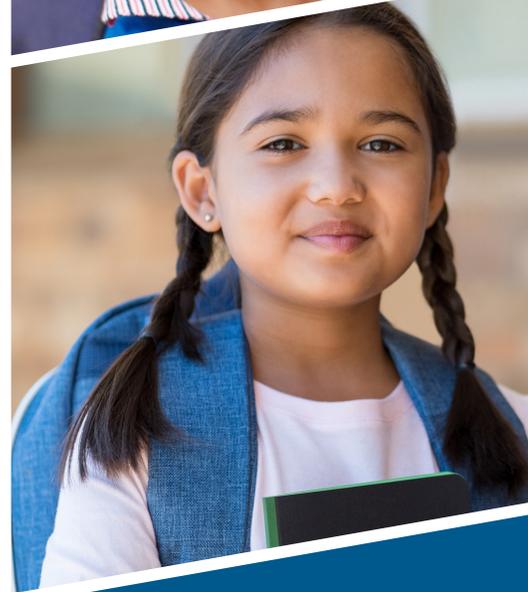




GET ON
BOARD



2019 Guide for Iowa School Board Candidates

Provided by the Iowa Association of School Boards

www.ia-sb.org/getonboard



IASB's Guide for School Board Candidates

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**GET ON
BOARD**

Find more resources on www.ia-sb.org/getonboard and sign up for emails and mailings to receive information on upcoming events and IASB resources. Check out p.10 for candidate education offerings, beginning on Aug. 20!



Rewards of School Board Service

Serving on a school board is a challenging job that requires leadership, vision and dedication. A school board member is entrusted with one of the most important responsibilities that can be assigned to a citizen: ensuring that Iowa schools help students reach high levels of educational achievement. Serving on a school board is a crucial aspect of grassroots democracy.

Experienced board members across Iowa say that the rewards of service lie in meeting the needs of children and their communities. Read for yourself why school board members serve.

Why School Board Members Serve

IASB asked current Iowa school board members why they serve on their local boards. While we found there are many reasons why they are willing to give their time and commitment to serve their communities, there is one that remains consistent no matter who you ask—they serve to make a difference for the children in their community.

“Working with other board members toward a common goal gives me a feeling of accomplishment. I’ve seen how we can improve education for children when we put our minds to it. It’s gratifying being part of the decision making process and part of making sure our students have a strong future.”

Jim Green, IASB Board President-elect, Grant Wood AEA Board President



“If you have a desire to learn, then the school board is for you. There are opportunities to ask questions and gain clarity about the issues that impact the district. I really enjoy seeing students succeed—every time I walk into a school building and see students learning, working on projects and sharing what they learned—it makes me glad I ran for the board.”

Amy Truax, Aplington-Parkersburg Schools Board Member



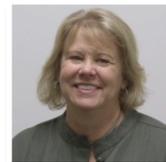
“The school board is one of the most important elected offices in the country. Boards ultimately make decisions that impact the lives of students. Having a board that is representative of the student enrollment is one of the best things a community could have going for it. Diverse boards bring more values to the table and help make better informed decisions.”

Rob Barron, Des Moines Schools Board Member



“The most rewarding outcome of board service is seeing the smiling faces of kids walking across the stage at high school graduation. Just knowing that I approved the new Spanish teacher that inspired them to take AP Spanish, knowing that I had one little bit of their life that I can be proud about—that’s the most inspiring part for me. Graduation gets me through the rough spots throughout the year.”

Liz Brennan, IASB AEA District Director, West Des Moines Schools Board Member, Heartland AEA Board Member



Overview of School Boards in Iowa

Board members are locally elected, non-salaried public officials entrusted with the task of providing direction for the education of students across Iowa. Iowa school board members represent a continuing commitment to local citizen decision making in public education.

K-12 School Boards

K-12 school board members are elected by their local communities to serve four-year terms. School districts are subdivisions of the state and most general laws regarding conduct of public officials and handling of public funds apply to members of the local board of education. Iowa has 327 school districts with five- or seven-member boards.

