



**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE – ME-2026-06**

**SCHOOLBOARD TRUSTEE ELECTION PROCEDURE**

**2026 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS**

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cassandra Child".

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**Cassandra Child, AOMC, Dipl.M.A.  
Clerk/Returning Officer**

**Town of Cochrane**

**March 5, 2026**

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## **1. AUTHORITY AND APPLICATION**

- a) This Procedure is established under the authority of sections 11 and 12 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, S.O. 1996, c. 32, as amended (the “Act”).
- b) This Procedure governs the administration of School Board Trustee elections conducted in conjunction with the 2026 Municipal Election.
- c) This Procedure shall be read in conjunction with all other ME-2026 procedures and the Clerk Legal Reliance Statement forming part of this Manual.
- d) In the event of any conflict, the Act shall prevail.

## **2. ROLE OF THE CLERK**

- a) The Clerk shall administer School Board Trustee elections in accordance with:
  - i. The Act;
  - ii. Applicable regulations;
  - iii. Information provided by school boards and Elections Ontario; and
  - iv. Established municipal procedures.
- b) The Clerk’s role in the administration of trustee elections is administrative in nature and does not extend to the determination or correction of trustee zone structures, elector data, or external governance frameworks.

## **3. TRUSTEE ZONES AND LEAD MUNICIPALITY**

- a) Trustee elections shall be conducted based on trustee zones, representation structures, and lead municipality designations established by the applicable school boards and provincial authorities.
- b) A consolidated reference table of trustee zones, representation, and lead municipality designations is provided in Appendix A – Trustee Zone and Lead Municipality Reference Table.
- c) Appendix A is provided for administrative guidance only and does not supersede legislated or board-approved structures.

## **4. ADMINISTRATIVE CONTEXT**

- a) The Clerk acknowledges that trustee election administration is dependent on external authorities, including school boards and Elections Ontario.
- b) Based on available information, trustee zone structures, geographic compositions, lead municipality designations, and elector data may be incomplete, overlapping, or not capable of definitive interpretation, and may require reliance on external clarification.
- c) The Clerk shall administer the election in a manner that is reasonable, transparent, and defensible, based on the best available information at the time of decision-making.

## **5. TRUSTEE ZONE AMBIGUITY AND OVERLAPPING JURISDICTION**

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- a) Where trustee zone descriptions, locality references, geographic compositions, or lead municipality designations are unclear, inconsistent, overlapping, or not capable of definitive interpretation, the Clerk shall not be required to independently resolve such ambiguity.
- b) In such circumstances, the Clerk shall:
  - i. Accept nomination papers that are complete and compliant on their face;
  - ii. Rely on candidate declarations of qualification and declared trustee zone;
  - iii. Document identified inconsistencies or uncertainties; and
  - iv. Seek clarification from the applicable school board and/or Elections Ontario where required.
- c) The Clerk shall not be responsible for:
  - i. Reconciling conflicting trustee zone descriptions;
  - ii. Interpreting or redefining geographic boundaries;
  - iii. Determining final trustee zone composition; or
  - iv. Assigning jurisdiction where multiple interpretations exist.

## **6. NOMINATION PROCESS**

- a) Nominations shall be filed in accordance with ME-2026-01 (Nomination & Certification Procedure) and the Act.
- b) Where trustee zone assignment or lead municipality designation is uncertain, the Clerk shall accept nomination papers that are complete and compliant on their face.
- c) The Clerk shall not refuse or invalidate a nomination solely on the basis of uncertainty respecting trustee zone assignment or jurisdiction.
- d) The Clerk may rely on the candidate's declaration of qualification and declared trustee zone and is not required to independently verify such assignment at the time of filing.
- e) Nomination Day shall be Friday, August 21, 2026 at 2:00 p.m., in accordance with the Act.

