

# BCSTA

# Motion Guide

*A Resource for BCSTA member boards, standing committees  
and branches*

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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.

“Advocacy, in addition to governance and oversight, is an important role for publicly-elected school trustees. Advocacy depends upon trustees being attentive to the cause of public education while being creative, agile, resilient and supportive. It calls on boards: to speak out to the value of public education; to call for resources and supports needed for public schools to be successful; and to ensure government (through the electorate) maintains the legislative and policy framework needed to ensure the ongoing success of public schools...By speaking out and advocating for the interests of boards within the publicly funded education system, BCSTA can influence government decisions. BCSTA can further propose solutions to benefit all communities affected by government policies.” (*BCSTA Learning Guide*)

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; and,
- set the advocacy agenda for the Association.

Most of the motions that are considered at Provincial Council and 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 and Annual General 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 and Annual General meetings.

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

The motions are submitted to the Legislative Committee for review. For further information, please refer to page 8.

### **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 and through BCSTA publications. Please refer to the resolution tracking document which is available in the BCSTA Hub (please see the "Resolution Tracking" section of the Home Page).

## Types of BCSTA Motions

|                         | Description  | Example   | Which BCSTA body can enact   | Process to enact  |
|-------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Bylaws                  | The rules which govern the organization.   | <i>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)</i>   | BCSTA member boards at General meetings  | Extraordinary motion:<br>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.   | <i>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)</i> | BCSTA member boards at General Meetings  | Extraordinary motion:<br>2/3 ballot vote                        |
| Policy motions          | Motions that support and expand Foundational Statements. Reflect context and guide the advocacy of the Association.  | <i>BCSTA adopts as policy the following principle: BCSTA supports the use of a variety of instructional strategies for addressing student differences, including...</i>   | BCSTA member boards at General Meetings<br><br>Provincial Council (on interim basis) | Substantive (ordinary) motion:<br>simple majority               |
| <b>*Action motions</b>  | <b>Define an action that the Association will take, usually on a specific issue.</b><br><b>(*Note: Action motions make up the majority of motions currently passed at AGM and Provincial Council. *)</b> | <i>That BCSTA urge the Ministry of Education to review the transportation funding formula...</i>  | <b>BCSTA member boards at General Meetings</b><br><br><b>Provincial Council</b>      | <b>Substantive (ordinary) motion:</b><br><b>simple majority</b> |

## **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. Please note that individual trustees are not eligible to submit motions to Provincial Council or AGM.

#### **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.

## **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 BCSTA [Motion and Resolution Database](#) 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 4-year school trustee term of office, the Legislative Committee may reject the motion.

## **c. Motion Checklist**

When preparing a motion, please refer to the BCSTA Motion Checklist (see below on page 12) to 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 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 also contact BCSTA's [CEO](#) and/or [Legal Counsel](#) 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 addresses why the motion is “emergent.” 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.

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**

Submit a Microsoft Word version of the motion to BCSTA at [motions@bcsta.org](mailto:motions@bcsta.org) using the BCSTA Motion Form. The motion should be submitted on or before the relevant motion submission deadline. The motion deadlines will be conveyed to you in various BCSTA communications and calendars including the BCSTA Hub, the BCSTA Trustee Datebook and the *BCSTA Weekly*.

### **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.

BCSTA staff may contact you 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).

Motion sponsors should be prepared to respond promptly to the comments and questions as there are often tight timelines for response. BCSTA staff will provide sponsors with a deadline to respond to messages regarding motions. If the sponsor does not respond in time, their motion may be edited or rejected by the Legislative Committee. Sponsors should be aware that with AGM motions in particular, staff may need to contact sponsors over Spring Break so please make arrangements to be able to respond despite holidays.

Boards, branches and committees are encouraged to have clear processes in place for how they will respond to questions and recommendations from the Committee. Ensure a member of the board,

branch or committee is authorized to work with BCSTA staff and the Legislative Committee directly.

#### **4. Distribution of Motions to Members**

The motions which the Legislative Committee 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. Motions that the Provincial Council deems emergent will be debated at the end of the Provincial Council meeting.

