



Date: January 24, 2024 **Agenda Item:** 7.2

To: Board of Trustees

From: Shawna Warren, Superintendent

Originator(s): Shawna Warren, Superintendent

Governance Policy: [Board Policy 105: Vision, Mission and Values](#)
[Board Policy 225: Role of the Board](#)
[Board Policy 700: Superintendent of Schools](#)
[Board Policy 701: Board Delegation of Authority](#)
[Board Policy 315: Opening Exercises, Flag Protocol and Recognition of Dignitaries](#)

Additional Reference: Education Act: Sections 16, 58
Remembrance Day Act
Alberta Act, 1905: Section 17
School Ordinance of the Northwest Territories, 1901; Sections 137 and 138
Constitution Act, 1867: Section 93
Alberta Human Rights Act: Sections 11.1(1) and (2)

Assurance Domain: Governance
Local & Societal

Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard (SLQS)

SLQS Competencies ([SLQS](#) / [Board Policy 700](#)):
Building Effective Relationships
School Authority Operations and Resources
Supporting Effective Governance

Subject: **Board Policy 315: Opening Exercises, Flag Protocol and Recognition of Dignitaries**

Purpose:
For approval. Motion required.

Recommended Motion:
THAT the Board of Trustees rescind *Board Policy 315: Opening Exercises, Flag Protocol and Recognition of Dignitaries* as recommended at the January 24, 2024 Public Board meeting.

Background:
The [Remembrance Day Act](#) clearly defines the legislative responsibilities of the Board for Remembrance Day ceremonies:

1. A board, as defined in the Education Act, shall on Remembrance Day, with respect to each of its schools,
 - a. arrange for a remembrance ceremony that will encompass at least the time period from 11:00 a.m. to 11:05 a.m., or
 - b. ensure the observance of 2 minutes' silence from 11:00 a.m. to 11:02 a.m.
2. If a ceremony referred to in subsection (1)(a) is held at a school, all pupils shall either attend the ceremony or remain in the school, silent, during the ceremony.
3. If Remembrance Day falls on a day on which the school is not open, the board shall comply with subsection (1) on the school day immediately preceding Remembrance Day.

A board, as a partner in education, has the responsibility to entrust the day-to-day management of the school division to the staff through the superintendent (33 (1)(j)).

[Board Policy 240: Policy Development](#) states, “at any time, the Board may delete or suspend a policy and subsequently delegate to the Superintendent authority over a particular area (2.5)”.

Administration has created a new Administrative Procedure, *AP335 - Protocols for Opening Exercises, Flags and Recognition of Dignitaries*, using feedback from Trustees, administration and two respected teacher leaders with longstanding experience with Remembrance Day Ceremonies protocols who have a military background.

This new Administrative Procedure, which includes an Appendix for Remembrance Day ceremonies and a Remembrance Day Ceremony handbook for SPS staff, is specific, detailed and focused. It will enable all areas of the organization to fulfill day-to-day responsibilities to students, employees and the public regarding protocols for special events.

Administration is prepared to respond to questions at the January 24, 2024, Public Board meeting.

Attachment(s):

1. Board Policy 315: Opening Exercises, Flag Protocol and Recognition of Dignitaries.

Policy 315 - Recommendation to Rescind Policy and Replace with new AP335

Opening Exercises, Flag Protocol and Recognition of Dignitaries

1.0 POLICY

The Board believes in the promotion of a sense of pride in our country, province and community. The Board believes that students should be provided with opportunities in school to participate in patriotic exercises in order to acquire knowledge and develop skills and attitudes that will prepare them to be responsible and productive citizens. The Board believes, the acknowledgement of and respect for religious diversity, the maintenance of inclusive environments in its schools, and the provision of appropriate opportunities for students to give expression to their religious beliefs. The Board believes that the local community should have an opportunity for input into the opening exercises that the Board authorizes for individual schools.

2.0 GUIDELINES

2.1 National Anthem

2.1.1 In accordance with the Education Act, the Board may prescribe the conducting of patriotic exercises for students. Schools are expected to provide education to students regarding the appropriate protocol and conduct during patriotic exercises or events. Protocol for Remembrance Day Services shall be as per Royal Canadian Legion Guidelines.

2.1.2 The playing of O Canada should be conducted at all schools (K - 12) at the commencement of each day and shall be conducted at the commencement of all patriotic activities.