K-12 School Board Facts:

Board seats in Iowa: 1,863

Male board members: 60%

Female board members: 40%

Five-member boards: 218

Seven-member boards: 112

Student enrollment 2017-18: 486,264

Total general fund revenues 2017-18: \$5.9 billion

Community College Boards

Iowa's 15 community colleges are governed by five to nine board members elected by residents for terms of four years.

Community College Board Facts:

Board seats in Iowa: 124

Male board members: 68%

Female board members: 32%

Five-member boards: 1

Seven-member boards: 3

Eight-member boards: 1

Nine-member boards: 10

Area Education Agency Boards

The state's nine area education agencies are governed by seven or nine member boards who are elected to four-year terms by K-12 school board members.

Area Education Agency Board Facts:

Board Seats in Iowa: 79

Male board members: 54%

Female board members: 46%

Seven-member boards: 1

Nine-member boards: 8

School board service is a volunteer position. While school board members receive no pay, the reward is the satisfaction they receive from public service.

What Do School Board Members Do?

The school board represents the citizens of the community in overseeing the public schools. As the entity legally charged with governing a school district or community college, each school board is responsible to its community to govern effectively. This obligation imposes some fundamental duties on the board.

An effective school board member recognizes that governing requires teamwork and collaboration, accountability and transparency, future-focused decision-making, community engagement, and above all else, a commitment to student achievement.

Among other responsibilities, the work of a school board is:

- Ensuring creation of a shared vision, plans and goals that reflects common values and core beliefs of the school community. The board must ensure that student learning and success are central to the focus, monitor progress toward improvement efforts, and ensure accountability for student learning.
- Setting sound, written policy to clarify the board's intent for district/community college direction, while also ensuring that board and district/community college actions comply with state and federal laws.
- Hiring, setting goals for, and evaluating the superintendent or community college president as the chief administrative officer of the school district or community college. The superintendent or community college president is responsible to lead and manage the district or community college in compliance with written board policy.
- Overseeing employment processes for other school employees through policy. The superintendent or community college president as chief administrative officer is responsible for employee management, and brings hiring or termination recommendations to the board, subject to provisions of law.
- Monitoring and evaluating the financial health of the district or community college, ensuring strong financial planning, approving an annual budget consistent with the district or community college vision, receiving financial reports and ensuring an annual financial audit.
- Using ongoing, two-way communications and transparency to build trust and support among community, board, superintendent or community college president, staff, and students. School boards must meet in compliance with the Iowa open meetings law and make public records available under the Iowa open records law. Citizens are welcome at all school board meetings, except in a few legally specified circumstances.
- Acting as a corporate body. Individual school board members have no authority; the board only has authority through decisions made by majority votes during official board meetings.

While this list is not comprehensive, it illustrates the authority placed with school boards as the community's trustees of the public schools.

