

Interested in
School Board Service?



Learn Why
Serving Matters



ASBA
Arizona School Boards Association

Cultivating
excellence
in locally-
governed
school
districts



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We applaud your interest in becoming a member of your local school board.

Local school boards are a uniquely American institution and at the heart of this country's public education system. A board's existence is based on the belief that lay control of public education makes schools flexible and responsive to the needs of the local community.

School board members are elected by voters within the school district. School board elections are part of the general election in even-numbered years.

The Arizona School Boards Association is committed to quality leadership and advocacy for children in public schools. As such, we are dedicated to supporting the efforts of potential and future school board governing members.

To determine whether being a school board member is right for you, you'll want to understand the duties and responsibilities of the position and the legal requirements of running for and holding office, and the process of running for election. You'll also want to consider the personal attributes needed to be an effective board member, including review the code of ethics by which you must abide by once elected.

Becoming a Board Member



School board members are responsible for broad, futuristic thinking, minute analysis and decisive action in all areas that affect students and staff in their schools. Some roles and responsibilities are implicit. Others are specifically mandated (A.R.S. §15-341) or allowed (§15-342) by Arizona law. School board members have no individual authority—the power of a school board exists only as a group. Everything board members do is focused, through the lens of equity, on providing the best education possible for the children in their community.

Set the Direction

The governing board, with extensive input from the staff and community, is responsible for envisioning the future of the public schools in their community. After setting the vision and mission for the district, the governing board works collaboratively to establish strategic goals to move the organization toward the community's vision for its schools.

Establish the Structure

Board policies and goals establish the structure and create the environment for ensuring that the needs of all students are met. The superintendent uses the structure established by the board to manage operations on a day-to-day basis. Although the superintendent may suggest changes to policies, only the board as a whole has the legal authority to adopt policy.

Provide Support

The board provides support to its organization by ensuring that resources available are aligned to meet established goals and provide for the needs of all students. Support also is provided by recognizing and encouraging excellence throughout the organization.

Ensure Accountability

As the community's representative in the local schools, the board is responsible for ensuring that the schools are well run – that resources are used wisely and that high standards for academic performance are set. The board, as a whole, needs to monitor performance to meet established goals – academic, financial and operational.

Advocate for Your Students

One of the board's most important roles is to be the ambassador for public education in the community. As individuals, each board member can help communicate the ways in which their local schools are supporting student educational needs, parent and community aspirations, and state and federal standards. Together, the board also can demonstrate that an atmosphere of collaboration and respect is the most conducive environment for providing the best education for children in the community.

Abide by a Code of Ethics

A code of ethics for board members is included in the policies adopted by most school boards for their districts, and it is incumbent on individual board members to follow it.

Specific Duties

Specific duties of school boards may relate to employment, purchasing, budget preparation, students and policies. They may include:

- Hiring and evaluating the district superintendent.
- Providing guidance in the development of the budget to ensure funding needed to meet board established goals.
- Approving the budget.
- Monitoring the budget.
- Setting salaries for employees.
- Approving purchases.
- Establishing and approving policies.
- Approving curriculum materials.
- Adopting the school calendar.
- Reviewing regulations for compliance with policy.

- Approving personnel actions based on the superintendent's recommendation.
- Closing or constructing schools.
- Assessing board effectiveness.
- Monitoring progress toward goals.

Mandatory duties of school boards are defined in A.R.S. §15-341. Discretionary powers are defined in A.R.S. §15-342.

What School Board Members and Boards DON'T Do

School board members do not:

- Implement policy; school boards make policy and superintendents carry it out.
- Manage the day-to-day operations of the school district; school boards see to it that the district is managed by professionals.
- Evaluate staff, other than the superintendent, nor do they become involved in employment interviews, other than those for superintendent.



Board members must:

- Be elected by the voters in the district or be appointed by the county superintendent of schools.
- Reside within the legal boundaries of the school district and have lived in the district for at least one year immediately preceding the day of election.
- Be a registered voter.
- Board members cannot be, or have a spouse or dependent who is, an employee of the district when assuming office or during the term of office.

Board members cannot serve simultaneously on more than one school district governing board.

The position is unpaid, though some expenses may be reimbursed.

