

# Motions Handout

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British Columbia School Trustees Association

# Getting Into Motion(s)

for BCSTA's AGM or Provincial Council

## **Checklist**

**Review your motion and check it against the following guidelines.**

Item	(✓)
The motion is in writing.	
The motion has a suitable title.	
The motion indicates who is submitting it.	
The motion begins with, "I move that..." or "Be it resolved that ..."	
The motion states its intent clearly in simple language.	
The motion is precise.	
The motion is complete.	
The motion is stated in the positive.	
The motion indicates who is being asked to take a position or action.	
The motion indicates how the action should be taken.	
The motion includes deadlines if appropriate.	
The motion includes an explanation or rationale.	
The mover of the motion agrees with it.	

# Preparing a Motion

for BCSTA's AGM or Provincial Council

## *Frequently Asked Questions*

### **What is a motion?**

A motion is a formal proposal for action – presented by a member of the association for the consideration of the assembly.

### **How does a motion come before the assembly?**

BCSTA considers motions three times a year, at the Annual General Meeting, usually in April, and at Provincial Council meetings, usually in October and February.

The following can submit motions to BCSTA's AGM and Provincial Council meetings:

- Member boards of education
- BCSTA branches
- Education Committee
- Aboriginal Education Committee
- Provincial council
- Board of Directors

### **What are the criteria for submitting a motion?**

- A motion must be concerned with, or have a direct effect, on the education system.
- It must be of a provincial or national significance.

AGM motions are reviewed the BCSTA legislative committee, which has the power to amend and reject motions.

## What are the types of motions?

1. An **extraordinary motion** is submitted to change or add to BCSTA's Bylaws.

Example:

BE IT RESOLVED

That Section 19 of the Bylaws be amended by adding: In recognition of its province-wide status, trustees (directors) of the Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique (CSF) have the ability to attend meetings of all branch associations on a non-voting basis, and the CSF has the ability to be a voting member of one branch, to be determined by agreement between the CSF and the branch.

2. A **substantive motion** can be either an action or a policy motion.

An *action* motion is submitted to call on BCSTA to take some action, i.e. advocacy

Example:

BE IT RESOLVED

That BCSTA urge the Minister of Education to introduce legislation requiring that membership of the BC College of Teachers Council include a school trustee, elected by the general assembly at the BCSTA annual general meeting.

A *policy* motion is submitted to define long-term objectives or positions/ beliefs of the Association.

## How is an effective motion created?

An effective motion answers the questions who, what, how and when:

- **Who is being asked to take an action position?** There is often more than one group or individual involved in an issue. It is valuable to be as specific as possible in describing who is being asked by whom to take what action/position.
- **What action/position is recommended?** It is important to be as specific as possible in describing what action is being requested.
- **How is the action being taken?** Some resolutions call for a specific advocacy approach, such as writing a letter, forming an ad hoc committee, or requesting a meeting. It is also possible to leave the choice of means to another group or individual within the organization, such as a standing committee or the board of directors.
- **What are the time lines?** If a matter is time sensitive, it can be valuable to include relevant dates, deadlines and time frames in the resolution.

In preparing your motion, follow these steps:

1. Identify the issue.
  - What do you want to change?
  - What type of motion will this be?
2. Describe the reason the change is needed.
  - What is the background?
  - Why is this important?
3. List the actions you want BCSTA to take.
  - Be specific
  - Be realistic
4. Review and revise the motion as needed.
  - Is it clear?
  - Is it concise?
5. Submit to BCSTA within the deadlines.
  - Extraordinary motions - 70 days before AGM
  - Substantive motions - 60 days before AGM
  - Motions may be accepted after the deadlines if they concern events taking place after the deadlines.
6. Identify who will move, second and speak to the motion at AGM.

### **What happens once a motion is carried?**

BCSTA refers to carried motions as resolutions. Resolutions are taken forward by the association in the manner is directed in the text. In addition, the BCSTA Board of Directors advises staff on what action to take to advance the intent of the membership as an issue evolves.