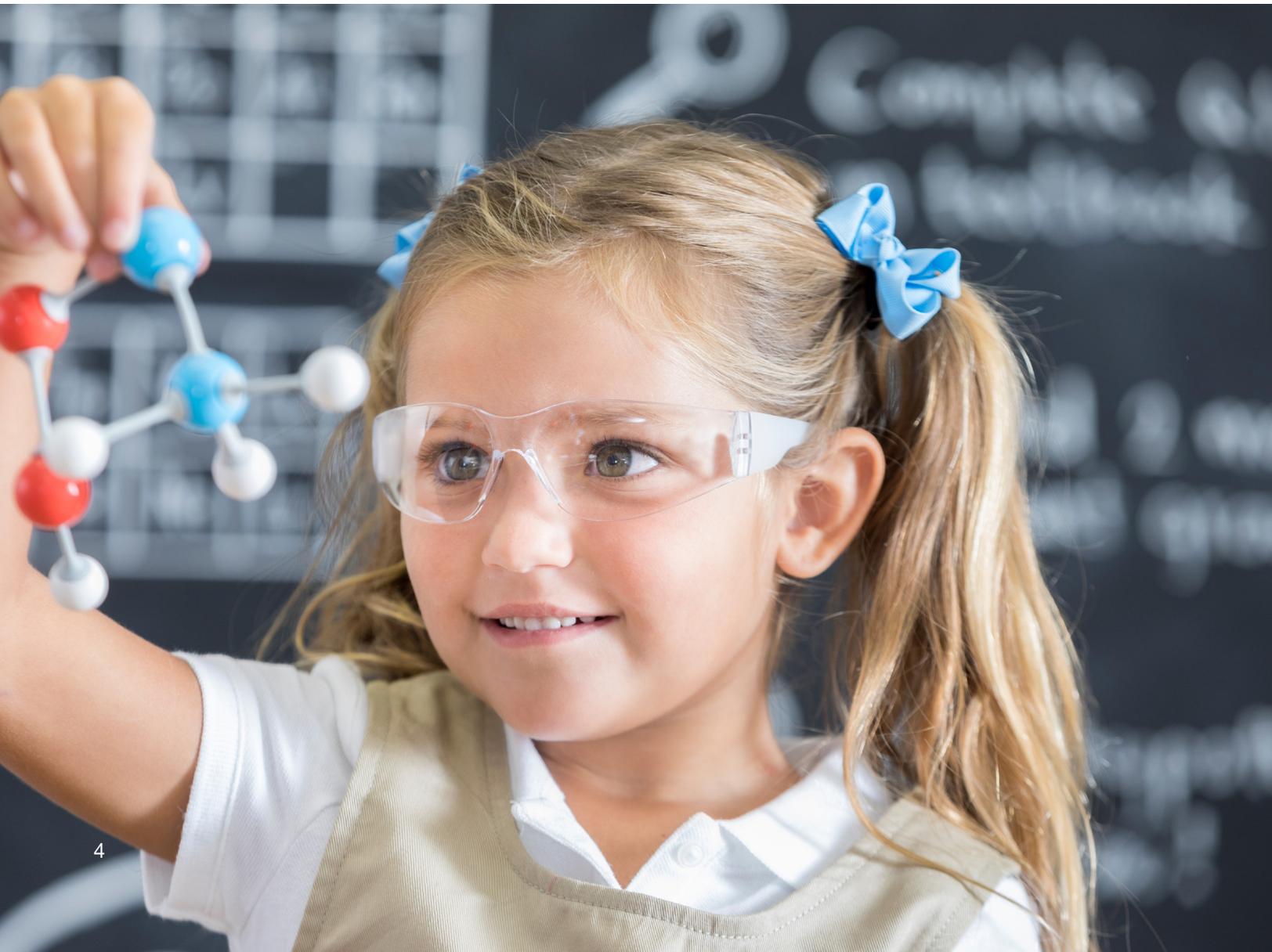


Time Commitments of a School Board Member

The time commitment of serving on a school board will vary based on the community and the needs of the school district or community college. If you are considering board service, talk with current or past board members and the superintendent or community college president for the best insights. Generally, you should expect:

- **A regular schedule of meetings.** The official work of the school board is carried out at its meetings. Most school boards meet at least once a month, with a growing number meeting twice a month.
- **Time spent outside of meetings.** You will spend time beyond board meetings reviewing board materials, as well as communicating with citizens as a locally elected official. To stay knowledgeable and accessible, many board members commit to attending a variety of school activities.
- **A commitment to your own learning.** To understand education trends and issues, legal requirements, and effective governing practices, Iowa school boards have access to board learning opportunities through the Iowa Association of School Boards. See p. 11 for more information.

Serving on a school board is a significant responsibility that takes a commitment of time and energy. Many school board members also say it is one of the most rewarding experiences of their civic lives.



The Basics of Becoming a Candidate for the School Board

School board members for school districts and community colleges are elected by their local communities in an election held the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November in odd-numbered years.

