

and for the future.

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Meet the Board





JOAN NELLIS

BOARD CHAIR

A Trustee since 2017, Joan prioritizes appropriate funding for sustainable programs and the new curriculum. She believes public education builds community, understanding, and creates great neighbours, bringing together people from all abilities, religions, ethnicities, and other groups in Grande Prairie.



DONNA KOCH

VICE CHAIR

Donna, in her first term as trustee, advocates consistently for students, including advocating for their access to mental health and career/technology supports. Her priorities include the curriculum, student learning, and access to extracurricular activities. She also emphasizes strong governance and creating great citizens.



TRUSTEE ANDRE OUELLETTE

In his second term, Andre, who was born and raised in Grande Prairie, prioritizes success for all students. He aims to ensure the division provides a caring and respectful learning environment and provides the best education available to all students, regardless of their background.



TRUSTEE CHRIS JOHNSTON

A first-term trustee and mechanical engineer, Chris's top priorities are student safety, well-being, and success. He advocates for providing equitable access to education for all students and is passionate about developing and expanding STEM fields within GPPSD programming, using evidence-based decision making.





Meet the Board



TRUSTEE RAY BUZIAK

A first-term trustee and retired teacher, Ray advocates for a curriculum that fosters higher-level thinking and the development of engaged citizens. He advocates for fair and adequate funding from the province to offer quality programming and attract/retain staff while ensuring public education remains free, high quality, and universally accessible.



TRUSTEE ROB MARTIN

A second-term trustee and firefighter, Rob is focused ensuring the division meets the needs of students, staff, and parents. He advocates for proper levels of funding from the province and creating a safe, inclusive, and welcoming learning environment that is free of barriers and provides equitable opportunity for all children.



TRUSTEE VACANCY

Trustee Paulette Kurylo, who served the community of Grande Prairie as a Trustee since 1992, passed away in the spring of 2023.

The Board reviewed the implications of holding a by-election mid-way through the term, and as per the option in the Local Authorities Elections Act, elected to leave seat at the table vacant until the October 2025 election.



SECTION 1 - WHAT IS THE BOARD'S GOVERNANCE MODEL?

This section describes the concept of governance, why it is important in the context of public education in the province of Alberta, and introduces the GTEC model of governance used in the division.

The Importance of Local Governance

Local governance in school boards is a cornerstone of democracy, with trustees providing citizens a direct way to influence public services. Trustees offer essential oversight of the education system, ensuring decisions align with community values while meeting provincial standards. This role enables trustees to make informed and balanced decisions. The term governance describes the work of the board as a whole to provide leadership and oversight of the division and to support division operations led by the Superintendent of Schools. Evidence of the board's governance can be seen in the discussion and the motions that occur at the board table during public meetings.

Alberta's school boards operate with local autonomy, enabling them to address the unique challenges and opportunities in their communities. Trustees are instrumental in bringing local insights to educational policies and practices, ensuring that every student has access to the resources and opportunities they need to succeed.

Alberta School Boards Association Guide for School Board Trustees, p. 6

Key Components of Governance

Canadian educational researcher and consultant, Michael Fullan, and his co-author of *The Governance Core* Davis Campbell, describes governance as "...the process where the direction of the organization is set, the structure is established, and accountability both fiscal and programmatic is assured." (p. 15). Fullan describes effective boards as being committed to providing good governance, being driven by a shared moral imperative and governance mindset, and governing with unity of purpose. He further describes effective school boards as sharing five areas of responsibility:

- 1. Establishing strategic directions and related outcomes.
- 2. Focusing on providing policy direction.
- 3. Providing stewardship of and support for the work of the division.
- 4. Providing oversight and leading a culture of accountability within the division.
- 5. Engaging with community stakeholders and providing community leadership.

Campbell and Fullan, The Governance Core, p.p. 121 - 134

The GPPSD Board's Governance Model

As with many other Alberta School Boards, the Board of Trustees of the Grande Prairie Public School Division utilize the **GTEC Policy Governance model** - **Governance Through Engagement and Collaboration**. The GTEC model focuses first on ensuring all stakeholders understand the respective roles and responsibilities of the Superintendent of Schools and the Board of Trustees and how they work together to realize the mission and vision of the division. The GTEC model also requires the board develops a culture of accountability, as they deliberately engage with division stakeholder groups representing students, staff, parents, and community.