## **7. LEAD MUNICIPALITY COORDINATION**

- a) Where the Town of Cochrane is identified as the lead municipality, the Clerk shall:
  - i. Receive and process nominations;
  - ii. Certify nominations;
  - iii. Administer voting; and
  - iv. Conduct tabulation and declaration of results.
- b) Where another municipality is identified as the lead municipality, the Clerk shall coordinate with the appropriate Clerk.
- c) Where nominations are received for a trustee office administered by another municipality, the Clerk may accept the filing and shall promptly transmit the nomination to the appropriate Clerk.
- d) Transmission may occur electronically, with original documents forwarded as soon as practicable.

## **8. VOTERS' LIST AND SCHOOL SUPPORT**

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- a) The Voters' List shall be prepared and administered in accordance with ME-2026-08 (Voters' List Administration Procedure).
- b) Elector data and school support designation shall be based on information provided by Elections Ontario and other authorized sources.
- c) The Clerk shall rely on such information as the authoritative source of elector data and shall not be responsible for independently verifying elector assignment to trustee zones where such assignment depends on external data or unresolved structural information.
- d) For greater certainty, the Clerk shall not be responsible for confirming or validating elector assignment to trustee zones where such assignment is dependent on external data or unresolved structural information.
- e) Where school support designation is unclear or disputed, the Clerk may require the elector to complete the appropriate declaration or oath.

**9. VOTING**

- a) Voting shall be conducted in accordance with ME-2026-02 (Alternative Voting Method Procedure).
- b) Ballots shall be structured based on trustee zones and school board representation as determined by available information.
- c) Electors shall be permitted to vote only for the trustee office corresponding to their school support designation.

**10. RECOUNTS**

- a) Recounts shall be conducted in accordance with:
  - i. The Act;
  - ii. ME-2026-04 (Recount Procedure); and
  - iii. EL-004 (Recount Policy), where applicable.
- b) A recount shall be conducted based on the ballots cast and the data available at the close of voting.
- c) The recount process shall not involve the reassignment or reclassification of electors between trustee zones unless directed by a court or other competent authority.

**11. RELIANCE AND SUBSEQUENT CLARIFICATION**

- a) The Clerk shall proceed in good faith reliance on information provided by school boards, Elections Ontario, and candidate declarations.
- b) The Clerk is not required to independently verify or reconcile structural inconsistencies in trustee zone boundaries, elector data, or school support designations that originate external to the municipality.
- c) Where such information is subsequently amended, clarified, or corrected, the Clerk shall not be responsible for actions taken in reliance on the information available at the time of:
  - i. Nomination;
  - ii. Voting; or

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iii. Tabulation.

c) All such actions shall be deemed valid where undertaken in good faith and in accordance with this Procedure.

**12. INTER-MUNICIPAL AND AGENCY COORDINATION**

a) The Clerk shall maintain coordination with:

- i. Clerks of affected municipalities, including Iroquois Falls and Black River-Matheson;
- ii. Applicable school boards; and
- iii. Elections Ontario.

b) Coordination shall include:

- i. Nomination handling;
- ii. Elector data alignment;
- iii. Voting administration; and
- iv. Recount processes.

**13. RECORDS AND DOCUMENTATION**

a) All records relating to School Board Trustee elections shall be retained in accordance with ME-2026-13 (Election Records & Retention Procedure).

b) The Clerk shall maintain complete documentation of:

- i. Correspondence with school boards and Elections Ontario;
- ii. Identified inconsistencies or ambiguities;
- iii. Decisions made in reliance on available information; and
- iv. Materials forming part of Appendix A.

c) Such records shall form part of the official election record and support transparency, accountability, and defensibility.

**14. GENERAL**

a) This Procedure is intended to ensure the orderly, consistent, and legally compliant administration of School Board Trustee elections.

b) This Procedure shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the Act and the principles of transparency, fairness, and administrative integrity.

