

School boards put the public in education

School board service is one of the most important responsibilities a citizen can undertake. The board's standards and decisions will affect a generation of students, your community and society.

Governing on a public board is a challenging job with long hours and difficult decisions. However, it is rewarding to watch students succeed and lead productive lives as a result of the educational opportunities you helped create.

As a board member, your decisions must reflect what is best for all students and all citizens. This demands a strong commitment to serving other people.

If you are willing to devote your time and talents to meeting these challenges, then we applaud your decision to run for your local board. We are ready and willing to serve you. In addition to state-mandated financial training, Minnesota School Boards Association has a complete school board orientation series as well as advanced training and full board inservices.



MSBA supports, promotes and enhances the work of public school boards.

RUNNING FOR SCHOOL BOARD

It's About Students!

Minnesota School Boards Association

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*A candidate guide from the
Minnesota School Boards Association*

How to become a candidate

School board members are elected during the November General Election on either odd or even years. Terms are four years, and at least three members are on the ballot during each election. Most school board members are elected at-large.

A primary must be held if a school district has approved a resolution to be part of the primary election system AND if more than two candidates file for a precinct seat, or if there are more than double the number of candidates as there are at-large seats.

FILING PERIOD

- ◆ There are two filing periods for school districts. For districts with primaries, the filing dates will be in July. For districts without a primary, filing dates will be in August.
- ◆ Candidates must file an affidavit of candidacy with the school district clerk. The fee is \$2.

ELIGIBILITY

- ◆ At least 21 years old.
- ◆ Eligible voter.
- ◆ District resident for at least 30 days prior to election/appointment.
- ◆ Not convicted of a felony.

FINANCIAL REPORTING

- ◆ Candidates must file a campaign financial report no later than seven days after the election. This report indicates whether a candidate has either received \$750 in campaign contributions or spent \$750 on the election.

Fundamental roles of school boards

Vision, structure, accountability, advocacy, conduct, ethics

School boards are most effective when members focus on the big picture: making policy, setting goals and engaging stakeholders, all with the ultimate goal of improving student achievement. When boards focus on administrative issues, school districts suffer. Divided boards lead to a divided community.

The work of a school board involves:

- developing a vision for the district.
- setting goals and monitoring progress.
- establishing district policy.
- monitoring student achievement.
- aligning resources with goals.
- collaborating with community partners.
- ensuring facilities are safe and adequate.
- communicating with stakeholders.
- rallying the community around student achievement.
- hiring and evaluating the superintendent.
- ratifying employee contracts.
- advocating student needs to lawmakers.
- training in education issues and governance.

What qualities make a good board member?

Integrity, commitment, vision, courage, respect

After nearly 100 years of working with school boards, Minnesota School Boards Association staff have identified common traits among outstanding school board members. Board members have no individual authority; an effective board acts as a whole and respects staff expertise. Most good board members develop skills over time through experience and continued training. Board members who run on a single issue or for personal gain create havoc in a school district.

Outstanding school board members are:

- motivated by the best interests of all kids.
- passionate about public education.
- able to make decisions.
- strong communicators, willing to listen.
- believers in the democratic process.
- willing to spend time and energy on board business.
- committed to governance training.
- able to function as part of a team.
- collaborative.

