

# MOTION GUIDE

A resource for BCSTA member boards,  
standing committees and branches



**BCSTA**

British Columbia  
School Trustees  
Association

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## **Background: BCSTA Motions and Advocacy**

Motions play a central role in the work of the association. Motions, which are discussed and voted on by members of the association at Provincial Council and annual general meetings, enable members to bring forward issues for collective discussion, decision-making and advocacy.

Under BCSTA's bylaws, motions may be used to:

- Create and amend the Association's bylaws.
- Set long-term Association policy and foundational statements.
- Set interim policy for the Association between general meetings.
- Set the advocacy agenda for the association.

Most of the motions that are considered at Provincial Council and the annual general meetings are intended to influence the public education system by collectively advocating for change. Motions are often focused on informing the provincial and federal governments about important education issues and proposing ways in which provincial and federal governments can work with boards to address these issues.

### **Who may submit motions to Provincial Council meetings?**

BCSTA member boards of education, branch associations, the board of directors, the Indigenous Education Committee and the Professional Learning Committee may submit motions for consideration by the membership at BCSTA's Provincial Council.

### **Who may submit motions to annual general meetings?**

BCSTA member boards of education, branch associations, the board of directors, the Indigenous Education Committee, the Professional Learning Committee and Provincial Council may submit motions for consideration by the membership at BCSTA's annual general meetings.

### **What happens to the motion after it is submitted to BCSTA?**

The motions are submitted to the Legislative Committee for review.

### **What happens after a motion is passed by the assembly at Provincial Council or AGM?**

Motions which have been adopted by the assembly are called resolutions. BCSTA takes action in the manner directed by the membership in the resolution. The board may lead the work or may refer the motion to BCSTA committees and/or staff. BCSTA reports to the membership on the progress of resolutions in a variety of ways such as at Provincial Council meetings, through BCSTA publications and through BCSTA's online motion and resolution database, which can be accessed through the [BCSTA Portal](#).

## Types of BCSTA Motions

	Description	Example	Which BCSTA body can enact	Process to enact
Bylaws	The rules which govern the organization.	The president, the vice-president, the directors and the immediate past president shall form the board of directors. The chief executive officer shall be a nonvoting member of the board. (Bylaw 3)	BCSTA member boards at general meetings	Extraordinary motion: 2/3 ballot vote
Foundational statements	The core beliefs and values of the Association. Intended to guide future policy and action motions. Meant to be long-term/long standing.	BCSTA believes that educational programs should address literacy, critical thinking and problem-solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity and innovation, as well as aesthetic, cultural, numerical, scientific and technological literacies. (5.1FS Educational Programs Objectives)	BCSTA member boards at general meetings	Extraordinary motion: 2/3 ballot vote
Policy motions	Motions that support and expand Foundational Statements. Reflect context and guide the advocacy of the association.	BCSTA adopts as policy the following principle: BCSTA supports the use of a variety of instructional strategies for addressing student differences, including...	BCSTA member boards at general meetings Provincial Council (on interim basis)	Substantive (ordinary) motion: simple majority
*Action motions	Define an action that the Association will take, usually on a specific issue.  (*Note: Action motions make up the majority of motions currently passed at AGM and Provincial Council. *)	That BCSTA urge the Ministry of Education to review the transportation funding formula... .	BCSTA member boards at general meetings Provincial Council	Substantive (ordinary) motion: simple majority

# Procedure for Submitting Motions for Consideration at BCSTA Provincial Council and/or Annual General Meetings

The following is an overview of the motion process.

## 1. Preparation of the motion

The motion sponsor(s) (i.e. BCSTA member boards of education, branch associations, the board of directors, the Indigenous Education Committee and the Professional Learning Committee) drafts a motion with the view to submitting it for consideration at a BCSTA Provincial Council or annual general meeting. These motions must be approved by the appropriate body before submitting to the Legislative Committee for review.

### a) Types of BCSTA motions

BCSTA motions are categorized into extraordinary and substantive motions.

An extraordinary motion is submitted to change or add to BCSTA's bylaws or the foundational statements within BCSTA's policy book. Extraordinary motions require a two-thirds majority to pass, and voting is by ballot. Extraordinary motions can only be considered at general meetings.

A substantive motion may be an action motion or a policy motion. An action motion calls on BCSTA to take a particular action. A policy motion is submitted to define the long-term objectives, positions or beliefs of the Association. Substantive motions require a simple majority to pass and voting is by show of hands or electronic ballot.

### b) Motion topics

Motions should pertain to the work of public boards of education. Motions should not address an issue that is unique to an individual school district.

If a motion has cost implications for the association, the rationale for the motion should include details about the cost implications so members can review this information when considering whether to adopt the motion. Some examples of motions that have cost implications for the association are:

A motion to create a new BCSTA ad hoc or standing committee.

A motion requesting that BCSTA create a research report on a public education topic.

Review the database on the [BCSTA Portal](#) to ensure that the topic of your motion was not recently considered at a BCSTA Provincial Council or annual general meeting. Please note that if similar motions are submitted twice within one four-year school trustee term of office, the Legislative Committee may reject the motion.