Utilizing the GTEC model and focusing on the five interrelated components of governance model described by Fullan and Campbell, the Board of Trustees can ensure the board's corporate or collective will can become reality, student growth and achievement can be maximized, and the expectations of the board identified in the Education Act can be met.





SECTION 2 - THE BOARD'S LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Public school boards are entrenched in legislation in Alberta. This section provides a brief introduction to education laws in the province of Alberta, and to GPPSD Board Policy, to explain the roles, responsibilities, and expectations re: how public school boards are to operate.

Alberta's Local Authorities Elections Act and the Education Act

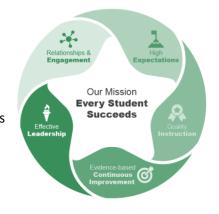
The Board of Trustees of the Grande Prairie Public School Division are granted authority in the province of Alberta's Education Act, the law which delegates governance powers to school boards and which outlines the role of both the Board of Trustees and the Superintendent of Schools. The Local Authorities Election Act ("LAEA") is the law in Alberta which regulates trustee elections.

Local School Board Trustees are elected every four years, as part of Alberta's Municipal Elections, and are accountable to their communities, parents and Alberta Education for their decisions. The LAEA describes the process for seeking election as a trustee and identifies expectations related to eligibility, dates and deadlines, election finances, etc.

Board Policy

The clarity of roles that are the foundation of the GTEC Policy Governance model are described in Board policy. Board Policy 11 - Policy Making, describes the importance of policy to the board's governance. Other policies describe the role and specific responsibilities of individual trustees, the corporate board as a whole, and the Superintendent of Schools.

The board's primary function is described in BP11 as being "...to establish a governance framework that clearly articulates how it will exercise its leadership to govern the affairs of the Division. It will accomplish this by establishing a mission, guiding principles and governance policies to provide direction and guidelines to fulfill the governance role. Policies approved by the Board shall clearly articulate those areas of responsibility which reside with the Board and those which have been delegated to the Superintendent."



Alberta's Education Act provides further clarity about the role of the board to function as a governance board. Section 33 of Alberta's Education Act identifies it is the responsibility of the Board to hire a Superintendent of Schools for the division and to delegate the day-to-day operation of the division to the superintendent. Board Policy 10 provides further clarity about what the delegation of operations to the Superintendent means. The policies established by the Board provide clarity regarding the roles and responsibility for each of the superintendent, of individual trustees, and of the corporate board. The remainder of the policies describe the Board's beliefs, values, and expectations within the division.

Committees of the Board

The GTEC model requires a strategic approach to engagement with division stakeholders. Board Policy 8 - Committees of the Board describes the standing committees established by the Board that support the Board's engagement with different stakeholder groups. Standing Committees are established annually at the Board's Organizational Meeting. The Board may also establish ad hoc committees, to fulfill a specific, temporary, purpose, related to board governance during the school year.





SECTION 3 - STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

The Alberta School Boards Association Guide for School Board Trustees describes Board of Trustees as the connection between the citizens of the community and the school division. While trustees interact with individual members of the community during their day to day lives, board policy also establishes a more formal, structured system to guide their engagement with stakeholders of the division.

School Division Stakeholder Committees

Structured formal opportunities for trustees to engage with school division stakeholders are created through the establishment of the following committees:

- **PARENTS** Each trustee is assigned as the Board's liaison to attend up to 4 monthly school council meetings. The entire board also meets 4 times per year with all school council chairs at the Council of School Council Meeting.
- **TEACHERS** Two trustees are assigned to attend meetings with teacher representatives from all schools at the Teacher Trustee Liaison Committee meetings, held 4 times per year.
- **ADMINISTRATION** The Board meets annually with each school's principal and vice principals during Assurance meetings to review the school's progress toward the priority outcomes in the school's 3-Year Education Plan.
- NON-INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF Two trustees are assigned to attend meetings with the executive of the Non-Instructional Staff Association, held 4 times per year.
- **STUDENTS** Three trustees are are assigned to attend 4-6 meetings per year with the division's Student Advisory Committee.

