

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Audit & Risk Committee – External Community Member

Information Package

District Overview

Established in 1906, the Surrey School District serves the communities of Surrey, White Rock, and the rural area of Barnston Island. It is governed by a publicly elected board of seven trustees.

As the largest school district in British Columbia, Surrey Schools continues to grow, with student enrolment exceeding 81,000 as of September 2024. The district operates 105 elementary schools, 21 secondary schools, three student learning centres, three adult education centres, a distributed (online) learning program, and various satellite and inter-agency programs designed to meet diverse student needs.

Surrey Schools reflects a rich cultural diversity. More than half of its students come from households where a language other than English is spoken. The district represents over 198 languages, with Punjabi, Tagalog (Filipino), Mandarin, Hindi, and Arabic being the most common. Additionally, between 3,000 and 3,200 students identify as Indigenous, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

For the 2024-25 school year, Surrey Schools operates with a consolidated budget exceeding \$1.1 billion, including an operating budget of over \$958 million, a capital budget of more than \$56 million, and a special purpose budget nearing \$128 million. The district allocates a higher proportion of its operating budget to instruction while keeping administrative costs below the provincial average. It also invests more than the provincial average in classroom teachers, reinforcing its commitment to high-quality education.

External Community Member Overview

Surrey Schools has established an Audit & Risk Committee to support the Board of Education in overseeing financial reporting, internal and external audits, internal control systems, and risk assessment and mitigation strategies. Strong governance ensures informed decision-making, promoting the effective and efficient use of taxpayer dollars while delivering high-quality educational services to students.

Through this Expression of Interest (EOI), the Board is seeking a qualified candidate with relevant skills and experience to serve as an external community member on the Audit & Risk Committee.

Audit & Risk Committee Objectives

The objective and focus of the Audit & Risk Committee is to provide independent assurance, oversight and assistance to the Board on risk management, control, governance, and external accountability responsibilities on an advisory capacity.

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The primary duties of the Committee include, but are not limited to the following:

- Overseeing financial reporting
- Assessing the processes related to identification of the district's risks and effectiveness of its control environment
- Evaluating the district's internal control systems for financial reporting
- Evaluating the internal, external and any special audit processes
- Providing an avenue of communication amongst the external auditor, management, internal audit staff and the Finance Committee
- Making recommendations to the Finance Committee as to potential policy or procedural changes arising out of audit recommendations

Audit & Risk Committee Structure and Composition

The Audit & Risk Committee is a standing committee of the Board of Education and reports to the Board through the Finance Committee.

The Audit & Risk Committee is comprised of three Trustees appointed by the Board Chair, one of whom is the Finance Committee Chairperson and the independent external community member. Other staff (non-voting) participate in Committee meetings as required. Representatives from the Board's external audit firm may also be in attendance.

Appointment of External Community Members

The Finance Committee recommends the appointment of the external community member to the Board of Education. The term of office for the external community member is reviewed annually with the intent to limit the term to a maximum of five years. All appointments are to be made based upon a demonstrated ability to meet the selection criteria.

Selection Criteria

The external community member will have a broad range of skills, experience and personal qualities relevant to the operations Surrey Schools. The external community member of the Committee will have a strong financial management and/or audit background, with an understanding of accounting and auditing standards in a public-sector environment. Legal, governance, risk management, information management systems (IMS) and business management skills and experience are desirable.

The following criteria will be considered in relation to skills and experience when assessing applications:

- Relevant professional qualifications
- Relevant professional knowledge and expertise
- Understanding of / experience in public sector
- Understanding of the role of corporate governance in organizations
- Current / prior experience on similar committees in the public sector



Roles and Responsibilities

The role and responsibilities of the external community member will be in accordance with the Committee Terms of Reference.

In fulfilling their role per the Terms of Reference, members of the Committee are expected to:

- Attend and actively participate in meetings of the Audit & Risk Committee
- Contribute the time needed to study and understand reports and documents provided
- Apply analytical skills, objectivity and good judgment
- Express opinions frankly, ask questions that get to root of issues, and pursue independent lines of enquiry
- Work collaboratively with other members of the Committee in achieving the Committee's objectives
- Understand the relevant legislative and regulatory requirements appropriate to the District
- Provide well considered advice and recommendations to the Board based on objective analysis of facts that are relevant to the agenda items being considered
- Action and follow up tasks established by the Committee

Committee Meetings

The Committee shall meet at least three (3) times per year. Preparation will involve review and critical analysis of the agenda pack.

The need for any additional meetings will be directed by the Chair, although the other Committee members may make requests to the Chair for additional meetings.

Constraints

All Committee members are required to comply with the following:

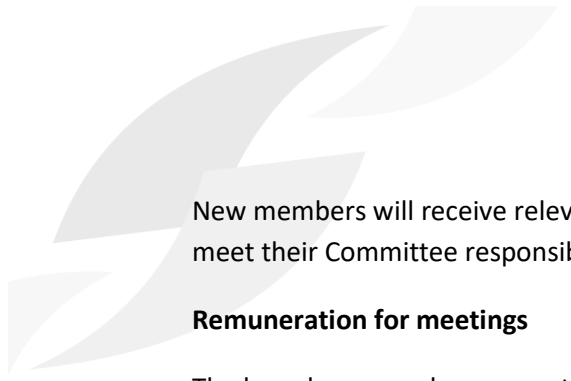
- Maintain confidentiality in relation to all discussions and information obtained during or as a result of Committee meetings
- Declare a direct conflict of interest with any issue on the agenda at the commencement of the meeting or should any potential conflicts occur
- All conflicts of interest are to be declared and recorded in the minutes and, if necessary, the parties involved will be asked to leave the room while the matter is discussed.

Code of Conduct

All Committee members shall always abide by the District's Code of Conduct and relevant policies.

Induction and Training

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New members will receive relevant information and briefings on their appointment to assist them to meet their Committee responsibilities.

Remuneration for meetings

The board-approved remuneration for external community members of the Audit & Risk Committee is currently under review and includes time spent preparing for the meeting. Travel costs will be reimbursed at the District's standard kilometrage rate.

Expression of Interest Submission

The Board invites interested persons to submit an Expression of Interest by submitting a written expression of interest and a detailed resume by the deadline date. Submissions should address the selection criteria stated above.

Inquiries

All inquiries or requests for information should be directed to the office of the Secretary Treasurer by email: _____ or by telephone 604-595-6300.

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