### **c) Motion checklist**

When preparing a motion, ensure that you have complied with the requirements before finalizing and submitting the motion to BCSTA. It is particularly important to ensure that the motion is consistent with BCSTA's bylaws, policies and foundational statements unless you are seeking to amend the bylaws, policies or foundational statements.

### **d) Assistance with motion drafting**

Boards of education are encouraged to seek input and assistance from school district senior staff regarding the composition, terminology and technical accuracy and implications of proposed motions. Motion sponsors may contact BCSTA [staff](#) with questions about motion preparation. Trustees are encouraged to attend BCSTA and/or branch professional development workshops related to motion-building.

### **e) Provincial Council and emergent motions**

If you are considering submitting an advocacy motion for a Provincial Council meeting, ensure that the rationale: (a) addresses why the motion is "emergent" and (b) explains why this motion is important and should be supported by BCSTA. BCSTA bylaw 7 defines "emergent" as "business that, if delayed until the annual general meeting, will impact negatively on boards' ability to influence public policy, or a public education issue." Please note that a motion may well be important but not meet the criteria for being emergent. Whenever possible motions should be considered at AGM, where all trustees and boards of education have the opportunity to consider, debate and vote on the motions. Provincial Council motions are those that are emergent and debated by only one representative from each member board.

In addition to emergent advocacy motions, Provincial Council considers motions to amend the constitutions and bylaws of BCSTA branch associations.

## **2. Submit the motion to BCSTA by the motion submission deadline**

Please log on to the [BCSTA Portal](#) to submit your motion.

The motion deadlines will be conveyed to you in various BCSTA communications and calendars, including the BCSTA Portal and the newsletters.

### **3. Communications with BCSTA**

Motions submitted for BCSTA's general meetings and Provincial Council meetings are reviewed by the Legislative Committee. As per bylaws 11(a) and 7(l), the committee's role with respect to motions is to:

- examine, correlate, amend, reject, and report upon notices of motion submitted to the Association;
- prepare all notices of motion for review by Provincial Council or the general membership; and,
- prepare late notices of motion for the consideration of the membership at general meetings.

The Legislative Committee endeavours to work cooperatively with motion sponsors to address issues related to the motions. Occasionally, the committee may reject a motion for reasons such as when:

- A motion is submitted by a person or committee that is not authorized to submit motions to BCSTA (e.g. an individual trustee, the Finance and Audit Committee).
- The committee is of the view that a Provincial Council motion is not emergent.
- The committee is of the view that a late motion to AGM does not meet the late motion criteria set out in BCSTA's bylaws.
- A similar motion was submitted to BCSTA during the four-year school trustee term of office.

BCSTA staff may contact the motion sponsor to seek clarification of the motion or to request information if the motion submission form is not completed in full. On the motion submission form, please indicate which school trustee the board, branch or committee has authorized to communicate with BCSTA staff about the motion (including approving possible revisions to the motions).

Boards, branches and committees are encouraged to have clear processes in place for how they will respond to questions and recommendations from the Legislative Committee. Ensure a member of the board, branch or committee is authorized to work with BCSTA staff and the committee directly.

### **4. Distribution of motions to members**

The motions which the Legislative Committee has approved for debate are included in the Provincial Council agenda or printed in the AGM handbook. Late motions or motions which the Legislative Committee has rejected will not be printed in the meeting materials that are distributed to members in advance of Provincial Council and AGM.

## **5. Late motions**

### **a) Late motions to Provincial Council**

A Provincial Council motion submitted after the motion submission deadline is not referred to the Legislative Committee for review.

Instead, during the Provincial Council meeting, the Provincial Council will review the motion and consider whether the motion is emergent and will be debated at the end of the meeting if deemed emergent.

### **b) Late motions to AGM**

A substantive motion submitted to BCSTA after the motion submission deadline (60 days before AGM) “shall be considered by the general meeting only when such a motion deals with matters arising from events occurring or legislation introduced subsequent to the stated sixty (60) day deadline for submission of motions.” The Legislative Committee reviews late motions and decides whether or not the motions meet the late motion criteria. During the AGM business session, the Legislative Committee will report to the assembly about the late motions which it received and reviewed. The committee will recommend that the assembly consider the late motions which the committee recommends for inclusion on the AGM agenda.

## **6. Appeals**

If the Legislative Committee rejects a sponsor’s motion, the sponsor has an opportunity to appeal the decision of the Legislative Committee at Provincial Council or AGM. The appeal takes place at the point in the meeting when delegates consider whether the motions the Legislative Committee has approved should be added to the meeting agenda. At this point in the meeting, a motion sponsor may challenge the Legislative Committee’s decision to reject a motion by seeking to have their motion added to the agenda. A representative from the board, branch or committee can explain why they believe the motion should be added to the agenda. A representative from the Legislative Committee will then explain why the Legislative Committee decided to reject the motion. The assembly will then vote on whether or not to amend the proposed agenda. Please notify BCSTA staff in advance if your board, branch or committee wishes to challenge a Legislative Committee decision so that staff can assist you with the challenge process and make arrangements to enable delegates to view the wording of your motion.

## **Resources**

[BCSTA Bylaws, Policy Book and Operational Guidelines](#)

[BCSTA Portal + Motions Database](#)