



Qualifications for School Board Members in NY*

Must be able to read and write.

Must be a qualified voter of the district, that is, a citizen of the United States, at least 18 years or older, and not a convicted felon or adjudged an incompetent.

Must be and have been a resident of the district for at least 1 year prior to the election but need not be a taxpayer.

May not have been removed from any school district office within the preceding year.

May not reside with another member of the same school board as a member of the same family.

May not be a current employee of the school board.

May not simultaneously hold another incompatible public office.

** School Law 2004, NYS School Boards Association, Albany NY*

Newly elected school board members are required by law to complete 6 hours of financial oversight and governance training respectively within their first year on the board. This training is typically paid for by the school district and offered by CNYSBA.



How CNYSBA can help:

The Mission of The Central New York School Boards Association is

To inform public school board members about contemporary issues affecting public education and the operation of public schools;

To provide forums and other professional development programs where school board members can continue to enhance their skills and learn from one another;

To mobilize board members to effectively influence those outside the schools who also share responsibility for the education of our children.

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Prospective School Board Member Guide



The Essentials of Public Service on a Local School Board





How Does A School Board Operate?

Local control of school districts is the foundation of school governance. A well functioning school board is both an example of democracy in action and a model of democracy for our students.

Decision-making is vested in the board, not in the individual members.

At the first meeting in July, the board elects its own president and vice-president. By law, the board must hold at least one meeting a month.

The board determines the time and place of meetings and what, if any, committees will be formed.

All meetings must be publicized and open, except for discussion of specific matters such as personnel and litigation.

Time required for board meetings and preparatory work is estimated to be a minimum of 10-15 hours a week with many night and some weekend meetings.

In most school districts, board members serve without pay. Most elected school board members find it gratifying to work on important community issues in a non-partisan, collegial group.

A school board is primarily a policy-making body and must delegate administration to school staff. One of its first tasks is to set goals and objectives for the school system. Another task is to select a superintendent of schools when there is a vacancy. A school board must meet a range of **responsibilities:**

Finance – To adopt a budget and set school tax rates within legal limits; to provide for borrowing and bonding; to provide for the safeguarding/managing of district funds.

Administration – To appoint and evaluate the superintendent and through him/her all the employees of the district; to approve contracts negotiated with bargaining units; to set personnel policies.

Total Education Program – To authorize all courses of study, pupil services, extra-curricular activities, textbooks, supplies; to determine grade organization; to set policy regarding discipline.

Property – To provide for and maintain all school property.

Transportation – To provide transportation of students to and from school beyond walking limits.

QUESTIONS For Prospective School Board Members

Reasons For Seeking Election

Why are you running for school board?
If elected, what will be your priorities?
What experiences/skills qualify you?
Are you involved in school activities?
How frequently do you attend school board meetings?

Background & General Information

How long have you lived in this district?
How much time can you/will you give to board service?
Are/were you a parent of a child in public schools?

Board Issues & Operations

What do you see as the major issue(s) facing public education?
What do you see as the major issue(s) facing your school district?
How does a school board balance the need to provide a meaningful education with the need to respond to taxpayer burden?
What changes, if any, should be made in the district's budget?
What is the school board's role in defining the school district's curriculum?
What changes, if any, would you seek in the district's curriculum?
What is the role of technology in education?
What is the school board's role in selecting texts and library books?
What, if anything, should your district do about teaching values?
How is the school board role different from that of the superintendent and administration?