

Your City. Your Vote.



LOCAL ELECTIONS AFFECT OUR DAILY LIVES

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND OTHER TIPS TO RUN A
SUCCESSFUL EDUCATION CAMPAIGN ON CAMPUS

ELECTION DAY: Vote on October 20

Our Communities. Our Vote.

Municipal elections can be the most challenging level of government elections to talk with members about. Why? Well, it seems that while people can typically see how policies and legislation of the provincial and federal governments affect their lives, many people aren't aware of what their city or town councils actually do.

Beyond that, there are many positions we are voting for: depending on where you live, you might be voting for councillors, mayor, regional districts, boards of education, park boards, and community commissions. That's a lot to learn!

This municipal election, let's make the most of this opportunity to speak with members. Some basic discussions can be an eye-opening experience for members and could spark their desire to get informed and to vote!

Understanding Local Government

Why do we have local governments?

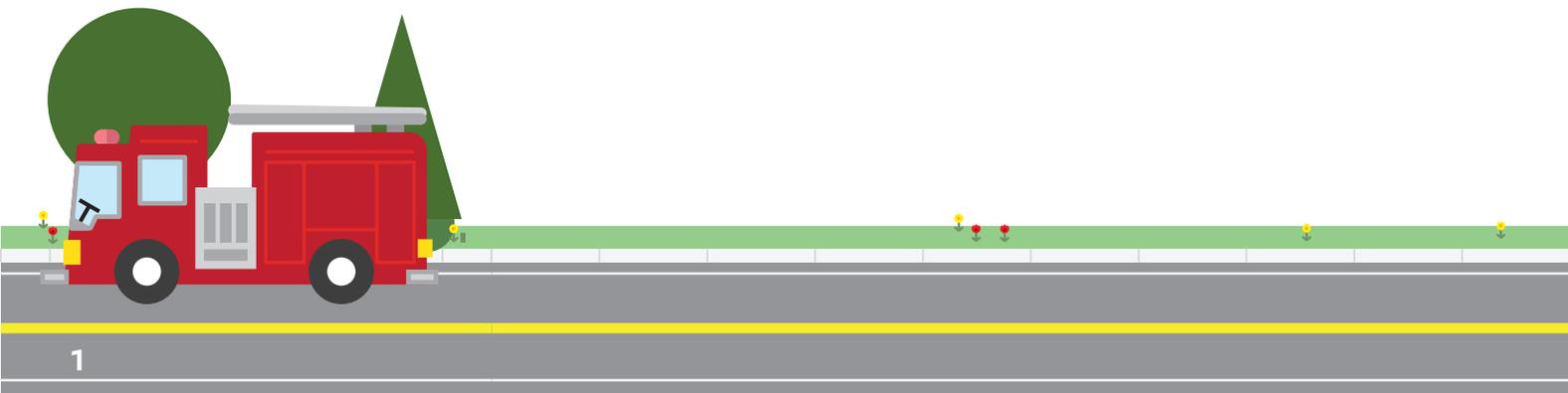
Whether you live in a rural area, in a small village or town, or in a large urban centre, local government is tasked to take care of community needs.

- Specifically, local government (municipalities and regional districts) shapes communities by offering essential services, regulates local policies, regulates land-use/development, and plans for the future economic growth of the community.

Why should I care?

Services. Local government provides and maintains essential services that you use every day:

- clean water
- public transit
- affordable housing/zoning
- garbage collection
- composting/recycling programs
- sewer systems
- roads and sidewalks
- streetlights
- fire and police protection
- libraries
- parks and recreational programs
- snow removal
- facilities (skating rinks, gymnasiums and swimming pools)



What else does the municipal government do besides services?

Local governments provide regulation in several different areas:

- land management: use and development, zoning, housing density
- business licensing
- building permits and inspection
- commercial vehicle licensing
- dog licensing

How does the municipal government pay for all of these things?

