



# Becoming a Candidate

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### How do I prepare to serve on my school board?

Anyone who plans to run for the school board should acquire a basic understanding of the school district, including:

- purpose (what is the school district trying to accomplish?)
- organization (who does what?)
- finance (income and expenses)
- government (laws and regulations and local school board policies)
- board procedures (how business is conducted)

A great board candidate understands the proper relationship of the school board to the state, the community and the superintendent – and the proper relationship of the individual board member to the other members of the board. In preparation for board candidacy, he or she will:

- attend board meetings to learn how the board functions
- make an appointment with the district superintendent to learn more about the district and to discuss challenges and problems facing the board
- visit [www.casb.org](http://www.casb.org) and the school district office to read as much as possible about the nature of school board work and the laws affecting schools

### Elections

School board members are elected at regular biennial school elections, which are held on the first Tuesday in November of each odd-numbered year.

Some school districts have a director district plan of representation, which means that school board members must reside in certain geographical areas. Others have an at-large or a combined at-large and director district plan of representation.

Most Colorado school board members are elected to four-year staggered terms. Board members may be elected to serve two consecutive four-year terms unless the board has locally extended or removed term limits. Vacancies are filled by appointment until the next election. The county clerk is mostly responsible for conducting school elections; however, school officials also have election duties.

### Eligibility

A candidate for the school board must be a resident of the school district and a registered voter for at least 12 consecutive months prior to the election. If the school district has

director districts in its plan of representation, the person must be a resident of the director district in which he or she is a candidate. No person who has been convicted of a sexual offense against a child is eligible to serve on the school board. Because school director elections are nonpartisan, candidates may not campaign as members of a political party.

## **Nomination procedures**

A person who desires to be a candidate for school director must file a nomination petition signed by 25 eligible electors of the school district in districts with fewer than 1,000 students, or 50 eligible electors in larger districts. Your school district can provide more information about the number of signatures required on the petition.

The nomination petition must be filed with the designated election official of the school district no later than 67 days before the election. The candidate would be wise to obtain extra signatures in case some of the signatures are invalidated.

In most communities, nomination petitions are available at the local school district offices and must be filed at the school district. However, in some communities, the county clerk handles this. Call your school district office to find out where to pick up petitions.

## **Campaign filing requirements**

School board candidates must meet filing requirements under Colorado's Fair Campaign Practices Act (FCPA). One of the first steps is to file a candidate's affidavit with the Secretary of State within 10 days of becoming a candidate. Also, candidates are required to report contributions and expenditures on the Secretary of State's [online TRACER program](#). For more information about FCPA's reporting requirements and timelines for filing these reports, please visit the Colorado Secretary of State's website at [www.sos.state.co.us](http://www.sos.state.co.us).

## **Code of ethics for board members**

Adopted in 1999, the Code of Ethics of the National School Boards Association provides:

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 I 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 systemic 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 expressions of public reactions to board policies and school programs.

- Inform myself 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 associations.
- 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.
- Remember always that my first and greatest concern must be the educational welfare of the students attending the public schools.