##### **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.

## **BCSTA Motion Checklist**

*Below please find a checklist of some issues to consider with respect to advocacy motions that are submitted to BCSTA for general and provincial council meetings.*

### **General**

#### ***Motion Sponsor***

Is the motion sponsor eligible to submit motions to BCSTA's AGM/Provincial Council?

- AGM: BCSTA member boards of education, the Professional Learning Committee, the Indigenous Education Committee, branch associations, the Provincial Council and the Board of Directors may submit motions for consideration at a BCSTA AGM [Bylaw 10(a)]
- Provincial Council: BCSTA member boards of education, the Professional Learning Committee, the Indigenous Education Committee, branch associations and the Board of Directors may submit motions for consideration at a BCSTA Provincial Council [Bylaw 7(k)]
- Motions are submitted by boards of education, the BCSTA Board of Directors, Branches and certain standing committees. Please note that individual trustees cannot submit motions to Provincial Council or AGM. Accordingly, in general, motions should not refer to the names of individual trustees.

#### ***BCSTA's Foundational Statements and Policies***

- Does the motion relate to [BCSTA's Foundational Statements and Policies](#)? If so, please refer to relevant Foundational Statements

and Policies. Is the motion consistent with BCSTA's Foundational Statements and Policies? If the motion is inconsistent, it needs to be preceded by a motion to amend the relevant Foundational Statements and/or policies. BCSTA's Foundational Statements and Policies can be found [here](#).

- Is the motion a request to amend BCSTA's Foundational Statements or introduce a new Foundational Statement? If so, this can only be done by way of an extraordinary resolution to a general meeting [BCSTA Bylaw 23].
- Is the motion a request to amend an existing policy or propose a new policy?
  - Amending the policy book can be done by way of a substantive motion to a general meeting [BCSTA Bylaw 23]
  - Interim policies on emergent issues may be made at Provincial Council meetings [BCSTA Bylaw 7(d)]

### ***Forum***

Is BCSTA's AGM/Provincial Council the appropriate forum for the motion?

- Does the motion deal with an issue that can only be dealt with at a general meeting? For example:
  - An extraordinary motion seeking to amend, repeal or add to the bylaws of BCSTA [Bylaw 10(d)]
  - An extraordinary motion seeking to amend, repeal or add a Foundational Statement [Bylaw 23(a)]
  - Policy motion to amend a policy in the BCSTA Policy Book (i.e. not the establishment of an interim policy) [Bylaw 23(a)]
- Does the motion deal with an issue that can only be addressed at a Provincial Council? For example:

- Approval of branch association bylaws [Bylaw 19]
- Authorization to Board of Directors to purchase property [Bylaw 7(e)]

Should this motion be directed to BCPSEA?

### ***Motion recipient***

- When possible, specify the particular government ministry that you would like the motion to be addressed to if the motion is carried (e.g. Ministry of Education rather than “provincial government”).
- Does the recipient have the authority/capacity to do what the motion sponsor is requesting?

### ***Rationale***

- Is the rationale succinct and pertinent to the motion?
- 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.

### ***References***

- Does the rationale include information about the reports, sources of statistics etc. referenced in the motion? Please include links to any materials referenced in the motion.

### ***Clarity***

- Is the motion clear/understandable?

### ***Accuracy***

- Is the information contained in the motion accurate?

## **BCSTA Style**

- Capitalize “Minister”, “Ministry”
- Replace “lobby” and “demand” with “advocate”/ “urge”/ “request” or similar
- The action that is requested in the motion should be performed by BCSTA (e.g. That BCSTA request that the Ministry of Education do x”)

## **Provincial Council: Emergence**

- Bylaw 7: Emergence: Determine if motions presented are of an emergent nature, i.e., "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 emergent.
- Does the motion’s rationale address why the motion is emergent?
- Examples: Is there a deadline to provide input to government regarding this public policy issue? Is the deadline prior to the BCSTA AGM? Is the government considering legislation which will proceed through the Legislature prior to AGM?
- 
- Below please find an example of an emergent issue:
  - A bill relating to public education is being debated in the Legislative Assembly. The Legislature will conclude its consideration of the bill on or before November 30 (the last day of the Legislative session). A board submits a Provincial Council motion for consideration at the October Provincial Council meeting. The motion calls on the Association to express support for or opposition to the bill. If this motion is

delayed until the next AGM, the bill will have already been passed or defeated by the Legislative Assembly and this will negatively impact the ability of the Association to influence government on this issue.