K-12 Boards

K-12 school board members may be elected at large, from director districts or in several combinations of at-large and director districts, depending on the system locally adopted. The school board secretary will have materials to help you get started, including the auditor's school election calendar, nomination petition, and general information about school boards.

Community College Boards

Community college board members must be residents of the direct districts in which they are elected. Each board member is elected by eligible electors from within their director district. Boards are comprised of one director from each director district within the merged area. Community college board members may not serve as school board members or AEA board members at the same time as their service on the community college board.

Qualifications

Any person who is a United States citizen, 18 years of age or older, a resident of the school district (and director district, if applicable) and is eligible to register to vote may become a candidate for the school board.

Nomination petitions must be filed with the school board secretary or community college secretary not more than 71 nor less than 47 days prior to the regular election. The process for filing nomination petitions is as follows:

- Request the original nomination petition from the school board secretary or community college secretary.
- **K-12 School Board Signature Requirements:** Ask your school board secretary for the minimum number of signatures. Obtain the nomination signatures from eligible electors of the school district equal to at least 1% of the registered voters of the district or 50 eligible electors of the district, whichever is less, but at least 10 signatures. (If board members are elected by director district, rather than at-large, signers of the nomination petitions must reside in the same director district as the candidate.) A person may sign nomination petitions for more than one candidate for the same office.
- **Community College Board Signature Requirements:** Obtain the nomination signatures of at least 50 eligible electors from the director district. Note: Nomination signers must include their home address and the school district in which they live.
- Attach a notarized affidavit acknowledging the candidate's eligibility.
- File the petition with the school board secretary or community college secretary not more than 71 days and not less than 47 days prior to the election. Petitions must be filed with the board secretary by 5 p.m. on the 47th day preceding the election.

Each candidate is assured a place on the ballot by successfully filing the completed nomination petition. A candidate's name may be withdrawn from the ballot after the completed petition is filed by submitting a written statement to that effect with the school board secretary or community college secretary more than 35 days before the election.

An individual may be elected as a write-in candidate. Space must be provided on the ballot for write-in candidates. The write-in candidate is not required to file a nomination petition.

2019 Key Dates

Aug. 26

First Day for Candidate Filing: First day to file nomination papers with the board secretary.

Sept. 19

Candidate Filing Deadline: Last day to file nomination papers with the board secretary. Deadline is 5 p.m.

Sept. 20

Nominations Delivered: Board secretaries deliver nomination papers to controlling commissioner. Deadline is noon.

Sept. 21

Last Day for Vacancies: Vacancies or resignations on a school board occurring after today must be filled at the school board election if a valid petition for election is filed. Any appointments made will be temporary until the election. Note that this is a Saturday.

Sept. 24

Withdrawal Deadline: Last day school board candidates may withdraw. Last day written objections to nomination papers or eligibility of candidates may be filed. Deadline is 5 p.m.

Nov. 5

School Election Day: Polls are open from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m.

