



School Board Trustees 101

School Board Trustees are members of the Toronto District School Board that are elected by the community within the Ward they represent. The TDSB is divided into 22 Wards. Here is the [TDSB Ward Map](#).

Northern is located in Ward 11. This ward includes 4 high schools

- Northern
- Leaside
- York Mills
- Marc Garneau

and numerous elementary and middle schools including

- Bennington Heights
- Rolph Road
- Fraser Mustard
- Thorncliffe Park
- Bessborough
- Maurice Cody
- Hodgson
- Northlea
- John Fisher
- Blythwood
- Sunny View
- Park Lane
- Bedford Park
- Rippleton
- Denlow
- Windfields
- Harrison
- Dunlace
- Owen
- St Andrew

The official responsibilities of the trustees include:

- Establishing the board's multi-year strategic plan, which includes the vision to ensure a strong public education system
- Setting goals for student achievement, well-being and equity
- Monitoring progress against the board's strategic goals and priority areas
- Promoting accountability throughout the school board
- Allocating resources in ways that ensure equity of outcomes and demonstrate accountability
- Establishing a respectful, caring, professional climate across the school board
- Creating collaborative relationships inside the board and across the community
- Promoting continuous improvement
- Promoting community involvement and establishing communications
- Holding the director of education accountable as they lead, execute and monitor activities on behalf of the board of trustees
- Passing a budget that uses resources wisely¹

¹ Source: [Ontario Municipal and School Elections](#)

Trustees play a critical role in representing the interest of students and parents in the community.

Practical Examples of What Trustees Can Do

- When the new procedures were being put in place for admission to the new Secondary Schools Without a Boundary program, Northern's principal had repeatedly expressed concerns to staff about the proposed process. He was thanked for his feedback, but the concerns were not addressed. When Shelley Laskin heard the concerns, she immediately challenged existing protocols and made sure that changes were implemented to address legitimate concerns.
- When School Councils are looking into revitalizing outdoor space, the Trustee can
 - review the proposal,
 - provide context regarding costs and similar projects at other schools,
 - provide information about opportunities to pursue funding outside the the school board
 - Connect Councils with appropriate contacts within the TDSB
- When parents have tried to get an issue addressed at the school level without success, they can reach out to trustees for support. See [Parent Concern Protocol](#). Trustees cannot intervene in operational issues (their role relates to policy, not day-to-day operation of schools), but they can connect parents with staff who have resources that can help. If the issue reveals an area that would benefit from a policy change then they can propose policy changes at the Board level..
- Trustees can hold ward forums to consult with the community, inform the community and/or allow families and councils the opportunity to connect with one another. They can introduce the community to TDSB Superintendents and other staff at these forums.
- Trustees can advocate for changes in policy at the TDSB level and at the provincial level on issues that affect education.