



BOARD CANDIDATE INFORMATION SESSION

School Board Candidate Filing: May 15-19, 2023

This November, three of the five seats on the Mercer Island School District Board of Directors will be up for election - board positions 1, 3, and 5. School Board directors are elected at large to four-year terms by Mercer Island voters. Individuals who want to run for one of the seats up for election must file with King County Elections between May 15-19, 2023.

For more information, visit King County Elections (<https://kingcounty.gov/depts/elections/for-candidates.aspx>) and the Washington Secretary of State (<https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/candidates/>).

What is the role of a School Board member in Washington state?

The Washington State School Directors Association (WSSDA) offers a number of materials on this topic, including a video, a candidate handbook and website information:

<https://wssda.org/leadership-development/board-development/becoming-a-school-director/>.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Planning, setting and monitoring goals (Fundamentals and Operational Expectations)
 - Employing and evaluating the superintendent
 - Setting district policy
 - Adopting an annual operating budget
 - Making decisions about placing levies and bonds before voters
 - Approving the instructional program
 - Ratifying contracts negotiated with local bargaining units.
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What are the legal qualifications to become a board member?

A candidate for the Board of Directors must be a:

- Resident of Mercer Island
- Registered voter in the school district

To register to vote, you must be a citizen of the United States, a legal resident of Washington State and at least 18 years old by Election Day.

Neither a board member nor his/her spouse or dependent family members may be employed by the school district, except when the board member's spouse was employed by the district before the election or appointment to the board. All candidates and elected officials must file a financial disclosure statement and must report all campaign finances to the Washington State Public Disclosure Commission (<https://pdc.wa.gov/registration-reporting>). Annual filing is required if elected.

What are the primary election requirements?

Candidates who meet the legal qualifications above must file a Declaration of Candidacy with King County Elections within the filing period in May. There is no filing fee. The general election is in November, but the Primary Election Day is in August. If no more than two people file for a position, there is no primary election for that position.

When do new board members take office?

Election Day is November 7, 2023. Newly elected board members take office at the first official board meeting following the certification of election results by the county auditor or county elections officer. Typically, this is the first week in December.

How often does the School Board meet?

Board meetings are typically held the second and fourth Thursday of each month during the school year, beginning at 5:00 p.m., in the district office boardroom. The meeting schedule and start times are subject to change. The board also holds study sessions, executive sessions, and exempt sessions in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act (RCW 42.30.080).

Board agendas, videos of past meetings, and the annual calendar can be found at:
<https://go.boarddocs.com/wa/misd/Board.nsf/Public>.

What time commitment is required?

The duties of a School Board member involve an average minimum commitment of 18-20 hours per month for preparation, participation and attendance at meetings and other functions, such as community meetings, and graduation exercises. Every member of the Mercer Island School Board is asked to serve either on four additional district committees or on three additional district committees and in a board leadership role (president, vice president, or legislative representative).

Members are obligated to attend board meetings regularly. Whenever possible, each director is asked to give advance notice to the president or superintendent if they will be unable to attend a meeting. A majority of the board may excuse a director's absence if requested. The board may declare a board member's position vacant after four consecutive unexcused absences from regular board meetings.

Prospective candidates are encouraged to contact a member of the current Board of Directors to ask what the experience is like and what is involved.

How long is a School Board member's term?

School Board members are elected to a term of four (4) years.

How are vacancies filled when a board member leaves prior to the end of his or her term?

In case of a board vacancy, the remaining board members will appoint someone to fill the vacancy until the next regularly scheduled board election, at which time a director will be elected for the unexpired term, if any. The vacancy and application process will be posted on the district's website. Candidate interviews will take place during a meeting open to the public.