## TRUSTEE ZONE AND LEAD MUNICIPALITY REFERENCE TABLE

### Purpose

This Appendix forms part of ME-2026-06 – School Board Trustee Election Procedure and is intended to provide an administrative reference for trustee offices, trustee zones, municipal composition, and lead municipality coordination applicable to the Town of Cochrane for the 2026 Municipal Election.

This Appendix is provided for administrative guidance only. It does not supersede the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, any applicable regulation, school board determination, or official direction issued by Elections Ontario or the applicable school board.

Where trustee zone descriptions, municipal composition, elector assignment, or lead municipality designations are unclear, inconsistent, overlapping, or subsequently amended, the Clerk shall rely on the best available information at the time of administration and proceed in accordance with ME-2026-06.

### Trustee Zone and Lead Municipality Reference Table

School Board	Trustee Office / Zone Description	Municipalities / Areas Included (Administrative Reference Only)	No. of Trustees for Zone	Lead Municipality	Cochrane Role	Notes / Administrative Comments
<b>District School Board Ontario North East (English Public)</b>	Trustee office for the applicable zone including the Town of Cochrane	Town of Cochrane, Town of Iroquois Falls, Township of Black River–Matheson, and any other municipalities or territory assigned to the zone by the board or Elections Ontario	1	<b>Town of Cochrane</b>	Lead municipality	Cochrane to receive nominations, certify nominations, administer voting, tabulate results, and declare results where designated as lead municipality.
<b>Northeastern Catholic District School Board (English Separate)</b>	Trustee office for the applicable zone including the Town of Cochrane	Town of Cochrane and any other municipalities or territory assigned to the trustee area by the board or Elections Ontario	1	<b>To be confirmed by board / Elections Ontario</b>	Participating municipality or lead municipality, as confirmed	Lead municipality and exact municipal composition should be confirmed in writing prior to Nomination Day.
<b>Conseil scolaire public du Nord-Est de l'Ontario (French Public)</b>	Trustee office for the applicable zone including the Town of Cochrane	Town of Cochrane and any other municipalities or territory assigned to the trustee area by the board or Elections Ontario	1	<b>To be confirmed by board / Elections Ontario</b>	Participating municipality or lead municipality, as confirmed	French Public trustee area, zone composition, and lead municipality should be confirmed in writing.
<b>Conseil scolaire catholique de district des Grandes Rivières (French Separate)</b>	Trustee office for the applicable zone including the Town of Cochrane	Town of Cochrane and any other municipalities or territory assigned to the trustee area by the board or Elections Ontario	1	<b>Town of Cochrane</b>	Lead municipality	Cochrane to receive nominations, certify nominations, administer voting, tabulate results, and declare results where designated as lead municipality.

### Administrative Use Notes

#### 1. Nomination Filing

Where the Town of Cochrane is the lead municipality for a trustee office, nomination papers shall be filed with the Clerk for the Town of Cochrane in accordance with the Act and ME-2026-04, Nomination & Certification Procedure.

#### 2. Where Another Municipality is Lead

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**APPENDIX A**

Where another municipality is identified as lead municipality, the Clerk may accept nomination materials for transmission to the appropriate Clerk, in accordance with ME-2026-06.

**3. Elector Assignment**

Elector assignment to trustee offices shall be based on school support information and elector data provided by Elections Ontario and other authorized sources. The Clerk is not responsible for independently determining or correcting trustee zone assignment where such information depends on external data or unresolved structural issues.

**4. Conflicts or Uncertainty**

If any conflict exists between this Appendix and information subsequently confirmed by a school board, Elections Ontario, or another competent authority, the confirmed external information shall govern for administrative purposes.

**5. Documentation**

Any clarification received respecting trustee zones, municipal composition, school support, or lead municipality designation shall be retained as part of the official election record in accordance with ME-2026-13, Election Records & Retention Procedure. This aligns with the procedure's direction that records include correspondence, identified ambiguities, decisions made in reliance on available information, and materials forming part of Appendix A.