



# CREE SCHOOL BOARD CHAIRPERSON

So You're Thinking About Running for  
Cree School Board Chairperson . . .

## Answers to some questions you may have

- What is the purpose of the Cree School Board?
- What is the Council of Commissioners?
- What does the Council of Commissioners do?
- What does the Council of Commissioners NOT do?
- What does the Chairperson (Chief Governance Officer) do?
- What does the Chairperson (Chief Governance Officer) NOT do?
- Who is Eligible to be Chairperson?
- What are the time expectations for Chairperson?



## **What is the purpose of the Cree School Board?**

The Cree School Board was incorporated in 1978, three years after the signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, and has jurisdictional powers and authority to deliver educational services to nine Cree Communities within Eeyou Istchee.

## **The vision of the Cree School Board is**

“A vibrant and thriving Cree Nation.”

To participate in creating that vision, the Cree School Board exists so that Each student develops the character, capacity and competence to succeed in his or her life journey.

## **What is happening right now at the Cree School Board?**

- A new guaranteed and viable curriculum for Kindergarten through Grade 6 for Cree, English, French and Math will be implemented in August this year.
- Intensive work is continuing to build teaching and leadership capacity in our schools and to increase management and governance capacity throughout the Cree School Board to achieve the results necessary for students to succeed.

## **What is the Council of Commissioners?**

The Council of Commissioners is the governing body of the Cree School Board on behalf of Eeyou Istchee. The Council of Commissioners consists of nine Commissioners who serve three-year terms on a rotational basis.

## **What does the Council of Commissioners do?**

The Council of Commissioners governs the Cree School Board. This includes the following duties:

- Being the direct connection between the Eeyou Nation of Eeyou Istchee and the Cree School Board in order to understand the values and educational needs of the Eeyou Nation;
- Developing written governing policies. These policies are written at a high level, leaving development of operational details to the Director General. The policies include clearly identifying:
  - What results the Cree School Board is to produce for students
  - Constraints within which the Director-General can further develop detailed operational policies
  - Description of how the Council itself will do its job
  - Description of how the Council will delegate and monitor or evaluate areas that it has delegated.
- Evaluating how well the Cree School Board has achieved the desired results and operated within the constraints set by Council, using a deliberate and systematic process.
- Maintaining the relationships between the Cree School Board and the Grand Council of the Crees of Eeyou Istchee, Chiefs, and Councils of the Cree Nation communities of Northern Quebec, and the governing level of other political entities.

## **What does the Council of Commissioners NOT do?**

- The Council does not manage the Cree School Board. Management is the responsibility of the Director General.
- The Council does not interfere in management decisions, because if it did so, it could not hold the management accountable for results. However, as stated above, Council does monitor the areas it has delegated to management order to hold management accountable for expected results.

## What does the Chairperson (Chief Governance Officer) do?

The Chairperson is the “servant leader” of the Council of Commissioners. That means that the Chairperson leads the Council by ensuring that the Council does its job in the way that it committed to do it. The Council has agreed to using the Policy Governance® model to help it govern more effectively, so the Chairperson needs to become familiar with the principles of the model. The Chairperson has one vote on the Council, the same as any other Commissioner.

### **Specific tasks/duties that the Council of Commissioners has delegated to the Chairperson include:**

- Ensuring that the Council operates consistently with its own rules and those legitimately imposed upon it from outside the Cree School Board;
- Assuring that content of meeting discussions include only those issues that, according to Council policy, clearly belong to the Council to decide or monitor, rather than issues that belong to management;
- Chairing Council meetings, and ensuring that deliberation is timely, fair, orderly, and thorough, but also efficient and kept to the point;
- Representing the Council to external parties by announcing Council-stated positions and stating Chairperson's interpretations within the areas delegated to the Chairperson by the Council;
- On behalf of the Council of Commissioners of the Cree School Board, ensuring appropriate communication with the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority, the Chiefs and Councils of the Cree Nations communities of Northern Quebec and the governing level of other political entities, organizations and agencies.

## What does the Chairperson (Chief Governance Officer) NOT do?

- The Chairperson does not supervise or direct the Director General, because he is accountable to the Council of Commissioners as a whole.
- The Chairperson does not make decisions about operational areas covered by policies that the Council has delegated to the Director General, because then the Council could not hold the Director General accountable for those areas.

## Characteristics of a Good Chairperson

A Chairperson displays the following qualities and attitudes:

- Passion for the role of education in building a strong Cree Nation
- Willing to meet with and talk to members of the Cree Nation as part of the Council's overall linkage plan
- Aware of and willing to learn and apply the principles of the Policy Governance Model
- Committed to serving the Council of Commissioners by providing leadership to the Council's work within areas delegated by the Council
- Honest, with strong moral principles; Prepared to make decisions in the best interests of the Cree School Board on behalf of the Cree Nation without considering your own personal interests
- Will ensure Council operates with purpose, integrity and efficiency
- Ability to anticipate what might happen in the future, and to make decisions now with an understanding of how they may affect future generations
- Post-secondary education
- Interest in and capability to make value-based decisions which guide the Cree School Board
- Will respect the delegation of operational details to the Director General
- Will not to be involved in day-to-day operational details
- Will participate in thoughtful discussion, while respecting the opinions of those who may disagree
- Will commit to honour Council of Commissioner's decisions.

## Who is Eligible to be Chairperson?

The Council of Commissioners acts as the governing body on behalf of the Cree School Board within Eeyou Istchee. The Chairperson is the Chief Governing Officer (CGO) who serves a three-year term as Chairperson. To be eligible for the office of Chairperson, the candidate must:

- Be elected by the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee;
- Be a member of one of the following communities: Whapmagoostui, Chisasibi, Wemindji, Eastmain, Waskaganish, Nemaska, Waswanipi, Ouje-Bougoumou, or Mistissini;
- Be the age of majority;
- Not be subject to protective supervision within the meaning of the Civil Code;
- Not have a criminal record as detailed in the Bylaws;
- Not be a current employee of the Cree School Board

## What are the time expectations for Chairperson?

The Chairperson position is a full-time job.

As a representative of the Cree Nation, the Chairperson will:

- Prepare the agendas and act as meeting Chair for five regular meetings of two to three days per year
- Prepare the agendas and act as meeting Chair for special meetings or public meetings when called
- Prepare for all meetings by ensuring the appropriate background information for efficient meetings is included in the agenda package
- Chair the dialogue concerning governance matters pertaining to the organization
- Arrange for linkage opportunities with the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee according to the plan developed by the Council of Commissioners
- Be the external spokesperson for the Council of Commissioners, connecting the Cree School Board and the community concerning governance matters
- Follow through on tasks and correspondence related to communication with the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority, the Chiefs and Councils of the Cree Nations communities of Northern Quebec and the governing level of other political entities, organizations and agencies
- Represent the Council of Commissioners at official functions and meetings
- Fulfill any other tasks mandated by the Council of Commissioners.

## Process for submission of nominations

The Nomination Process of the Chairperson includes:

- At least thirty (30) days before the Election Day, the Returning Officer must prepare and make available the nomination form.
- To be a candidate, a person must meet the qualifications and must have been nominated in writing by ten (10) names of eligible voters on the nomination form.
- Nomination forms must be filed with the Returning Officer at least fifteen (15) days before the Election Day.
- A candidate must expressly notify the Returning Officer at least ten (10) days before the election whether to accept or decline the nomination, otherwise, his or her name will be automatically dropped from the list of candidates.
- The Returning Officer must make every effort to find out whether a nominee wishes to be a candidate, after a person has been nominated in writing.

