



**YOU MATTER  
TO PUBLIC EDUCATION**

British Columbia School Trustee Elections

# British Columbia School Trustee **CANDIDATES GUIDE**



British Columbia  
School Trustees  
Association

**2026 EDITION**

## YOU MATTER TO PUBLIC EDUCATION

Congratulations on your decision to run, or run again, for school trustee.

Local school trustee elections are an important opportunity for communities to shape and strengthen public education.

Trustees are dedicated community leaders who work together to support student success.

The work of a trustee is demanding, but it is also deeply meaningful and rewarding.

### Update to Elections Legislation for 2026

Several changes have been made to the laws governing local and school trustee elections.

These changes take effect for the 2026 general local elections, which will be held on **October 17, 2026**. They do not apply to any by-elections held before that date.

Changes of note for the 2026 general elections:

- **No more “originals” requirement for nomination documents:** Candidates no longer need to submit original paper copies of their nomination documents. Nomination papers can be submitted to the Chief Election Officer in person, by mail, fax, or email, as long as they are received before the nomination deadline.

- **Improved candidate privacy:** New rules limit the amount of personal information that must be made public. Candidates' contact information (such as phone numbers and home addresses) will be removed from online postings and public notices. Instead, public notices will include the name of the jurisdiction where a candidate lives. Anyone wishing to see unredacted nomination documents can do so at the school district or local government office, but they must first sign a declaration promising to use that information only for legal election purposes.
- **Candidate endorsement documents:** To streamline the endorsement process, elector organizations are no longer required to submit separate endorsement documents. Endorsements will now be included as part of the candidate's nomination package and must include signed consent statements from both the candidate and the authorized principal officer of the elector organization.
- **Eligibility changes under the [Eligibility to Hold Public Office Act](#):** Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) are not allowed to hold local elected offices, including the office of school trustee. If a sitting trustee later becomes an MLA, they are automatically considered to have resigned from their trustee position.



## SIGNIFICANT DATES

### General Election

**Election Period:** January 1, 2026 – September 18, 2026

**Pre Campaign Period:** July 20 – September 18, 2026

**Nomination Period (BC-wide):** September 1, 2026 – September 11, 2026

**Declaration of Candidates:** September 11, 2026

**Challenge of Nomination Deadline:** September 15, 2026

**Candidate Withdrawal Deadline:** September 18, 2026

**Candidate Endorsement Withdrawal Deadline:** September 18, 2026

**Campaign Period:** September 19, 2026 – October 17, 2026

**Voting Day (General):** October 17, 2026

**Disclosure Statement Filing Deadline:** January 15, 2027

**Late filing deadline for disclosure statements (with \$500 fee):** February 16, 2027

### Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique (CSF) Election

Please see **Appendix A** for more information on significant Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique election dates.

## IMPORTANT REMINDER

All candidates must be familiar with the [Local Elections Campaign Financing Act](#) and its requirements. For clear step-by-step information about campaign financing, expense limits, and third-party sponsors, see the following selection of Elections BC's guides:

- **Guide to Local Elections Campaign Financing in B.C. for Candidates and their Financial Agents**
- **Guide to Local Elections Campaign Financing in B.C. for Elector Organizations and their Financial Agents**
- **Guide for Local Elections Third Party Sponsors in B.C.**

These guides, and more, are available on the [Elections BC website](#).

**Note:** The BCSTA Candidate Guide is a resource. It does not replace or interpret the law. For specific questions about your eligibility or campaign, consult the relevant legislation or seek legal advice.

**Note:** This guide may not apply to:

- [The City of Vancouver](#), governed by the [Vancouver Charter](#), or
- [Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique \(CSF\)](#) regulated by the [Francophone Education Authorities Regulation](#).



## GENERAL INFORMATION

### What Boards of Education Do

#### Governance and Leadership in Public Education

Boards of education share responsibility for public education with the provincial government and the Ministry of Education and Child Care through a co-governance model.

The Ministry sets the overall direction for education, including the curriculum, funding, and the laws that guide school districts.

Boards of education are responsible for running their local school districts in ways that reflect the goals and needs of their communities, while following provincial direction, the *School Act* and other relevant laws and statutes.