Nov. 12 or Nov. 13

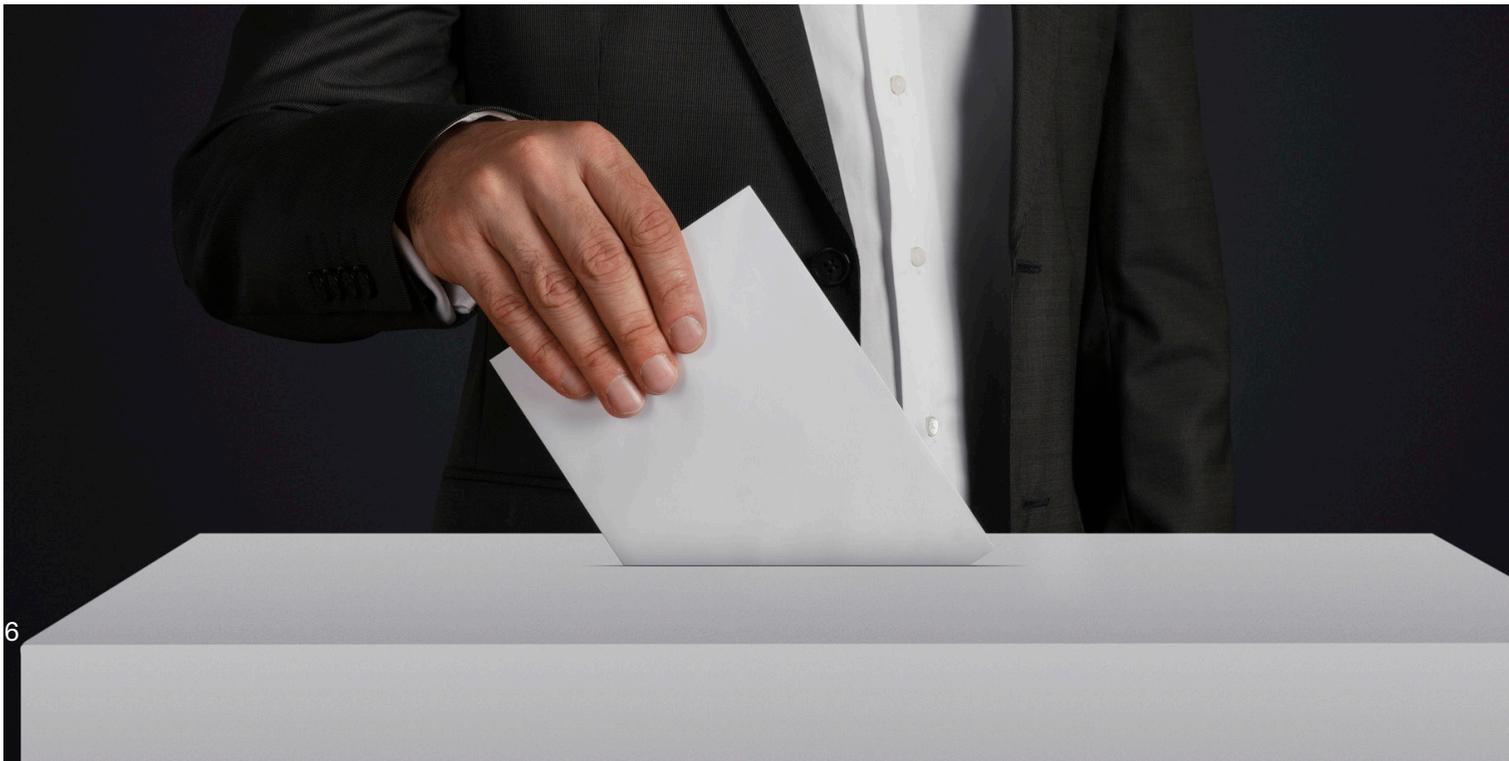
Tier 1 Canvass of Votes: First Monday or Tuesday after the election, unless these fall on a legal holiday, then it pushes back 1 day. This is the final election canvass for school districts located within one county. Note: Monday, Nov. 11, 2019 is Veteran's Day, so this canvass is held on Tuesday, Nov. 12 or Wednesday, Nov. 13.

Nov. 18 or Nov. 19

Tier 2 Canvass of Votes: Second Monday or Tuesday following election. This is the final election canvass for school districts whose boundary lines are within multiple counties.

Dates Vary

Organizational Meeting: No date is legally specified for the organizational meeting. The organizational meeting is held at a special meeting before the board's first regular meeting or at the board's first regular meeting following the final canvass. During this meeting, the school board organizes for the new term.



What You Need to Know About Campaigning

Campaign Finance Disclosure Law

School board candidates must comply with the Iowa Ethics Campaign Finance Disclosure Laws (Chapter 68A and 68B). Candidates should be aware that failure to comply with these laws can result in fines and other penalties. The laws also apply to write-in candidates. Candidates may obtain more information about Iowa's campaign finance laws and access the Iowa Ethics and Campaign Disclosure Board's web reporting system at www.iowa.gov/ethics.