Zone and Provincial Associations

The Board of Trustees maintain membership in two provincial associations, each focused on supporting and continually improving Alberta's K-12 Education System:

- The Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) is the provincial association representing all 65 member boards, consisting of locally elected public, catholic and francophone member school boards across Alberta, Yellowknife (2) and Lloydminster, SK. ASBA is a private not-forprofit corporation established by the Alberta School Boards Association Act.
- There are 62 public, separate, and francophone school boards in the
 province of Alberta and each has a professional association that
 represents its members. The Public School Boards Association of
 Alberta represents Alberta's public school boards and believes that by
 advocating for public school education, the PSBAA is helping the
 children in our communities gain access to opportunity and options
 within their public school system.









SECTION 4 - KEY BOARD GOVERNANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

The strength of a public school board is in the manner in which the board, in its entirety, works together. Board Policy 3 - the Role of the Trustee states that "A trustee acting individually has only the authority and status of any other citizen of the Division." Trustees have a fiduciary duty to the school division, which means they have a responsibility to act in the best interests of the division, over and above their own personal interests. The authority of the board is realized through acting with one voice when away from the board table.

The responsibilities of the board described in Board Policy 2 - The Role of the Board illustrate the importance of working together to understand the needs of the division and then acting with one voice to advocate on behalf of the division when engaging with stakeholders and government.

Advocating to Alberta Education and Childcare

A very important responsibility of the Board is to advocate for the needs of the division and the public education system to the Alberta Government, primarily through Alberta Education and Childcare. Provincial-level advocacy happens through the work of their provincial associations, but the Board also meets regularly on their own with local Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, with the Minister of Education and Childcare, and at other times with other government representatives and organizations.

To help guide their advocacy on those topics that matter most to the division, twice per term the Board engages with stakeholders and updates their Advocacy Priorities. The Board's Advocacy Priorities are the top 3 to 5 areas that will have the most impact on the continuous improvement of the division. These priorities, developed based on feedback from the division community about what is important, are used by the Board to guide and focus the Board's efforts to influence change in the provincial system when meeting with the Minister of Education, MLAs, and other elected representatives.

Current Board Advocacy priorities are available on the division's website at:

https://www.gppsd.ab.ca/our-board/board-advocacy-priorities.



Oversight of Student Growth and Achievement and Stakeholder Satisfaction

Each year, every public school board in Alberta is expected to develop and share a rolling 3-Year Education Plan and Annual Education Results Report, which must include priorities and information required by the province and of interest to the local division community, with the public and with Alberta Education. All division plans are available on the division's website at https://www.gppsd.ab.ca/our-division/division-planning.

Oversight by the Board of Trustees is guided by current achievement and progress over time. The Board uses evidence of division performance and of student growth and achievement obtained over the course of the school year to assess performance. Evidence provided by division administration and reviewed by the Board includes student assessment results, results from provincial and local assurance surveys, and other relevant information that is provided during Board and committee meetings.





Oversight of the Division's Financial Health

Another key responsibility of the Board of Trustees is to ensure the current and long-term financial health of the school division. The majority of division revenues are provided by Alberta Education in accordance with the annual Alberta Education Funding Manual, available online. The Board is responsible to ensure revenues are allocated appropriately as per the terms of the Funding Manual. Approximately 78% of all expenses are staffing.

Alberta Education establishes a limit to how much can be saved as reserve and how much can be spent on division administration and board governance. The Board is responsible to adhere to those limits established by the Minister and when approving the annual division budget ensures today's dollars are spent on today's students. Annual audited financial statements illustrates the board spends less on administration and governance than the limits established by Alberta Education and Childcare.

To help provide assurance to the government and the public, the Board utilizes an Audit committee, which includes two public members, to participate in the annual financial audit of the division. The Annual Audited Financial Statements, are submitted to Alberta Education and Childcare and are publicly available on the division website.

Self-Evaluating the Performance of the Board

Board Policy 2 describes the role and responsibilities of the Board. The Appendix to Board Policy 2 describes the annual Board self-evaluation process, which is an important responsibility and illustrates their commitment to provide effective governance to the school division. At times the Board utilizes an external consultant to support the self-evaluation process.

The purpose of the Board self-evaluation is to evaluate the effectiveness of Board practice for the purpose of continually improving the effectiveness and impact of Board governance on Division performance.