Under the *School Act*, boards of education are responsible for:

- Holding board and committee meetings
- Setting local policies for effective school operations
- Hiring staff needed to run the district
- Establishing conditions of employment
- Preparing and approving budgets and capital plans
- Hearing appeals from parents or students when a staff decision significantly affects a student's education, health, or safety

### Boards as Employers

Boards of education are the legal employers of all school district staff. They are responsible for fair and lawful employee relations with management, teachers, and support staff.

In BC, teacher collective bargaining happens at two levels, provincial and local.

- At the provincial level, the BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA) negotiates with the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) on province-wide issues such as salaries and benefits.
- At the local level, each board of education and local teachers' association negotiate local issues that affect their specific district.

Boards play a key role in ensuring that local priorities are represented during Provincial Collective Agreement negotiations between BCPSEA and BCTF.

### What School Trustees Do

#### Understanding the Work of School Trustees

School trustees are the members of a board of education. They are locally elected representatives who speak and make decisions on behalf of their communities in support of public education.

Trustees work together as a board to make sure all students in the district have the best possible opportunities to learn, grow, and succeed. Their work is guided by the *School Act*, which sets out the responsibilities of boards of education and individual trustees.



A trustee's role is to:

- Keep the focus on student learning and well-being
- Represent the interests and values of their community
- Make informed decisions that benefit the entire district

## Trustees Set the District's Strategic Direction

One of the most important responsibilities of a board of education is setting the strategic direction for the school district

Trustees work together to develop the board's strategic plan, which outlines the district's goals, priorities, and actions to improve student outcomes. The plan helps guide decision-making for the board, staff, parents, and the wider community.

The board hires a superintendent, who serves as the district's chief executive officer (CEO). The superintendent is responsible for carrying out the board's strategic plan and overseeing the daily operations of schools.

Trustees are responsible for ensuring the right systems are in place, for example, fair and consistent processes to evaluate teachers and administrators. Trustees do not directly manage or evaluate individual employees. Their focus is on ensuring the system works effectively, not on making personnel decisions.

## Trustees Are Financial Stewards

Boards of education manage significant public funds and are accountable for how those resources are used. Trustees play an important role in ensuring that financial decisions support student learning and align with the strategic plan.

Each year, the board approves the annual budget, which connects the district's goals and priorities with its available resources. Trustees review and approve the allocation of funds and staff to ensure the district's budget supports the priorities identified in the strategic plan.

Good financial stewardship means making transparent, responsible decisions that are focused on long-term sustainability and student outcomes.

## Trustees Work as a Team

A school trustee is part of a team, the board of education.

Under the *School Act*, the authority to make decisions rests with the board, not with individual trustees. This means a single trustee cannot make decisions or act on behalf of the board unless specifically authorized to do so.

Trustees often have diverse perspectives, and respectful debate is a healthy part of governance. However, once the board votes and decides, that decision becomes the board's position. All trustees are expected to support that decision, even if they personally disagreed during the discussion.

Trustees may be motivated to run for personal or community reasons, for example, they may have a passion for student success or specific education issues. These motivations are important and valuable. However, once elected, trustees must always look beyond individual issues and make decisions that serve the best interests of the entire school district.



## Trustees Are Community Leaders

School trustees are community leaders who work with others to strengthen public education. They collaborate with parents, Indigenous communities, local governments, and organizations to ensure every student in the district can reach their full potential.

Trustees represent the public's voice in education, but they also have a responsibility to think broadly and make decisions that benefit all students, not only those in their own neighbourhood or community.

Successful trustees balance their dual roles:

- As elected representatives, they bring their community's concerns and perspectives to the board table.
- As governors, they make collective decisions in the best interests of all students in the district.

In short, trustees are community-minded leaders who help shape the future of education in their district and across the province.

## TRUSTEE ELECTORAL AREAS AND ELIGIBILITY

### Trustee Electoral Areas

Every school district in British Columbia is divided into [trustee electoral areas](#), which are the regions from which trustees are elected.

You do not have to live in the community where you run for trustee. You may choose to run in any trustee electoral area within the district.

The number of trustees elected, and the division of electoral areas vary from district to district, depending on population size and community needs.