School board members have no individual authority over school matters. The authority of a board member includes expressing an opinion and casting a vote as a part of the governing board in a board meeting.



Serving as a member of your local school board is one of the most challenging and rewarding jobs you will ever undertake. It also is an enormous responsibility. As a school board member, the decisions you make will affect children and their parents, the livelihood of school system employees and the economic well-being of your community. Service to a board requires time, energy, a willingness to learn about issues affecting your schools, and a passion for a public education system committed to providing the best and most appropriate education for all children entrusted to its care.

Effective school board members share some common attributes. Before deciding to run for election to your local governing board, consider whether you possess the qualities that will enable you to best serve your community.

- Have a conviction that public education is important.
- Are committed to improving public education for all children in Arizona.
- Possess a sincere desire to serve the community, rather than a desire for personal glory or to achieve a personal goal.
- Have the ability to understand the forces of change in our society and foresee, to some extent, the shape of the future in order to plan wisely.
- Have loyalty to the democratic process.
- Have the courage to make difficult decisions, defend the philosophy and goals of the organization, and withstand criticism from people who hold opposing views.
- Are able to accept the will of the majority and support a decision when it is made by the board.
- Respect the diversity of perspectives and cultural backgrounds on the board and in the community, enabling them to serve with tolerance and without prejudice.
- Participate in a collaborative culture, recognizing that success in achieving board goals and implementing ideas requires a team approach.
- Can communicate well with others.

Personal Attributes

- Are willing to invest the significant time and energy required by board service.
- Are available to attend all board meetings and related board work.
- Strive to be knowledgeable about policies and programs.
- Have professional respect for district staff.
- Are respected and involved in their communities.
- Bring a broad base of knowledge and experience to the job, enabling them to vote with intelligence and confidence on complex issues such as finance, curriculum and student-employee-community relationships.
- Know that the reputation of the entire school district is reflected in their behavior and attitude.
- Understand the board's roles and responsibilities.
- Are willing to learn from others.

School board elections are part of the general election in even-numbered years. Special elections to fill unanticipated vacancies between regular elections may be called by the county superintendent of schools. County school superintendents may also choose to appoint an individual to fill such a vacancy. Because school board elections are non-partisan, primary elections do not pertain to the elections of school board members.

Eligibility to run

Any registered voter that resides within the legal boundaries of the school district and has done so at least one year immediately preceding the day of election may run for school board.

A person who is employed, or whose spouse is employed, by a district can stand for election for governing board. However, if elected, the successful candidate and/or spouse must terminate employment with the district before taking office.

Other limitations on board service exist:

- Board members may not serve simultaneously on more than one school district governing board.
- A person who has an immediate family member sitting on a school district governing board and who has shared the same household of residence with that family member within four years prior to the election is ineligible to be a candidate for nomination or election to that governing board if the governing board is composed of five members, unless the immediate family member is serving in the last year of a term of office.
- Two or more individuals related by marriage, blood or law to the third degree are prohibited from serving simultaneously on a five-member school governing board with a minimum student count of 250 located within a county of more than 50,000 people.

Term of Office

Election is for a four-year term, except for those positions filling a vacancy or for those districts with two-year terms.

The Process for Running

- Pick up or request an information packet for your county superintendent of schools
- File a statement of organization for political committee with your county election department or county superintendent of schools once you have reached a combined total of \$1,100 in contributions and expenses
- Collect signatures (you can collect signatures without filing a political committee statement of organization)
- File your signature pages with the county superintendent of schools between the identified candidate filing period
- Run your campaign

Nominating petitions are required for those running for school board. Candidates can gather signatures without forming a political committee. Eligible persons desiring to run for the school board should:

1. Obtain nominating petitions from the county superintendent of schools.
2. Ask the county superintendent how many signatures of qualified voters within the school district boundaries are required.
3. Obtain necessary signatures, being very careful to follow the legal requirements for valid signatures.
4. File the nominating petitions with the county superintendent of schools during the designated time frame for the current election cycle.

Some candidates may need to file a statement of organization.

Campaign Finance Reports

School board candidates who have combined total of \$1,100 contributions and expenses must file a political committee statement of organization. Consult your county elections office for contribution limits and filing information. Forms for reporting can be obtained from the county superintendent of schools.