Candidate Committees

Candidates who receive contributions, make expenditures or incur debts more than \$1,000 (including personal funds) must form a committee and file reports. This holds true for such actions done by a committee on behalf of a candidate. The committee must file its statement of organization within 10 days of the \$1,000 threshold being crossed. The committee name must include the candidate's last name. Every candidate who crosses the \$1,000 threshold is mandated by law to file his or her statement of organization and campaign disclosure reports electronically using the Iowa Ethics and Campaign Disclosure Board's web reporting system. A candidate committee must identify a treasurer who is an Iowa resident and at least 18 years of age. A candidate may serve as their own treasurer. A candidate committee's bank account must be with a financial institution in Iowa.

Disclosure Reports

Every candidate committee is required to periodically report its financial activity to the Ethics Board. Reports disclosing campaign transactions are due by 4:30 p.m. five days before the election, and on the 19th day of January. For committees that do not dissolve, they must also file reports on the 19th day of January of each year in which the candidate's name does not appear on the ballot.

Campaign Contributions

Iowa does not have campaign contribution limits. Contributions from relatives within the third degree of consanguinity and affinity must include a description of the relationship to the candidate. Candidates are required to deposit all contributions within seven days of receipt in an account maintained by the candidate's committee in a financial institution. (Exception: a separate account need not be established if the candidate receives no funds from others and finances the campaign out of his or her own pocket; in this instance the candidate files reports to show expenditures from personal funds as in-kind contributions from the candidate to the committee).

Campaign Expenditures

Candidates may spend campaign funds only for campaign purposes, educational or other expenses associated with the duties of office or constituency services and may transfer funds only as provided in Iowa Code sections 68A.302 and 68A.303.

Campaign Signs

Prohibited locations for candidate campaign signs include any property without the permission of the property owner or lessee, property owned by the state or governing body of a county or city considered the public right-of-way, and property owned or leased by a corporation, financial institution, or insurance company except when leased as campaign headquarters or office. On Election Day, signs cannot be placed on the premises of any polling place or within 300 feet of an outside door of the polling place, or any motor vehicle if it is parked on public property within 300 feet of the outside door of the polling place. See Advisory Opinion IECDB AO 2008-14 or Iowa Code 68A.406 for more detailed information on where you can and cannot place campaign signs.

Attribution Statements

Any printed political material must include the words "paid for by" and identification of the individuals, committee or organization which paid for the ad (includes newspapers, brochures, videos, posters, billboards, mailings and websites, but not items too small to include such credit, such as buttons or pens). Candidates who have not registered a committee must include their full names and addresses as part of the identification, or file form DR-SFA to use the shorter "paid for by" statement.

School Resources for Campaign Use

School resources cannot be used to promote either candidates or ballot issues, including the use of school mail boxes for distribution of campaign advocacy materials or school email for promotional or solicitation messages.

Six Tips for Campaigning

IASB recommends the following tips for all school board candidates as they campaign for election:

- 1. Attend school board meetings.** Watching the current board in action will help you begin to understand the practicalities of school board operations and learn more about issues in your district or community college. Board agendas and virtually all materials before the board are public documents; reviewing them can build your understanding.
- 2. Ask questions.** The superintendent or community college president, board secretary or community college secretary, business manager and current board members can help you understand district issues.
- 3. Be proactive in helping the community understand your views.** Help citizens understand what you stand for by speaking at candidate forums, talking with reporters, stating your views in campaign materials, and using other forums.
- 4. Carefully consider your campaign promises.** As an individual, a board member has no authority. It's only when a majority of the board takes action through a vote that the board's authority is exercised.
- 5. When campaigning for the board, state your position on issues** but avoid making promises that you alone cannot keep.
- 6. Encourage voter participation.** Strong voter turnout is more than a grassroots campaign strategy. Voter participation in school board elections helps engage citizens and create a strong bond between the public and their public schools.