Evaluating the Superintendent of Schools

The expectation the Board evaluate the Superintendent for the purpose of holding the Superintendent accountable for the operation of the division is identified in Alberta's Education Act and in Board Policy. Board Policy 19, available online at https://www.gppsd.ab.ca/our-board/policies-and-bylaws, describes the process that will be used to evaluate the performance of the Superintendent of Schools, including the expectation that the evaluation is facilitated by a committee of the Board and that an external educational consultant will be utilized to support the process.





SECTION 5 - THE BOARD'S ANNUAL WORKPLAN

The work of the board is highly structured, to support effective operations of both administration and the board and to ensure the engagement of the board with administration and stakeholder groups is sufficient to inform the board in its governance duties. A critical resource is the annual board workplan, copied below.

Time Commitment for Trustees and Board

The Board of Trustees of the Grande Prairie Public School Division meets the second and fourth Tuesday of the month, with some exceptions, 6:00 p.m. at the Division Central Office (10127 – 120 Avenue, Grande Prairie, AB). Meetings of the Board of Trustees are open to the public. Trustees are expected to attend regular board meetings, participate on committees and attend school council meetings as they are able, and to participate in other meetings and events whenever possible.

A summary of the current committee assignments of the board, which describes meeting frequency and estimated time committment, is available online at https://www.gppsd.ab.ca/our-board/trustee-profiles-committee-assignments2.

Monthly Board Workplan

The monthly board workplan, which identifies monthly dates, events, and describes the Board's governance activities, is attached for review on the pages that follow. NOTE: the workplan is updated monthly and reviewed as part of each board meeting. The plan on these pages is current as of August, 2025.

AUGUST

Date	Event	Governance Description
Tuesday August 19	Advocacy and Engagement Committee (3:30 pm)	Standing Committee Meeting
Tuesday August 19	Committee of the Whole (5:00	Board Committee of the Whole
Tuesday August 19	pm)	Meeting
Tuesday August 19	Regular Public Meeting (6:00 pm) • Summer School Participation Summary Report • Career Pathways Planning	Regular Board Meeting

SEPTEMBER

Date	Event	Governance Description
Tuesday, September 9	Board Policy Committee (3:30 pm)	Standing Committee Meeting
Tuesday, September 9	Committee of the Whole (5:00pm) • Division Assurance Survey Summary	Board Committee of the Whole Meeting
Tuesday, September 9	Regular Public Meeting (6:00 pm)	Regular Board Meeting
Wednesday, September 17	ASBA Zone 1 Meeting (10:00am) GP Catholic School Division	External Board/Committee
Thursday, September 18	ASCA Council of School Council's Workshop (5:00pm)	Parent Engagement
Tuesday, September 23	Advocacy and Engagement Committee (3:30pm)	Standing Committee Meeting
Tuesday, September 23	Regular Public Meeting (6:00pm)	Regular Board Meeting





OCTOBER

Date	Event	Governance Description
Tuesday October 7	Audit Committee Meeting (4:30pm)	Standing Committee Meeting
Wednesday October 8	ASBA Zone 1 Meeting (10:00am) High Prairie School Division	External Board/Committee
Tuesday October 14	Board Policy Committee (3:30 pm)	Standing Committee Meeting
Tuesday October 14	Committee of the Whole (5:00 pm) • Annual Staff Exit Survey Data Summary	Board Committee of the Whole Meeting
Tuesday October 14	Regular Public Meeting (6:00 pm) • Annual Student Enrollment Summary	Regular Board Meeting
Wednesday October 15	Teacher Trustee Liaison Committee (3:45pm)	Standing Committee Meeting
Monday October 20	Municipal Election Day	
Wednesday October 22	Non-Instructional Liaison Committee Meeting (4:15pm)	Standing Committee Meeting
Thursday October 23	First day of trustee orientation and Mock Board Meeting (9:00am)	Board Development
Tuesday October 28	Annual Organizational Meeting (5:00pm) Board Meeting Schedule Trustee Compensation Recommendation	Annual Board Organizational Meeting
Tuesday October 28	Regular Public Meeting (6:00pm)	Regular Board Meeting