Unlike candidates for state-wide office, candidates for governing board are not required to file financial disclosure statements.

Appointment

Occasionally school board members must leave their positions before they have completed their terms. In the case of a mid-term vacancy, the county superintendent of schools may appoint a new member to fill the position through the end of the term or the next election. Check with your county superintendent of schools for details regarding specific appointments.



How often does a school board meet?

It varies. Boards must meet at least once a month during the school year. Many boards regularly meet twice a month year round and call special meetings as needed.

Will I get paid?

No. Members may be reimbursed for travel and subsistence expenses for authorized school purposes.

As a board member, can I be held personally liable for legal claims against the board or the school district?

As a general rule, no. By state law, governing board members cannot be held liable for actions taken in good faith and within the scope of their authority. Boards also may receive legal counsel to advise them, and the liability insurance of most, if not all, organizations covers board members who are acting in their official capacity. A governing board member is not immune from liability, however, if he or she:

- Acts outside the scope of authority;
- Knows (or should have known) that an action violates a person's constitutional rights;
- Engages in criminal activity;
- Commits an intentional tort, such as assault, or
- Violates the open meeting or conflict of interest laws.

Can my company do business with the school district if I am a board member?

Yes, but a board member cannot vote on matters in which he or she has a conflict of interest, and, in most circumstances, a board member's company may seek only contracts offered by competitive bidding. The conflict of interest restrictions applicable to governing board members vary if the district's enrollment is greater or less than 3,000 students.

What happens if I move out of the district while I hold office?

Governing board members must reside in their district to hold office. When notified that a member has moved from the district, the county superintendent can fill the vacancy by appointment or by calling a special election.



Serving school boards and school board members in Arizona is at the heart of the Arizona School Boards Association's mission. We work toward the best schools in every Arizona community by cultivating excellence in locally-governed school districts. More than 250 school districts and charter schools from across Arizona, representing 1,200-plus school board members and over 1 million children, are members of ASBA.

Board Training and Development

ASBA offers a full-day New Board Member Orientation in election years with basic information to jump start your board service. ASBA also provides on-going model training and leadership to school board members and administrators, emphasizing best practices in public school governance. We conduct in-service education for prospective and experienced board members, including workshops and seminars, a school law conference and an annual conference.

At these and other events, topics of vital interest to school board members are explored in depth to enable better understanding of the complex issues facing public schools and school boards today. Boards also may contract with ASBA for customized board training sessions.

ASBA also offers board members resource materials specifically related to school board issues.

Advocacy

ASBA represents and advocates for the diverse interests of public school governing boards. Our Governmental Relations staff works diligently during the legislative session to ensure adequate state support of education and the enactment of legislation that favors the interests of public schools. The proximity of our headquarters to the State Capitol enables our staff to actively engage lawmakers to advance ASBA's political agenda (as adopted by the organization's delegate assembly). During the legislative session, our Governmental Relations staff also produces daily in-session updates aimed at informing members of pending legislative activity.

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Board members also have the opportunity to get more involved in state education issues through ASBA's grassroots efforts. Relationships are also maintained with the Governor's Office, State Board of Education, Arizona Department of Education and other state agencies affecting the operation of public schools.

Legal Services

ASBA's Legal Services staff is available to answer board members' questions about the law and to do a limited amount of legal research. (ASBA is not empowered to give specific legal advice.)

ASBA also engages in legal advocacy to advance members' political agenda, representing the association and its member boards in state and federal courts and regulatory proceedings.

Policy Services

Our Policy Services staff provides boards with support in developing and maintaining school policy to help ensure that they are in compliance with the most current state and federal laws, regulations and opinions issued by the courts and legal officers. Policies are updated and accessed at the district level through ASBA's cloud-based PolicyBridge platform. This is provided as a fee service. For charter schools, ASBA provides a general operations handbook at a very affordable price.

Executive Search Services

ASBA conducts superintendent or other executive searches on behalf of member school boards as a fee service.

Communications and Public Relations

ASBA's Communications staff keeps members up-to-date on association happenings, serves as a resource to boards and members on communications topics, and engages in public relations efforts to develop the informed understanding of public education necessary to achieve ASBA's vision, mission and goals.