BCSTA reports to the membership on the progress of resolutions in a variety of ways, such as:

- through BCSTA publications, including eAlert and eDigest, as well as in tracking reports included and presented in Provincial Council and AGM packages.

### **2009 Deadlines**

The 2009 deadlines are: February 11 for *extraordinary* motions: February 20 for *substantive* motions.

# Elements of a Motion

for BCSTA's AGM or Provincial Council

## **1. Resolution** – a statement identifying a specific action or position to be adopted by BCSTA.

An effective resolution answers the questions who, what, how and when:

- **Who is being asked to take an action/position?**

There is often more than one group or individual involved in an issue. It is valuable to be as specific as possible in describing who is being asked by whom to take what action/position.

- **What action/position is recommended?**

It is important to be as specific as possible in describing what action is being requested.

- **How is the action to be taken?**

Some resolutions call for a specific advocacy approach, such as writing a letter, forming an ad hoc committee, or requesting a meeting. It is also possible to leave the choice of means to another group or individual within the organization, such as a standing committee or the board of directors.

- **When?**

If a matter is time sensitive, it can be valuable to include relevant dates, deadlines and time frames in the resolution.

## **2. Rationale** – provides background information and reasons for supporting the motion.

An effective rationale answers the questions what and why:

- What is the issue?
- Why is it an issue?
- What benefit may be achieved by taking the action/position outlined in the resolution?

**BCSTA**

British Columbia  
School Trustees  
Association

# Motion TEMPLATE

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**Title:**

**Submitted by:**

**Submitted to:**

**Resolution:**

**Rationale:**

# Motion TEMPLATE

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**Title:** *A brief description of the motion subject*

**Submitted by:** *The name of the body submitting the motion.*

**Submitted to:** *The name of the body to whom the motion is submitted.*

**Resolution:** *A statement identifying a specific action or position to be taken by the association.*

**Rationale:** *Background information and reasons for supporting the motion.*

# Motion TEMPLATE

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**Title:**

*A brief description  
of the motion subject.*

"Attracting and Retaining Trades Teachers"

**Submitted by:**

*The name of the body  
submitting the motion.*

"Submitted by the Northern Interior Branch"

**Note:** BCSTA accepts motions to its AGM and Provincial Council Meetings from member school boards, BCSTA branches and committees and the BCSTA Board of Directors.

**Resolution:**

*A statement identifying  
a specific action  
or position to be taken by  
the association.*

**BE IT RESOLVED**

"That BCSTA request the Minister of Education and the British Columbia College of Teachers to introduce a specially endorsed, permanent trades and technical teaching certificate (through a flexible 10-month professional preparation program) that will allow journeyman and/or highly skilled trades and technical persons to teach in their area of expertise without the need to participate in a university program for four to five years."

**Rationale:**

*Background information and  
reasons for supporting the  
motion.*

"School districts are striving to provide relevant trades and technical career programs to students.

"At present, it is difficult to attract and retain highly skilled journeyman trades people to teach in these programs because they are required to have a permanent teaching certificate. Without this certificate, trades people must apply for an interim teaching certificate that must be reapplied for and approved on a yearly basis.

"The result of this situation is program instability for students and districts, and career instability for trades teachers.

"Returning to university for a four- to five-year teacher preparation program is not a realistic option for highly certified trades people."