- In some school districts, all trustees are elected at large, meaning the entire district is a single electoral area, and all voters choose from the same list of candidates.
- In other districts, there are multiple trustee electoral areas, each electing one or more trustees.
- Trustee electoral areas may include one or more municipalities, rural areas, or a combination of both.

In some communities, elector organizations (also known as local political parties) may choose to endorse candidates.

Sometimes, local governments and boards of education work together to run elections. This means that in some districts, the election process, which includes nomination submissions, may be handled by the municipality or regional district office instead of (or in addition to) the board of education office.



## ELIGIBILITY

To run for a position on a board of education, you must:

- Be a Canadian citizen,
- Be 18 years of age or older on general voting day,
- Have lived in British Columbia for at least six months before nomination day, and
- Not be disqualified under the School Act or any other law from being nominated, elected, or serving as a trustee.

You cannot serve as a school trustee if you are a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA).

If you are endorsed by an [elector organization](#), information about these organizations is available on the Elections BC website.

For those interested in running for the Conseil Scolaire Francophone de la Colombie-Britannique, see the [Francophone Education Authorities Regulation](#).

## Board of Education Employees

If you are an employee of a board of education and wish to run for a seat on your employer's board, there are special rules you must follow:

1. Before you are nominated, you must give your employer written notice of your intention to be nominated.
2. You must take a leave of absence from your job starting on the first day of the nomination period, or the day you give notice – whichever comes later.
3. If you are elected, you must resign from your employment with the school district.

If you work for a different school district than in the one where you are seeking election, you do not need to take a leave or resign. However, you should be aware that certain situations may create a conflict of interest. For example, you may not be able to take part in provincial collective bargaining discussions if you are both a unionized school district employee and a trustee in another district.

Further details on conflict of interest are provided below.

## Conflict of Interest

Conflict of interest rules for school trustees are found in both the *School Act* and common law (court decisions that interpret how the law applies).

When trustees take the [Oath of Office](#), they promise to follow all conflict of interest requirements in the *School Act*, including rules about pecuniary interests, that is, matters that could have a financial impact on the trustee or certain family members.

## Pecuniary (Financial) Conflicts

Under [Part 5](#) of the *School Act*:

- If a matter being discussed by the board could financially benefit a trustee, or certain people connected to them (such as a spouse, parent, or child), the trustee is considered to have a pecuniary interest and therefore a conflict of interest.
- The same applies if those family members have financial interests tied to the school district, such as membership in a union representing district employees.



A trustee with a pecuniary interest cannot:

- Be elected to the board of directors of the BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA),
- Serve as a trustee member of a BCPSEA bargaining team, or
- Represent their board at any BCPSEA general meeting or function.

If a trustee has a pecuniary interest in a matter before the board or one of its committees, the trustee must:

1. Declare their interest,
2. Leave the room during the discussion,
3. Not participate in any debate or vote, and
4. Not try to influence others on the matter before, during, or after the meeting.

### Non-Pecuniary Conflicts

Sometimes a trustee may not have a direct financial interest, but there may still be a perceived conflict of interest.

For example, a trustee might be asked to vote on an issue involving a close friend or relative. Even if there is no financial impact, there might be an appearance of bias.

Non-pecuniary conflicts are not written into the *School Act* but are instead governed by the common law. In common law, it is a fundamental requirement that a statutory body, or one of its members, should not be biased or have the appearance of bias.

In these cases, the trustee may be seen as having a reasonable appearance of bias, meaning their decision-making may not appear impartial.

Trustees are expected to act in the best interests of all students and avoid participating in any decisions where personal interests, relationships, or outside responsibilities could be seen to influence their judgment.

**Tip:** When in doubt, disclose the potential conflict and seek legal advice or guidance from your board chair or the Ministry of Education and Child Care. It's always better to be transparent than risk violating conflict-of-interest rules.

## NOMINATIONS, CAMPAIGNING, AND ELECTION RULES

### Filing Your Nomination

You must submit complete nomination papers to the Chief Election Officer (CEO) by **4 p.m. on September 11, 2026**. These must include a sworn declaration of eligibility, signed in front of the CEO or an authorized official (e.g., a lawyer or notary public).

Nominations can be submitted in person, by mail/courier, or electronically, but must be received before the deadline. Late or incomplete submissions won't be accepted.