VOTE

What You Should Know About Conflict of Interest and Gifts

Board members, as elected public officials, are duty-bound to serve the public interest. Yet, as private citizens, they may also participate in outside employment and activities. The most critical conflict of public versus private interest in decision making arises in financial transactions—the spending of public funds. School board members must comply with the conflict of interest laws in Iowa Code.

Statutes remove certain potential conflicts of interest by excluding a board member from:

- Receiving compensation from the school district for one or more contracts for the purchase of goods or services which benefit a board member unless the benefit to the board member does not exceed \$6,000 in a fiscal year or the contract is publicly bid.
- Appointing a relative within the third degree to a paying position, except a teaching position, unless it was first approved by the board.
- Being an agent for a textbook or school supply company involved in a transaction with a staff or board member of your own school district.
- Being a statewide elected official or a state legislator.

The law does not prohibit a spouse or other family member of a school district employee from running for the board.

Generally, Iowa law prohibits school board members and candidates from accepting gifts and honoraria from people who may be financially affected by actions of the school board. Candidates are advised to inquire about the status of restrictions or reporting requirements at the time of the election by contacting the Iowa Ethics and Campaign Disclosure Board. (See 68B.22, Iowa Code.)



Get on Board: Candidate and Election Resources

Our elections toolkit at www.ia-sb.org/getonboard has many great resources to educate and inform candidates.

Get on Board Digital Toolkit

- Guide for School Board Candidates (PDF)
- School Board Election FAQs
- Key Dates
- Informational videos
- Member testimonials
- Links to Iowa Secretary of State's Office and Iowa Ethics & Campaign Disclosure Board resources
- and more!

Tuesday Talks with IASB: So, You Want to Run for the School Board?

We are offering a live informational series for candidates to get up-to-speed on all elections-related topics. These will be offered in a variety of platforms, including Zoom, Facebook Live, etc. While we recommend that candidates attend all four, the first webinar on Aug. 20 is an essential first step for any individual interested in running for the board.

Aug. 20: Running for the School Board: Essential Tips for Candidates, Noon-1 p.m.

Sept. 10: Maintaining Your Community's Trust: Legal & Ethical Campaigns for the School Board, Noon-1 p.m.

Sept. 24: Confessions of a School Board Member: Perks and Pitfalls, Noon-1 p.m.

Oct. 8: School Board Service: Equity and Excellence for ALL—Are You Ready? Noon-1 p.m.



So, You're Elected to Your Local School Board—Now What?

Attend the board's organizational meeting, held at or before the first regular meeting following the final canvass of votes. Check with your school district or community college for a local meeting schedule.

Take the Oath of Office at the organizational meeting. Each new board member must qualify to serve by taking the oath of office.

"I, (name), do solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the state of Iowa and that I will faithfully and impartially to the best of my ability discharge the duties of the office of (director) in (district) as now or hereafter required by law."

Hit the ground running with help from IASB. The Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB) is a nonprofit membership organization that provides many services designed to help board members improve Iowa schools and carry out their legal responsibilities. After you're elected to the school board, we'll be here to help you be effective in your work. Our services include training, advocacy, consultation and many others. Mark your calendar for the following essential workshops for newly elected board members.

Welcome on Board: Orienting New Board Members

We have developed two brand-new workshops for newly elected board members—part one is a must-attend workshop this November during Annual Convention, and part two is a follow-up regional workshop in January and February that will be a powerful way to build a board team. Plus, new board members will find many interesting sessions and presenters at the IASB Annual Convention, as well as dedicated networking time to meet board members from across the state. Learn more about these events below, and don't forget to mark your calendar!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Special Pre-Convention Workshop: Thriving in Your First 90 Days

☐ *Wednesday, Nov. 20, Iowa Events Center, Des Moines*

Blast off into your first term on the school board!

There's a lot to learn in your first year of board service, but we're here to help you prepare for launch with critical information and essential resources about your new role in public education.