# AGM 2008:

## Motions and Status

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	<b>Resolution/Motion</b>	<b>Status</b>
E1	BCSTA Life Members	<i>Carried</i>
E2	Branch Realignment	<i>Carried</i>
3	Role Clarification Regarding Adult Learners	<i>Carried as Amended</i>
4	Math 11 Requirement	<i>Carried</i>
5	Aboriginal Teacher Recruitment	<i>Carried</i>
6	DRIVE 08 Program	<i>Defeated</i>
7	Inter-Ministerial Framework for Addressing Board of Education Mandates	<i>Carried as amended</i>
8	Community Schools and Board of Education Mandates	<i>Defeated</i>
9	BCSTA Branch Structure Review	<i>Withdrawn</i>
10	Government and Trustee Protocols of Recognition	<i>Defeated</i>
11	Improvement of Trustee/Ministry Co-Governance and Consultation	<i>Defeated</i>
12	Feasibility Study for a BCSTA Research Department	<i>Carried</i>
13	School Planning Councils (SPC)	<i>Carried as Amended</i>
14	Trustee Qualification	<i>Defeated</i>
15	Partnership Between Ministries	<i>Withdrawn</i>
16	District Staff Development Programs	<i>Carried</i>
17	Inter-Provincial Recognition of Teacher Certification	<i>Carried as Amended</i>
18	Letters of Permission	<i>Carried</i>
19	Recruitment and Retention	<i>Carried</i>
20	Remote Districts Recruitment Incentive	<i>Carried as Amended</i>
21	Guest Workers	<i>Refer to Education Committee</i>
22	Secondment of District Staff	<i>Withdrawn</i>
23	School Year Continuity in the Assignment of Special Needs Teachers	<i>Carried</i>
24	Support Communities in Economic Crisis	<i>Carried as Amended</i>
25	Reporting Teacher Conduct/Competence to the BCCT	<i>Withdrawn</i>
26	Clinical Counselling in Rural Areas	<i>Carried as Amended</i>

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27	Equity of Funding for All Students Attending Alternate Programs in Grades 10-12	<i>Carried</i>
28	Equity of Funding for All Students Taking Courses Leading to Graduation	<i>Carried</i>
29	Funding for Mental Health Services	<i>Carried</i>
30	Funding for School Sport Teams' Travel	<i>Carried as Amended</i>
31	Special Education Services for High-Incidence and Gifted Students	<i>Carried as Amended</i>
32	GAAP Funding	<i>Carried</i>
33	Stable, Predictable Funding	<i>Withdrawn</i>
34	15-Passenger Vans	<i>Withdrawn</i>
35	Carbon Neutral	<i>Carried</i>
36	Annual Facilities Grant	<i>Carried</i>
37	Capacity Utilization	<i>Carried</i>
38	Priority Listing	<i>Carried</i>
39	Property Values	<i>Carried</i>
40	Funding for Student Transportation	<i>Carried</i>
41	Transportation Study	<i>Carried</i>
42	Review of Daycare Licensing Requirement	<i>Defeated</i>
43	Speed Zones	<i>Carried as Amended</i>
L44	Provincial Government Carbon Tax	<i>Carried</i>

# Parliamentary Procedure

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## 1. What is Parliamentary Procedure?

The primary purpose of parliamentary procedure is to ensure due deliberation and the orderly consideration of every question before a meeting, thus allowing an assembly to express its collectible will or opinion.

Another way of characterizing parliamentary procedure is that it establishes rules for people working together in meetings. Much of parliamentary procedure is common sense. Anyone who becomes familiar with the basics should have no trouble understanding and working comfortably in this context.

Seven principles of parliamentary procedure are important:

- The purpose is to make it easier for groups to work together effectively and to accomplish their purposes. Rules of procedure should assist a meeting, not inhibit it.
- A meeting can deal with only one matter at a time.
- All members have equal rights, privileges and obligations. One of the main responsibilities of the chair and deputy chair is to use his/her authority to ensure that all delegates attending a meeting are treated equally, not to permit a few people to dominate the discussion.
- Parliamentary rules enable a meeting to determine the will of the majority of those attending a meeting. In other words, each delegate agrees to be governed by the vote of the majority on issues, except for extraordinary motions.

- The rights of the minority must be protected at all times. Although the ultimate decision rests with a majority, all members have basic rights to be heard and to oppose.
- Each matter presented for discussion should receive every opportunity to be considered fully.
- Fairness and good faith are the hallmarks of effective meetings. This means that every delegate must receive an opportunity to understand the meaning of any question presented to a meeting, and to know what effect a decision will have.