You pay for it! Sources of municipal revenue come from you—the community member—in the form of taxes, user fees, and other levels of government:

- property taxes (around 50%)
- grants/transfers from other levels of government (10%)
- user charges for facilities and services (30%)
- developer contributions (9%)
- partnerships

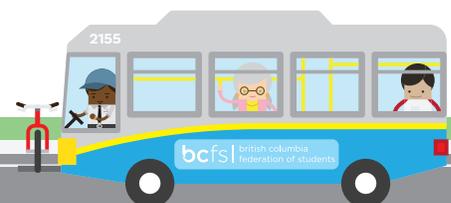
How can I find out what my local government is working on?

You can read the municipal annual report! Municipalities are required to prepare an annual report, providing information on finances, taxes, services and operations, and objectives and measures met during the year and those set for the next year.

MUNICIPAL ELECTION: DATES TO KNOW

Campaigning for the municipal elections officially starts September 22, though you have likely already seen many candidates campaigning in your area. Campaigning will run all the way until October 20.

Voting day – the most important date to know – is Saturday, October 20.



TIP: Be sure to know where your local polling stations are before you start tabling. ElectionsBC does not administer nominations or voting for local elections, so contact your local city/town hall for voting information specific to your community.

Your local Chief Election Officer is responsible for voting and ballots. To find their information search for your local government at CivicInfo BC (www.civicinfo.bc.ca/directories)

TIP: It's helpful if you know who the candidates are in your local election before you start tabling. Make a list or at least have a link to give people to find out more information on their local candidates. If you have the capacity, contact the local candidates— see if they're willing to come to a 'candidates forum' or a 'meet-and-greet' to discuss the issues with students on your campus.

TIP: If your students' union has the capacity, have a tablet or laptop available when tabling. This way students can register to vote or update their address right at the table.

What are the Services that Affect Me?

Here's an overview of municipal services and why they are relevant for you as a member of your local community. This information is useful to supplement the campaign materials (leaflets & shareables), to provide members with a bit more background information.

Take a look at these issues, and think about how these services are run in your municipality. Are there specific issues that may resonate with your members? Use those topics to draw people in and to help make the campaign relevant to your town/city.

Public Transit

Local government can make our transit modern and efficient in order to increase productivity, cut back traffic and pollution, and connect people. Your municipality may also be one of the 60 local governments that pays into BC transit and shares responsibilities for developing and maintaining the province-wide transit system.

Councils influence:

- schedules
- fleet management
- fares and discounts
- transit infrastructure (bus stops, exchanges, shelters/benches)
- routes
- transit policies & sustainability measures
- service plans



Affordable Housing

Local government can help create safe, affordable housing to ensure our communities are welcoming places to live, work, and thrive.

Councils influence:

- social housing
- redevelopment of public buildings
- zoning regulations for housing
- incentives and funding for developers to build more affordable housing
- tax incentives and regulations for short-term rentals to free up more rental units and reduce wait times, providing more security and stability for renters
- housing and services for homeless people

Environment & Climate Change

Local governments can lead the way on innovation to reduce climate-changing emissions – from greener fleets to building retrofits to low-emission waste systems.

Councils influence:

- composting programs
- recycling programs
- collection of garbage
- initiatives to improve air quality

Parks & Recreation

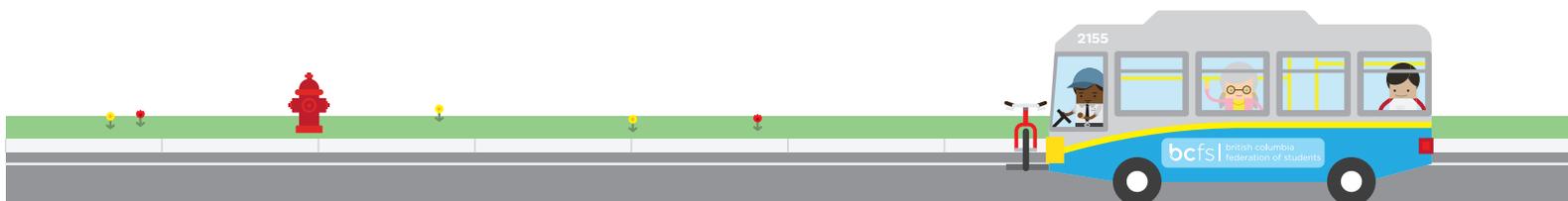
Local governments are in charge of developing and maintaining parks and recreational activities that assist in individual and community development, improve quality of life, and enhance social functioning in our communities.