NOVEMBER

Date	Event	Governance Description
Wednesday November 12	ASBA Zone 1 Meeting (10:00am) Peace Wapiti School Division	External Board/Committee
Sunday November 16 – Tuesday November 18	ASBA Fall General Meeting	External Board/Committee
Tuesday, November 18	Advocacy and Engagement Committee (3:30 pm)	Standing Committee Meeting
Tuesday, November 18	Committee of the Whole (5:00pm) Bi-annual Risk Management Report	Board Committee of the Whole Meeting
Tuesday, November 18	Regular Public Meeting (6:00 pm) • Annual Student Attendance Report	Regular Board Meeting
Wednesday November 19 – Friday, November 21	PSBAA Fall Conference & AGM	External Board/Committee
Thursday, November 20	Second day of Trustee Orientation (9:00am) • Draft Annual Education Results Report	Board Development
Friday, November 21	Student Advisory Committee (9:00am)	Standing Committee Meeting
Tuesday November 25	Audit Committee Meeting (4:30pm)	Standing Committee Meeting
Thursday, November 27	Council of School Council's Meeting (7:00pm)	Standing Committee Meeting





DECEMBER

Date	Event	Governance Description
Tuesday December 9	Board Policy Committee (3:30	Standing Committee Meeting
Tuesday December 9	pm)	Standing Committee Meeting
	Committee of the Whole (5:00	
Tuesday December 9	pm)	Board Committee of the Whole
Tuesday December 9	 Review Draft School Year 	Meeting
	Calendar	
	Regular Public Meeting (6:00	
	pm)	
	 Review Audited Financial 	
Tuesday December 9	Statements	Regular Board Meeting
	 Fall Budget Update 	
	 Annual Education Results 	
	Report	
W-ddDb10	ASBA Zone 1 Meeting (10:00am)	External Board /Committee
Wednesday December 10	Location TBC	External Board/Committee

JANUARY

Date	Event	Governance Description
Tuesday January 13	Advocacy and Engagement Committee (3:30 pm)	Standing Committee Meeting
Tuesday January 13	Committee of the Whole (5:00pm) • Annual Student Profile and Specialized Services Report	Board Committee of the Whole Meeting
Tuesday January 13	Regular Public Meeting (6:00 pm) • Annual Transportation Report • Annual Finance Department Report	Regular Board Meeting
Wednesday January 14	ASBA Zone 1 Meeting (10:00am) Location TBC	External Board/Committee
Wednesday January 14	Teacher Trustee Liaison Committee (3:45pm)	Standing Committee Meeting
Wednesday January 21	Non-Instructional Liaison Committee Meeting (4:15pm)	Standing Committee Meeting
Thursday January 22	School Assurance Meetings (9:00am)	Board Committee of the Whole Meeting
Tuesday January 27	Board Policy Committee (3:30 pm)	Standing Committee Meeting
Tuesday January 27	Regular Public Meeting (6:00 pm) • Approval of 2026-2027 School Year Calendar • Annual IT Department Report • Q1 Budget Update	Regular Board Meeting
Thursday January 29	School Assurance Meetings (9:00am)	Board Committee of the Whole Meeting
Friday January 30	Student Advisory Committee (9:00am)	Standing Committee Meeting





FEBRUARY

Date	Event	Governance Description
Thursday February 5 – Friday February 6	PSBC Meeting – Location TBC	External Board/Committee
Tuesday February 10	Advocacy and Engagement Committee (3:30 pm)	Standing Committee Meeting
Tuesday February 10	Committee of the Whole (5:00pm) Annual Optimum Student Learning Report Annual Occupational Health and Safety Report	Board Committee of the Whole Meeting
Tuesday February 10	Regular Public Meeting (6:00 pm) • Annual Operations and Maintenance Department Report	Regular Board Meeting
Wednesday February 11	ASBA Zone 1 Meeting (10:00am) Location TBC	External Board/Committee
Thursday February 12	School Assurance Meetings (9:00am)	Board Committee of the Whole Meeting
Thursday February 19	Board Professional Learning / Board Planning Retreat (9:00am) Review of all Director Workplans	Board Development
Tuesday February 24	Board Policy Committee (3:30 pm)	Standing Committee Meeting
Tuesday February 24	Regular Public Meeting (6:00 pm) Board Budget Development Process and Budget Guiding Principles Development Annual Human Resources and Wellness Report	Regular Board Meeting
Thursday February 26	Council of School Council's Meeting (7:00pm)	Standing Committee Meeting