## 2. A Guide for the Chair or Appointee at BCSTA Annual General Meetings

The Association's Bylaws, Articles 9, 10 and 11, and The Standing Rules of Order provide the chair with guidance on procedure. In addition, the chair can consult with the Parliamentarian on any issue of parliamentary procedure at any time.

The materials that follow are a verbatim guide for the Chair and Deputy Chair presiding at Annual General Meeting sessions.

The chair must maintain absolute impartiality and there is only one presiding officer.

The chair performs the functions of:

- a judge between individual members; and
- an agent of the whole assembly.

In neither capacity should the chair dominate the proceedings; s/he is excluded from the field of parliamentary activity.

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Here are a few important points that the Parliamentarian also discusses with the deputy chairs in advance:

- Debate on a motion is not interrupted to announce the results of a ballot vote, or to call one. Extraneous interruptions are avoided until the motion under consideration is resolved.
- At the beginning of the assignment, the deputy chair introduces him/herself and the reader, and then announces the motion to be considered.
- At the end of the shift, the deputy chair thanks the delegates for their attention and announces that a new deputy chair will be taking over.
- As needed, the deputy chair reminds delegates about the need for quiet.
- The chair may not make changes to program timing unless initiated or confirmed by staff.

### **3. Format for Presenting Non-Ballot Motions**

Motions are brought to the floor with the following format:

**Chair:** “We will now proceed with the next motion.”

**Reader:** Reads notice of motion.

**Chair:** “Do I have a mover and seconder to the motion?” .....Pause for mover and seconder.....  
“Please give your name and school district” (if needed).

“The motion has been duly moved and seconded. Is there any debate?” .....Long pause..... If opposition is indicated, proceed to debate.

Mover is invited to open and close debate. If there is no opposition, ask for the question.

“We are now ready for the question. The motion has been stated. Please indicate by raising your coloured card.”

“All those in favour?” “Opposed?”

Announce the result as the chair sees it, or if there

is division, call on secretary-treasurer to assist in counting.

“The motion is ... (Carried / Defeated).”

Business/legislative sessions are recorded. As necessary, remind delegates that they must give their name and school district every time they speak.

# BCSTA AGM: How It Works

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## I. The Main Purposes of BCSTA's AGM

The main purposes of the AGM are to:

1. Discuss issues brought before the AGM by member boards, Branches, the BCSTA Education Committee, the Aboriginal Education Committee, the Provincial Council and the Board of Directors. According to the Bylaws, the AGM:

- a. creates and amends Bylaws
- b. sets long-term Association policy
- c. sets a short-term advocacy agenda for the coming year.

2. Elect officers for the Association who will serve until the next AGM. The officers are the president, vice-president, and four directors (or five directors in years when the incumbent president is re-elected. The immediate past president serves as an officer for one year only).

Between AGMs, the Provincial Council and the Board of Directors are charged with ensuring that the wishes of the membership expressed at the AGM are carried out. The Provincial Council may adopt resolutions on emergent advocacy issues.

## II. Procedures for BCSTA's AGM

The BCSTA Bylaws cover points of order and procedures. Robert's Rules of Order and the Standing Rules of Order adopted by the meeting cover points of order and procedures not covered in the Bylaws.

**Delegates:** Delegates to the BCSTA AGM are school trustees of member school boards and BCSTA life members.

**Quorum:** Fifty delegates constitute a quorum under Bylaw 9 (e).

**Credentials Committee:** The President appoints a Credentials Committee to validate duly accredited delegates and to act in the event of a dispute over voting powers. This committee reports to the delegates from time to time during the AGM on the number of duly accredited delegates present and the number of votes they carry.

**Chairman:** The president of BCSTA, or persons designated by the president, chairs all sessions of the AGM.

**Seating:** All delegates and special guests are asked to wear their name badges. Delegates sit with their respective boards (in branch groupings). Gallery seating is provided for guests.

**Elections:** According to the Bylaws (16 (b) and (c)), nominations for office are to be submitted at least 30 days prior to the AGM. If nominations haven't been received for all offices, a nominating committee is appointed. Additional nominations are called for at the conclusion of the opening ceremonies.