Most school boards offer a candidate package with required forms and instructions. Check local rules before applying.

### Financial Interests

You must also file a [Financial Disclosure Statement](#) as required under section 2(1) of the [Financial Disclosure Act](#).

This statement lists your financial interests, including:

- Any personal or family income sources,
- Businesses you own or have shares in, and
- Property or other significant financial holdings.



This helps ensure transparency and public trust in the election process.

## Following Election Rules

You are responsible for ensuring your nomination is complete and in compliance with all election rules.

This includes:

- Submitting all required documents,
- Paying a nomination deposit (if required), and
- Meeting all filing deadlines with your community's Chief Election Officer.

Late or incomplete nominations cannot be accepted, so double-check everything before you file.

## Campaign Financing

As a school trustee candidate, you must follow the same campaign financing and advertising rules that apply to local government candidates. These rules are set out in the [Local Elections Campaign Financing Act \(LECFA\)](#). Elections BC oversees these rules and ensures they are followed. You can find detailed guides and forms on the [Elections BC](#) website.

Campaign finance rules can be complex. Take time to read Elections BC's resources carefully. They explain contribution limits, expense limits, and reporting requirements.

## Campaigning

Before you begin campaigning, make sure you know and follow the rules that apply, including:

- Local bylaws about signage (size, placement, and timing),
- The Ministry of Transportation and Transit's rules for signs along roads,
- Rules for online and social media advertising, and
- Campaign restrictions on general voting day.

Your campaign may include activities such as:

- Social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, X, etc.),
- Media interviews,
- Door-to-door canvassing,
- Meeting voters in public spaces ("mainstreeting"),
- Paid or unpaid advertising,
- A personal website or blog, and
- Attending all-candidates' meetings.

## Preparing for Your Campaign

Good preparation will help you both as a candidate and, if elected, as a trustee.

Consider:

- Attending board of education meetings to understand how decisions are made,
- Reading school trustee publications and following education news in your region,
- Learning about provincial education issues, and
- Getting to know other candidates and their platforms.

This background knowledge will help you shape your own views on education and communicate them clearly to voters.



## HELPFUL RESOURCES

Here are some key websites for more information:

- [BC School Trustees Association \(BCSTA\)](#)
- [BC Ministry of Education and Child Care](#)
- [BC Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs](#)
- [Elections BC](#)
- [CivicInfo BC](#)