MARCH

Date	Event	Governance Description
Tuesday March 10	Advocacy and Engagement Committee (3:30 pm)	Standing Committee Meeting
Tuesday March 10	Committee of the Whole (5:00pm) • Draft 3-Year Capital Plan	Board Committee of the Whole Meeting
Tuesday March 10	Regular Public Meeting (6:00 pm) Indigenous Companion Document Update	Regular Board Meeting
Wednesday March 11	ASBA Zone 1 Meeting (10:00am) Location TBC	External Board/Committee
Tuesday March 24	Board Policy Committee (3:30 pm)	Standing Committee Meeting
Tuesday March 24	Regular Public Meeting (6:00 pm) Output Q2 Budget Update 3-Year Capital Plan	Regular Board Meeting
Wednesday March 25	Teacher Trustee Liaison Committee (3:45pm)	Standing Committee Meeting





APRIL

Date	Event	Governance Description
Wednesday April 1	Non-Instructional Liaison Committee Meeting (4:15pm)	Standing Committee Meeting
Wednesday April 8	ASBA Zone 1 Meeting (10:00am) Location TBC	External Board/Committee
Thursday April 9 – Friday April 10	PSBC Meeting – Location TBC	External Board/Committee
Tuesday April 21	Advocacy and Engagement OR Board Policy Committee (3:30 pm)	Standing Committee Meeting
Tuesday April 21	Committee of the Whole (5:00pm) Annual Succession Planning Report Annual Division Compensation Report Bi-Annual Risk Management Report	Board Committee of the Whole Meeting
Tuesday April 21	Regular Public Meeting (6:00 pm)	Regular Board Meeting
Friday April 24	Student Advisory Committee (9:00am)	Standing Committee Meeting

MAY

Date	Event	Governance Description
Wednesday May 6	Teacher Trustee Liaison Committee (3:45pm)	Standing Committee Meeting
Thursday May 7	Board Spring Planning Retreat (9:00am) Draft 3-Year Education Plan Budget Development Update	Professional Development
Tuesday May 12	Advocacy and Engagement Committee (3:30 pm)	Standing Committee Meeting
Tuesday May 12	Committee of the Whole (5:00pm) • Draft Division Budget	Board Committee of the Whole Meeting
Tuesday May 12	Regular Public Meeting (6:00 pm) Board Policy 16 – Student Fees Update	Regular Board Meeting
Wednesday May 13	ASBA Zone 1 Meeting (10:00am) Location TBC	External Board/Committee
Tuesday May 26	Board Policy Committee (3:30 pm)	Standing Committee Meeting
Tuesday May 26	Regular Public Meeting (6:00 pm) • 2026-2027 Division Budget • 3-Year Education Plan	Regular Board Meeting
Thursday May 28	Council of School Council's Meeting (7:00pm)	Standing Committee Meeting
Thursday May 28 – Saturday May 30	PSBAA Spring General Meeting in Calgary	External Board/Committee





JUNE

Date	Event	Governance Description
Monday June 1 – Tuesday June 2	ASBA Spring General Meeting in Calgary	External Board/Committee
Wednesday June 3	Non-Instructional Liaison Committee Meeting (4:15pm)	Standing Committee Meeting
Friday June 5	Student Advisory Committee (9:00am)	Standing Committee Meeting
Tuesday June 9	Advocacy and Engagement (3:30 pm)	Standing Committee Meeting
Tuesday June 9	Committee of the Whole (5:00pm)	Board Committee of the Whole Meeting
Tuesday June 9	Regular Public Meeting (6:00 pm)	Regular Board Meeting
Wednesday June 10	ASBA Zone 1 Meeting (10:00am) Location TBC	External Board/Committee
Tuesday June 23	Board Policy Committee (3:30 pm)	Standing Committee Meeting
Tuesday June 23	Regular Public Meeting (6:00 pm)	Regular Board Meeting

JULY - NO MEETINGS SCHEDULED

AUGUST

Date	Event	Governance Description
Wednesday August 5 – Friday August 7	PSBC Meeting – Location TBC	External Board/Committee







Grande Prairie Public School Division

Acknowledgement

The Board Governance Framework was developed to build stakeholder understanding of the core actions the Board of Trustees takes to govern the division and support staff to realize GPPSD's mission; to ensure every student succeeds.