A Board of Directors candidates' forum will be held as part of the annual general meeting. Each candidate for office will also have an opportunity

to speak briefly (three minutes) to the delegates on election day. Elections are by ballot and will be held immediately after the speeches.

School board members are provided with special ballot sheets for the elections. The chair will announce the ballot number before marking takes place. Under current bylaws, a candidate must receive a clear majority of votes to be elected. In the election of directors, balloting occurs until four (or five in years where there is no immediate past president) candidates are elected.

Defeated candidates may be nominated for other positions immediately before the election for that office.

According to Bylaw 9, “Delegates shall be school trustees duly accredited by the school boards of which they are members. For purposes of ballot voting, school boards having an annual enrollment of pupils (actual pupils, not full-time equivalents) at the most recent date established under the School Act for the reporting of student populations, shall have the following number of votes irrespective of the number of delegates:

1 to 249 pupils: one vote
250 to 999 pupils: two votes
1,000 to 1,999 pupils: three votes
2,000 to 5,999 pupils: four votes
6,000 to 11,999 pupils: six votes
12,000 to 17,999 pupils: eight votes
18,000 to 23,999 pupils: 10 votes
24,000 to 29,999 pupils: 12 votes
30,000 to 35,999 pupils: 14 votes
36,000 to 47,999 pupils: 15 votes
48,000 to 59,999 pupils: 16 votes

60,000 and over: 17 votes
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### III. Standing Rules of Order

**Delegates:** Accredited delegates are school trustees of member boards and life members. Only accredited delegates may vote on or speak to a motion. Guests may be allowed to speak at the discretion of the chair. Only those who are registered and are wearing a name badge may sit with delegates. Others may sit in the public gallery.

**Order of Business:** The order of business is as written in the printed program, subject to alteration by a majority of the assembly, and subject to alterations deemed necessary by time considerations, at the discretion of the chair.

**Speakers:** A delegate wishing to speak must use a microphone, be recognized by the chair, and each time state his/her name and school district. A delegate may speak only once on any motion. The mover of the motion is entitled to speak first and to close debate after others have done so. Each speech is limited to three minutes, except by permission of the chair.

**Motions:** Extraordinary motions require a two-thirds majority to pass, and voting is by ballot. Substantive motions are called ordinary motions and require a simple majority to pass. When any motion is under consideration, no other motion shall be received unless to adjourn, to move the previous question, to postpone to a certain time, to refer, or to amend.

**Amendments to Motions:** An amendment may be in any of the following forms:

- (a) **to add or insert** certain words,
- (b) **to strike out** certain words,
- (c) **to strike out** certain words and insert others,
- (d) **to substitute** another motion or paragraph,
- (e) **to divide** the question into two or more questions.

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*An amendment may be inconsistent with one already adopted or may conflict with the spirit of the original motion, but must have a direct bearing on the subject of that motion. An amendment must be submitted in writing to the chair, in keeping with Robert's Rules of Order.*

**Late Motion:** A late motion shall be considered by the meeting only when it deals with matters arising from events occurring, or legislation introduced subsequent to the 60-day deadline for submissions, as stated in Bylaw 11(c). A member board wishing to appeal a Legislative Committee decision ruling a late motion out of order must file a written appeal with the executive director, who will then place the appeal before the meeting. The meeting will decide by simple majority vote whether or not to sustain the Legislative Committee.

**Voting:** A ballot vote is required by the bylaws for election of officers and for extraordinary motions. All other voting is by show of voting cards, unless a ballot vote is requested by any 20 delegates before the question is called on a substantive motion. When a count of voting cards is required to determine whether more delegates support or are opposed to a motion, the chair may request delegates to raise their cards for a count by the scrutineers.

**Meeting Procedure:** Annual meeting procedures outlined in these Standing Rules may be suspended by a two-thirds majority of the meeting. Robert's Rules of Order will govern points of order or procedure not provided for in the bylaws or the Standing Rules adopted by the meeting.