Councils influence:

- recreation facilities such as community centres, pools, playing fields, parks, and gardens
- recreational programming
- childcare facilities
- upgrades/development of facilities
- safety & security at facilities
- investment in local public art and cultural events
- operations of local theaters and performance spaces

Infrastructure

Local roads, bridges, and viaducts are some of the infrastructure crucial to our quality of life. Local governments own nearly two-thirds of the public infrastructure, and help keep our communities connected and safe.



Councils influence:

- road improvements for safe roads & sidewalks
- better bridges & viaducts
- bikeways and greenways
- green solutions to infrastructure

Clean Water

Local governments own, operate, and maintain most of Canada's 3,500 wastewater treatment systems.

Councils influence:

- safe drinking water
- waste water & storm water systems
- policies on (outlawing) bottled water in city-run buildings
- clean rivers, lakes, and coastlines

Emergency Preparedness

Local governments and their first responders are on the front lines when disaster strikes. They also protect communities from crime and threats to health and security.

Councils influence emergency preparedness services for:

- fire
- disaster
- policing
- search and rescue services
- snow removal (equipment to respond to severe weather)

School Board Trustees

School board trustees make up the Board of Education, which operates K-12 school districts. They are the employers of all school district staff & are responsible for employee relations, educational policymaking, strategic planning, financial and capital decisions.

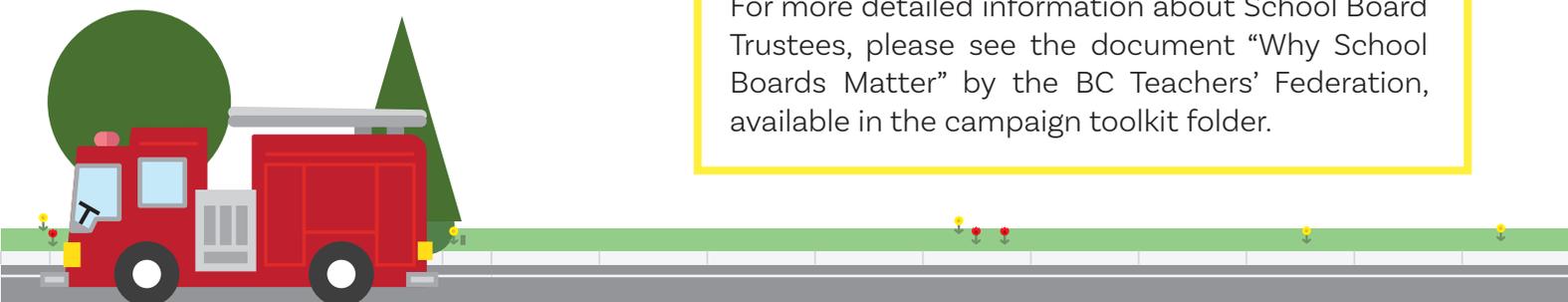
School board trustee's role includes:

- promoting student achievement and well-being
- engaging the local K-12 community (parents, public, staff)
- representing the interests of their community
- participating in different committee & community meetings

School board trustees influence K-12:

- student support (counsellors)
- health, wellness, and sports programs
- policies on environmental sustainability
- technology & innovation
- building new schools

For more detailed information about School Board Trustees, please see the document "Why School Boards Matter" by the BC Teachers' Federation, available in the campaign toolkit folder.