This includes keeping members informed and updated with the bi-weekly newsletter, the *ASBACONNECT*, an annual member magazine, the *ASBA Journal*, as well as sharing information via the association's website and through social media. We also operate the Arizona Education News Service (www.azednews.com), a statewide enterprise that delivers to the public balanced, accurate and concise journalism focused on the issues and people that impact Arizona education today. In addition, ASBA actively represents the association and the interests of its member boards in the media.

Contact Us

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Code of Ethics for Arizona School Board Members

The ASBA Board endorses the following code for local school board members.

As a member of my local Board of Education I will strive to improve public education, and to that end I will:

- Attend all regularly scheduled Board meetings insofar as possible, and become informed concerning the issues to be considered at those meetings;
- Recognize that a board member should endeavor to make policy decisions only after full discussion at publicly held Board meetings;
- Render all decisions based on the available facts and my independent judgment, and refuse to surrender that judgment to individuals or special interest groups;
- Encourage the free expression of opinion by all Board members, and seek systematic communications between the Board and students, staff, and all elements of the community;
- Work with other Board members to establish effective Board policies and to delegate authority for the administration of the schools to the Superintendent;
- Communicate to other Board members and the Superintendent expression of public reaction to Board policies and school programs;
- Inform oneself about current educational issues by individual study and through participation in programs providing needed information, such as those sponsored by my state and national school boards association;
- Support the employment of those persons best qualified to serve as school staff, and insist on a regular and impartial evaluation of all staff;
- Avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest, and refrain from using my Board position for personal or partisan gain;
- Take no private action that will compromise the Board or administration, and respect the confidentiality of information that is privileged under applicable law, and
- Remember always that my first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare of the students attending the public schools.

Contact Information for County School Superintendents

To begin the process of running for election as a school board member, contact your county superintendent of schools:

Apache County

P.O. Box 548
75 N. 1st West
St. Johns, AZ 85936
(928) 337-7539
schools.apachecounty.net

Cochise County

100 Clawson Ave., 3rd FL.
Bisbee, AZ 85603
cochise.az.gov/schools/home

Coconino County

2384 N. Steves Blvd.
Flagstaff, AZ 86004
(928) 679-8070
www.coconino.az.gov/CCESA

Gila County

1400 E. Ash St.
Globe, AZ 85501
(928) 402-8784
[gilacountyaz.gov/government/school_
superintendent/index.php](http://gilacountyaz.gov/government/school_superintendent/index.php)

Graham County

921 Thatcher Blvd.
Safford, AZ 85546
(928) 428-2880
graham.az.gov/school-superintendent/

Greenlee County

P.O. Box 1595
253 Fifth St.
Clifton, AZ 85533
(928) 865-2822
co.greenlee.az.us/schools

La Paz County

1112 Joshua Ave., Ste. 205
Parker, AZ 85344
(928) 669-6183
lapazschools.org

Maricopa County

4041 N. Central Ave., Ste. 1200
Phoenix, AZ 85012
(602) 506-3866
www.education.maricopa.gov

Contact Information

Mohave County

P.O. Box 7000
Kingman, AZ 86402
700 W. Beale St.
Kingman, AZ 86401
(928) 753-0747
mohavecounty.us/ContentPage.aspx?id=130

Navajo County

P.O. Box 668
100 E. Code Talkers Dr.
S. Highway 77
Holbrook, AZ 86025
(928) 524-4204
navajocountyaz.gov/Departments/Superintendent-of-Schools

Pima County

200 N. Stone Ave.
Tucson, AZ 85701
(520) 724-8451
schools.pima.gov

Pinal County

P.O. Box 769
75 N. Bailey St.
Florence, AZ 85132
(520) 866-6565
pinalesa.org

Santa Cruz County

2150 N. Congress Dr.
Nogales, AZ 85621
(520) 375-7940
co.santa-cruz.az.us/294/Superintendent-of-Schools

Yavapai County

2970 Centerpointe East Dr.
Prescott, AZ 86301
(928) 771-3326
ycesa.com

Yuma County

210 S. 1st Ave.
Yuma, AZ 85364
(928) 373-1006
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