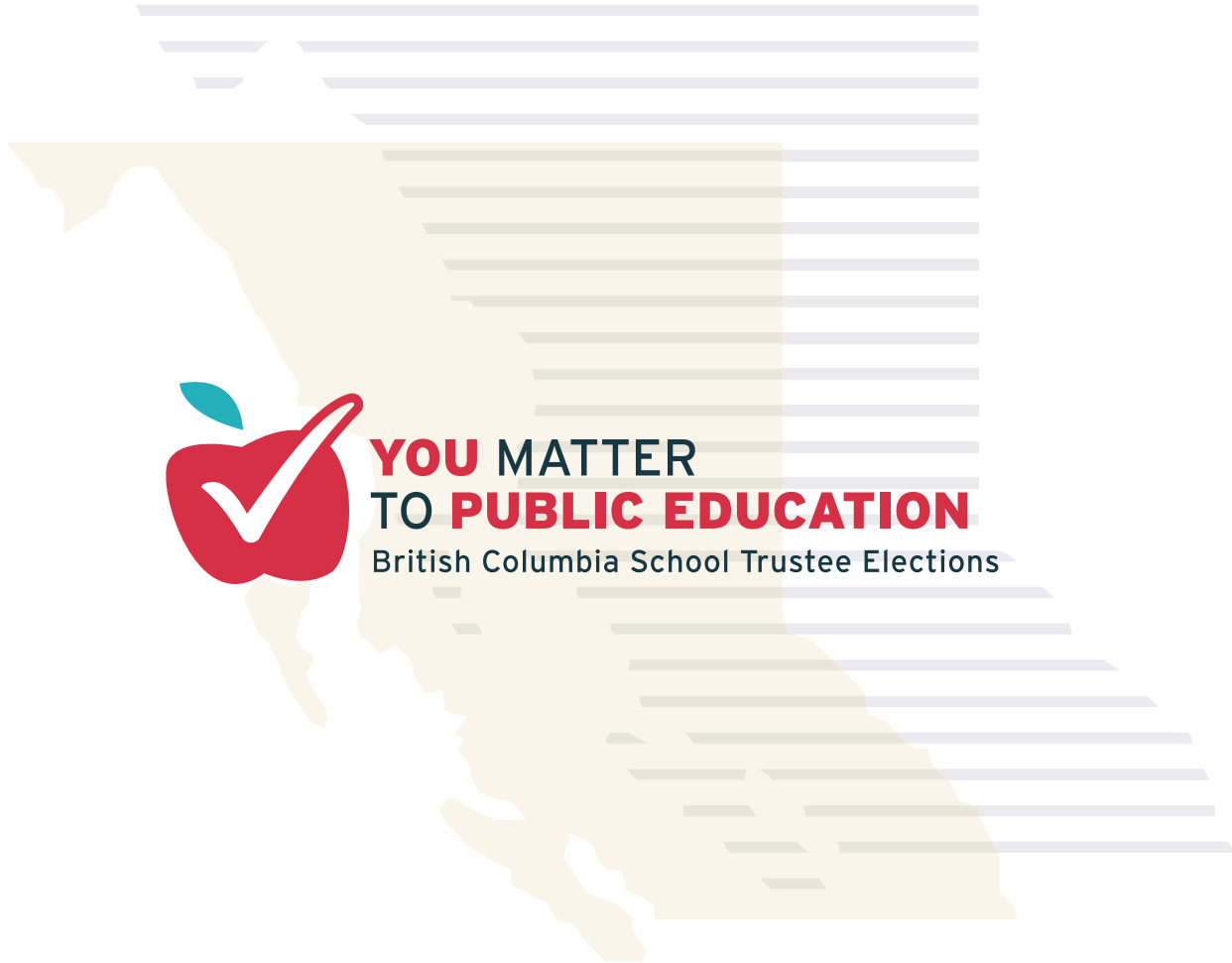
## ÉLECTIONS SCOLAIRES DU 17 OCTOBRE 2026 DATES IMPORTANTES

Le processus électoral, tel que décrit dans la Loi scolaire et le BC Reg. 212/99, se déroule en fonction de la date des élections. Voici le compte à rebours des dates limites qui correspondent aux échéances respectant la Loi scolaire :

Règles	Échéanciers	Dates limites
1. Date limite de résidence en Colombie-Britannique	6 mois avant les élections	16 avril 2026
2. Devenir membre du CSF	120 jours avant la date des élections	18 juin 2026
3. Appel aux candidatures	au moins 90 jours avant la date des élections	18 juillet 2026
4. Devenir membre du CSF dans le but de poser sa candidature	80 jours avant la date des élections	28 juillet 2026
5. Soumission de la candidature des membres intéressés au secrétaire trésorier	au moins 75 jours avant la date des élections	4 août 2026
6. Envoi de la liste des candidatures aux membres	au moins 70 jours avant la date des élections	7 août 2026
7. Contestation de la déclaration d'un membre se présentant aux élections en tant qu'élue(e) régional	au moins 60 jours avant la date des élections	16 h 00 18 août 2026
8. Annonce par le secrétaire trésorier des élues et/ou élus par acclamation	au moins 30 jours avant la date des élections	16 septembre 2026
9. Envoi, par le CSF, des bulletins de vote aux membres	au moins 30 jours avant la date des élections	16 septembre 2026
10. Annonce par le secrétaire trésorier des élues et/ou élus	Jour de l'élection	17 octobre 2026
11. Entrée en fonction des élu(e)s	Premier lundi après le 1 <sup>er</sup> novembre 2026	2 novembre 2026

### Pour voter aux élections scolaires du CSF, vous devez :

- Être une personne citoyenne canadienne ;
- Avoir atteint l'âge de 18 ans lors de la date des élections ;
- Être une personne résidente de la zone électorale dans laquelle vous votez ;
- Être membre du CSF depuis le 18 juin 2026 ;
- Être une personne résidente de la province depuis le 16 avril 2026.



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