Governing 101—A foundational overview of board roles and responsibilities. We'll review fundamental board responsibilities, how this role relates to that of staff, and provide a framework for helping you learn critical information about the district.

Meetings and Transparency Laws—The work of the board occurs at its meetings, so we'll acquaint you with handy information about common board meeting practices such as placing items on the agenda and other procedures. Plus, you'll learn about Iowa government transparency laws (open meetings law) which set explicit responsibilities for boards to ensure the public has access to meetings and deliberations of the board, minutes and executive sessions.

Policy Basics—Boards have the authority to lead their districts by setting policies. Learn what policy is, legal requirements for policy alignment with state and federal law, policy development and review, and the role the administration plays in the implementation of policy. A firm command of your existing policies will help you answer countless early questions of board service—this session will help you prioritize where to start.

You'll also learn from experienced board members about early pitfalls of serving as an elected official—they'll help you avoid common mistakes and start your board service with confidence.

After this workshop you'll be ready to fire up your new skills in no time and take on the next 275 days.

Bonus! Each attendee will receive a complimentary IASB Board Member Handbook.

IASB Annual Convention

☐ *Thursday, Nov. 20-21, Iowa Events Center, Des Moines*



Board members run to make a difference for students and for their communities. The IASB Convention showcases innovations in education, how schools are raising the bar and tackling issues affecting students. You'll find inspiring speakers and countless ideas to make public schools strong!

We are offering topics for both veteran and newly elected board members, as well as other important members of the governance team. Join us this November and learn together to deepen skillsets and build board unity. This year's convention features internationally recognized keynote speaker Sir Ken Robinson, pictured on the left.

For more information, visit www.ia-sb.org/convention.

Regional Workshops: Leadership Essentials for School Boards

☐ *January-February, regional locations across the state, date and sites to be announced*

Navigate the board leadership landscape with core governance skills.

Being effective as a board member requires a strong understanding of board roles and responsibilities. It's impossible to do a job well if you don't know what the job is.

This workshop will address fundamental duties of each board member in four core areas—all of which are front and center in the first months of the calendar year. It's a must for every new board member and a team builder for the entire board.

Financial Oversight—Gain an understanding of the board's role in the budgeting process. You'll learn what to anticipate on the budget road ahead and where to access information for continued learning on this important work—within your own district and IASB resources. Learn key parts of the district audit report as a new board member and ensure the board gives adequate time at the board table.

Superintendent Evaluation and Goal Setting—Explore the board's role in high-quality superintendent evaluation and goal setting—and how the board can commit to ensuring these critical processes occur. You'll learn the essentials to do this work well and find clarity around the importance of understanding your district's policy, evaluation instrument, and process.

Personnel Matters—Spring is the prime season for evaluating, hiring and terminating staff. Does the board have a role in this? Why or why not? How can the board make a difference, without undercutting the superintendent's authority? Clarify the work of the board, superintendent and other administrators around personnel matters.

Constituent Relations—Financial and personnel matters are sometimes high-visibility issues in communities. Discover the power of common messages and having clear policy when communicating and responding to your school community. Build strong community relations by effectively sharing the work and deliberation that goes into board decisions.

Join us for this exploratory mission to discover new essential skills, build your knowledge base and learn valuable, practical information you can use immediately. Plus, take home tips and practical ideas from veteran board members.

Call IASB at (515) 288-1991, email iasb@ia-sb.org or check out our website at www.ia-sb.org.

IASB IS HERE FOR YOU



GET ON
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IASB's Get on Board campaign is designed to help interested citizens understand school boards in Iowa, qualifications and steps to become a candidate, key dates and deadlines, frequently asked questions and more.

If you or someone you know is looking to give back to your community, then perhaps school board service is right for you.

You'll find many of the campaign resources in this guide as well as on our website. We are available to answer your questions, provide information and point you in the right direction if we are unable to help. Visit www.ia-sb.org/getonboard for election resources and contact Tammy Votava at tvotava@ia-sb.org with questions.

www.ia-sb.org/getonboard





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