Some Questions You Might Hear about the Municipal Election

When is the election?

Saturday, October 20. Polling is open 8:00am to 8:00pm.
Advanced voting is on Wednesday, October 10.

When are the results announced?

Monday, October 22.

Am I eligible to vote?

To be eligible to vote, you must:

- be 18 years old by October 20;
- be a Canadian citizen;
- have lived in BC for at least 6 months; and
- have lived in your local jurisdiction for at least 30 days.

How can I register? Does my current address need to be up to date?

Your address must be up to date—this will determine which municipality you’re voting for.

Register and update your info online with Elections BC at eregister.electionsbc.gov.bc.ca. All you need is your driver’s license or other provincial ID, Social Insurance Number (SIN), and your address.

What identification do I need to bring when I vote?

Typically a voter is required to show two pieces of identification, and the identification must prove who you are and where you live—including your name and residential address. One of the pieces of identification must also include your signature (such as a driver’s licence or BC Services Card). Check with your local government for their specific requirements.

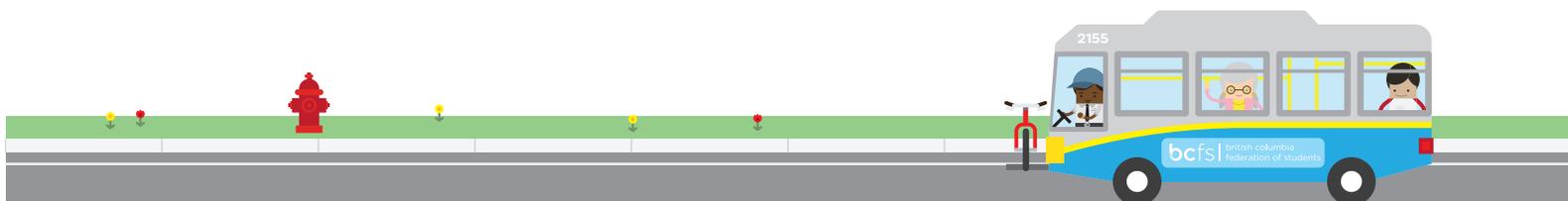
I live in a different municipality, but I go to school in this one. Can I vote in both places?

No. You can only vote in one jurisdiction when you live away from your usual place of residence to attend school. But, you may choose to vote either where you attend school or your usual place of residence (contact your local government if this applies to you, and you would like to change which municipality you’re voting in).

I live in a regional district (not a municipality). Do we still have local elections?

Yes, general local elections are held for these jurisdictions:

- municipalities
- specified parks boards
- regional districts
- local community commissions
- boards of education
- trust areas (Islands Trust)



What elected positions are we voting for?

- mayor
- councillors
- electoral area directors
- school trustees
- specified parks board commissioners
- local community commissioners
- Islands Trust local trustees

How often does this happen?

Municipal elections happen every four years, on the third Saturday of October. Elected officials' terms last 4 years.

Do candidates run for political parties?

In a majority of municipalities and regional districts, candidates run for office as individuals. This makes a little more work for you, the voter, as you need to get to know the specific services/issues that your local candidates support. But this also gives you the flexibility to support different candidates for a wide range of issues!

In most cases, candidates are not explicitly associated with a major political party (e.g. Liberal, NDP, Conservative, Green); however, in some cities such as Vancouver there are parties or slates through which groups of like-minded individuals collectively put forward policy and services platforms.

Do council members deal with all public services, or do they specialize?

Most municipal councils establish committees to direct and control public services. Each committee makes recommendations to the council who makes decisions collectively.

How many people are a part of my municipality's council?

There's 1 Mayor and 4 to 8 councillors, depending on the type of municipality and the population size:

City with over 50,000 citizens	8 councillors
City with under 50,000 citizens	6 councillors
Town or Village	4 councillors