- In January, the federal government announced that next year, it will commence a review of the copyright rules that apply to educational materials that teachers and students use in schools. If a board, branch or committee would like BCSTA to engage in advocacy on this issue, the motion sponsor can submit this motion for consideration at AGM rather than February Provincial Council as it would not negatively impact the Association's ability to advocate on this issue since the review will commence at least 1 year from the date of the announcement.

#### **AGM Late motions:**

- Bylaw 10(c): "Notice of motion submitted too late to meet requirements of section (b) herein 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. A motion meeting these criteria shall be referred to the Legislative Committee for consideration and then, if in order, be submitted to the general meeting; a simple majority is required for approval."
- Did the issue addressed in the motion arise after the motion submission deadline?
- Extraordinary motions cannot be submitted as late motions. Only substantive motions may be submitted late.

- Does the motion's rationale address why the late motion should be added to the AGM agenda?

### **Links**

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

# Sample Motion Form



British Columbia  
School Trustees  
Association

## MOTION TO AGM SUBMISSION FORM

### Title

*Funding for Portable Classrooms*

### Sponsor

Board of Education of SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 42 (MAPLE RIDGE-PITT MEADOWS)

### Authorization

**To be completed by the Board Chair, BCSTA Branch Association President, BCSTA Committee Chair or BCSTA President:**

- \*This motion has been passed in final wording by a majority vote of the Board/Branch/Committee and that vote is recorded in the official proceedings of the Board/Branch/Committee
- \*Janet Star is authorized by the Board/Branch/Committee to discuss and, if necessary, edit the motion. The Authorized Contact Person's [email] jstar@sd42.com and [phone] 604-111-1111.
- \*I confirm that I have read the BCSTA Motion Guide

### BCSTA Bylaws, Policies and Foundational Statements

Please indicate if the proposed motion relates to an existing Foundational Statement or Policy Statement in [BCSTA's Policies](#). You must check one or more boxes.

- Relates to Foundational Statement No. [#]
- Relates to Policy Statement No. [#]
- Propose to make this motion a new policy statement.
- This is an action motion and does not change or contradict any existing Foundational Statement or Policy Statement.

## Motion

Please clarify who the recipient of the motion is/who should do the work associated with the motion. (e.g. Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, etc.)

*That BCSTA...requests that the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance provide capital project funding for portable classrooms required for enrolment growth.*

## Rationale

Provide a ***succinct*** description of why this motion is needed, plus any relevant background information.

The Ministry of Education does not provide funding for portables required for enrolment growth. School districts are required to allocate about \$200,000 of operating funding for each portable that is acquired.

The purchase of a portable classrooms is capital in nature and should be funding through the Ministry of Education's capital planning and funding process.

## Optional References

Provide links to additional background material (e.g., legislation, websites, etc.)

Ministry of Education's Capital Plan Instructions

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/administration/capital/planning>

### REMINDERS:

**\*PLEASE ENSURE YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE ENTIRE FORM**

\*Please send a **Word version** of the completed motion submission form to [motions@bcsta.org](mailto:motions@bcsta.org)

\*Visit the [BCSTA HUB](#) to see the [BCSTA Motion Checklist](#) and other resources regarding preparing motions for BCSTA's AGM and Provincial Council

## Resources

- BCSTA Bylaws  
<http://bcsta.org/about/bylaws-policies-and-operations/>
- BCSTA Policy Book  
<http://bcsta.org/about/bylaws-policies-and-operations/>
- Motion Submission Forms and other motion resources  
[https://bcstahub.org/EmailNotificationLink.po?handle=4611903&name=Advocacy\\_Letters](https://bcstahub.org/EmailNotificationLink.po?handle=4611903&name=Advocacy_Letters)
- [Motion and Resolution Database](https://bcstamotions.org/)  
<https://bcstamotions.org/>