2.1.3 As per the Education Act, Section 58, a student may be excused from any patriotic exercise upon written request of the student's parent or guardian.

2.2 Lord's Prayer

2.2.1 In accordance with the Education Act, the Alberta Act, the School Ordinance of the Northwest Territories and the Constitution of Canada, the Board may prescribe that a school include recitation of the Lord's Prayer as part of its opening exercises.

2.2.2 The Board believes that our schools have a role in helping children develop emotionally, intellectually, physically, morally and spiritually.

2.2.3 Whenever parents/guardians request that the recitation of the Lord's Prayer be part of a school's opening exercises, the Principal shall advise the Superintendent, who will advise the Board of Trustees.

2.2.4 The Board of Trustees may, through the Superintendent, direct the Principal to undertake to obtain a consensus of parent/guardian opinion around such request through surveys, meetings or any other appropriate means of gathering information,

and establish a timeframe for such undertaking.

2.2.5 The Principal shall present information obtained, including the rationale for the request for recitation of the Lord's Prayer to be part of the school day opening, the determined degree of parent interest in the request, and proposed method of practice to the Board and seek Board prescription of such recitation.

2.2.6 The Board shall consider the rationale presented, including the tradition and culture of the school community, as well as the determined degree of parent interest and may prescribe the recitation of the Lord's Prayer to be a part of the school day opening at that school.

2.2.7 When the Lord's Prayer is part of the school day opening exercises, the Principal shall ensure that parents are informed of the practice at the time of registration each year.

2.2.8 The Principal shall annually ensure that written approval is provided for students whose parents/guardians wish them to participate in recitation of the Lord's Prayer as part of the school's opening exercises.

2.3 Flags

2.3.1 The Canadian flag, the Alberta flag and the Sturgeon Public Schools flag shall be displayed at each Division site as per established protocol and maintained in good condition. (Reference: Canada Heritage Website.)

2.3.2 A Canadian flag of proportionate size and quality shall be appropriately displayed in all classrooms.

2.3.3 Display of flags at assemblies and the lowering of flags (e.g. half-masting) shall follow the protocol established on the Canadian Heritage Website. Where there is no established protocol, such as for the death of a Sturgeon Public student or staff member, the school principal shall consult with the Superintendent to determine appropriate procedures.

2.4 Recognition of dignitaries at school events

2.4.1 School Personnel

2.4.1.1 School Council Chairs or designate

2.4.1.2 School principal, vice-principal(s) (if school is hosting event)

2.4.2 Division Personnel At events organized or sponsored by the school board or its schools, introductions of trustees and other dignitaries shall be in the following order:

2.4.2.1 Board Chair

2.4.2.2 Vice-Chair

2.4.2.3 Local Trustee, Trustees in attendance

2.4.2.4 "Greetings/regrets" from Trustees not in attendance

2.4.2.5 Superintendent, Deputy and/or Associate Superintendents

2.5 Other dignitaries Other elected officials and dignitaries attending (highest to lowest rank):

2.5.1 Members of the Senate representing Alberta

2.5.2 Members of Parliament (Cabinet Ministers first)

2.5.3 Members of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta (Cabinet Ministers first)

2.5.4 Mayors, Reeves

2.5.5 Other municipal Councilors

2.5.6 Special guests from the community (if invited and in attendance)

2.6 Royal Visits

2.6.1 While rare, school boards or schools occasionally may be included in royal visits (including those of Canada's Governor-General and/or Alberta's Lieutenant Governor);

visits by the Prime Minister or Premier; senior Cabinet Ministers; Ambassadors; or other prominent dignitaries. In such circumstances, the formal protocol of either the Government of Canada or Province of Alberta takes precedent. Information on proper protocol in these special circumstances can be obtained from the Government of Alberta.

2.6.2 In these circumstances, it is expected local event organizers will ensure local Trustees are properly recognized and included in the event as is appropriate to their positions as local politicians.

References:

Education Act: Sections 16, 58 ,61

Alberta Act, 1905: Section 17

School Ordinance of the Northwest Territories, 1901; Sections 137 and 138

Constitution Act, 1867: Section 93

Alberta Human Rights Act: Sections 11.1(1) and (2)

Websites:

Canadian Heritage: <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage.html>

Royal Canadian Legion: <https://www.legion.ca/>

History

2019 Mar 27 Initial Approval

2019 Oct 23 Amended

2020 Jan 29 Amended

2021 Oct 27 Reviewed