



British Columbia
School Trustees
Association

MOTION GUIDE

*A Resource for BCSTA Member Boards,
Standing Committees and Branches*



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 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 the advocacy agenda for the association.

Most of the motions that are considered at the Annual General Meeting 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 Annual General meetings?

BCSTA member boards of education, branch associations, the board of directors, the Indigenous Education Advisory Council, and the Professional Learning Committee 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. If the motion is submitted 7 days prior to the Annual General Meeting, the board of directors will review the motion.

What happens after a motion is passed by the assembly at 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](#).

	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE	WHICH BCSTA BODY CAN ENACT	PROCESS TO ENACT
BYLAWS	The rules which govern the organization.	<i>The board of directors shall hire the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO shall have the responsibility to carry out the day-to-day operations of the Association. (Bylaw 3)</i>	BCSTA member boards at general meetings	Extraordinary motion: 2/3 weighted 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>The purpose of the British Columbia public school system is to enable all learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will contribute to a healthy, democratic, pluralistic, and sustainable society. (4.1FS PURPOSE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION)</i>	BCSTA member boards at general meetings	Extraordinary motion: 2/3 weighted 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: <i>BCSTA supports the use of a variety of instructional strategies for addressing student differences, including...</i>	BCSTA member boards at general meetings	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 most motions currently passed at AGM)	<i>That BCSTA urge the Ministry of Education to review the transportation funding formula....</i>	BCSTA member boards at general meetings	Substantive (ordinary) motion: simple majority

Procedure for Submitting Motions for Consideration at 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 the Annual General Meeting. These motions must be approved by the appropriate body before submitting them to the Legislative Committee for review.

a) Types of BCSTA motions

BCSTA motions are categorized as 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 weighted 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. The motions will form direction for BCSTA governance and advocacy which impacts multiple school districts and communities throughout the province.

If a motion has cost implications for the association, the rationale for the motion should include details about the costs 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 an annual general meeting. Please note that if similar motions are submitted once within one four-year school trustee term of office, the Legislative Committee may reject the motion.

c) Motion preparation

When preparing a motion for debate at the Annual General Meeting, log on to the portal and click on the [submit motion icon](#). Fill in all the required fields in the database and ensure you have complied with the requirements before finalizing and submitting the motion to BCSTA. You can create a draft and save your entry and it will remain in the database until you press the submit to BCSTA button. 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.

The title of the motions should provide a very brief description of the subject of the motion. Motions should be clear on the action requested and succinct in wording. The rationale can provide more details as to why the motion (action) is needed and any relevant background information or references (links to articles, legislation etc).

Trustees are encouraged to attend BCSTA and/or branch professional development workshops related to motion-building.

e) Emergent motions

If you are considering submitting an advocacy motion after the deadline (*Bylaw 10c*), 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 defines emergent as business that, if delayed, 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 does not meet the criteria for being emergent. An example of why a motion may be submitted after the deadline is an unexpected change to legislation.

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 are reviewed by the Legislative Committee. As per *bylaws 11(i)* the committee's role with respect to motions is to:

- Oversee, prepare, and publish motions for the Annual General Meeting consistent with Bylaws and the Association's Operational Guidelines; and,
- The Legislative Committee may, in its absolute discretion and subject to the decisions of the membership at the Annual General Meeting, edit, reject, correlate, order, consolidate and report upon late notices of motions submitted in accordance with *Bylaw 10*.

The Legislative Committee endeavours to work cooperatively with motion sponsors to address issues related to the motions. Occasionally, the committee may reject or request withdrawal of 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 the 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.
- The motion is unique to an individual school district and does not impact other districts.

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 in the portal, 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 and that they are readily available to provide a timely response.

4. DISTRIBUTION OF MOTIONS TO MEMBERS

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

5. LATE MOTIONS

a) Late motions to AGM

A substantive motion submitted to BCSTA after the motion submission deadline set out in bylaw 10(c) will only be considered by the general meeting when such a motion deals with emergent matters arising after the stated sixty (60) day deadline.

The Legislative Committee reviews late motions and decides whether 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.

As extraordinary motions change bylaws and foundational statements, there is no late process for these types of motions.

Any late motion not submitted to the Legislative Committee seven (7) days in advance of the General Meeting will be referred to the board of directors, which, in its absolute discretion, may determine whether the motion will be considered at the General Meeting.

6. APPEALS AT AGM

If the Legislative Committee or board of directors rejects a sponsor's motion, the sponsor has an opportunity to appeal against the decision of the Legislative Committee or board of directors at AGM. The procedure to be followed is set out in *Bylaw 10(g)*.

Appeals of any notices of motion submitted within the time frames set out in *Bylaw 10(b)*, require that the sponsor advise the CEO of its challenge within 7 days of the Legislative Committee's decision, so that the original motion and the Legislative Committee's rationale can be published in advance of the General Meeting.

Should a motion sponsor wish to appeal against a decision ruling a late motion out of order under *Bylaw 10(g)*, written notice of intention to appeal against the Legislative Committee or board of directors decision shall be forwarded to the Chief Executive Officer within 24 hours of the decision.

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 or board of directors will then explain why the motion has been rejected. The assembly will then vote on whether to amend the proposed agenda.

BCSTA staff can assist you with the challenge process and to ensure a plan to enable delegates to view the wording of your motion.

RESOURCES

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



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