



# SERVING ON THE SCHOOL BOARD

What does it really mean?





## What does it really mean to be a School Board member for Orono Public Schools?

The Orono School District has a long tradition of honorable public service and strong leadership to the community and students. The six-member board functions at a high level and is aligned with national best practices. The Orono School Board was formed in 1949 by pillars in the communities the district serves. Strong leaders such as Russell Johnson from Independence and John Pillsbury, Jr. from Lake Minnetonka were pioneers in community service. Their belief system in service and care for children has remained a hallmark of membership through 53 board members over 75 years of dedication to excellence in education. The role of

a board member is bound by distinct laws, protocols, regulations, norms and best practice. Effective board members spend significant time listening, leading and engaging in the work of governance.

On Election Day 2024, voters will elect three residents to serve on the six-member School Board of Orono Public Schools. In response to community interest in serving on the Board, the District has prepared this guide that explores the **roles, responsibilities, and requirements** of School Board service for Orono Public Schools.

## ROLES | RESPONSIBILITIES | REQUIREMENTS

### Elections & Candidacy

The terms of three current School Board seats are expiring in January 2025. The election will be held on November 5, 2024. The period for filing an affidavit of candidacy for the office of School Board member begins at 8 a.m. Tuesday, July 30, 2024, and closes at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, August 13, 2024. An affidavit of candidacy may be obtained from the Orono Public Schools District Office (685 Old Crystal Bay Road N, Long Lake, MN 55356) or on the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State website. Prospective candidates **must sign the affidavit of candidacy in the presence of the Orono Schools Election Clerk** and pay the \$2.00 filing fee during the filing period.

### Candidates must affirm:

- I am eligible to vote in Minnesota.
- I have not filed for the same or any other office at the upcoming primary or general election (except as provided in M.S. 204B.06, subd. 1 (2)).
- I am—or will be upon assuming office in January 2025—a minimum of 21 years of age.
- I will have maintained residence in this district for at least 30 days before the general election date.
- I have not been convicted of an offense for which registration is required under Minn. Stat. 243.166.

## Membership

The School Board is made up of six citizens elected at large by voters in the District every two years to four-year overlapping terms. At the end of a four-year term, members may run for reelection to successive terms. Voting takes place at general elections in November and terms begin the first Monday in January thereafter.

Every year at its first meeting in January, the School Board holds an organizational meeting to elect officers, make committee and school liaison assignments, and settle other routine business. The Superintendent is an ex-officio member of the Board who facilitates the work of the Board and is responsible to the Board for providing leadership to the District and carrying out Board directives.

## Responsibilities

As the elected governing body of the Orono School District the School Board is responsible to:

- Establish policy. The administration implements policy and supervises school operations.
- Employ and evaluate the Superintendent. The School Board is responsible for hiring, then evaluating, the chief administrator who oversees all operations of the School District.
- Establish and approve the annual budget.
- Negotiate and approve contracts with unions that represent our employees
- Set the annual local school levy.
- Work with the administration to determine the District's educational goals.

## Current Members

**Mike Bash, Chair**

Term expires January 1, 2025

**Sarah Borchers, Vice Chair**

Term expires: January 1, 2027

**Ali Howe, Treasurer**

Term expires: January 1, 2025

**Laura Wallander, Clerk**

Term expires: January 1, 2025

**Wendy Lundsgaard, Director**

Term expires: January 1, 2027

**Todd Madson, Director**

Term expires: January 1, 2027

- Interpret the needs of the community regarding the educational program.
- Authorize development and revision of curriculum and student services.
- Approve expenditures and otherwise ensure that proper facilities and equipment are available to support safety, teaching, and learning in Orono Public Schools.
- Approve appointment of staff members as well as resignations, terminations and leaves of absence.



## Meetings

The School Board's official meetings are streamed live, recorded and archived on the Orono School Board YouTube channel.

Membership on the School Board requires attendance at a variety of meetings held every month as well as participation on school committee and community group assignments.

### Official Meetings

In general, the Orono School Board holds official meetings open to the public at 7 p.m. on the second and fourth Mondays of each month. Meetings are held at the District Office, 685 N. Old Crystal Bay Road, Long Lake. Meeting agendas and approved minutes are posted on the district's School Board webpage.

### Work Sessions

The School Board also holds work sessions to study topics in more depth. No formal action is taken during work sessions. Work sessions are typically held immediately following regular meetings on a predetermined basis. They are open to the public.

### Public Comment and Coffee & Conversation Sessions

The School Board welcomes comments from community members, whether via email or in person. The School Board hosts a public comment session at 7 p.m. during the first regular meeting of the month. Speakers register in advance and are limited in the amount of time they can speak. If there are no registrations, the session is not held. At a public comment session, speakers address the full Board in public. The Board also hosts a coffee & conversation session at 6:30 p.m. preceding the second Board meeting of the month. No registration is required. All speakers are required to protect individuals' privacy, including name, employment, health history, etc.

### School Liaisons

School liaison assignments, determined annually, pair School Board members with specific elementary, middle, and high schools. Board members are encouraged to attend the parent/teacher organization meetings for each of their liaison schools.

### City Council Liaisons

Orono Schools serves the following cities: Independence, Long Lake, Maple Plain, Medina, Minnetonka Beach and Orono. Each Board member is named a liaison to a council and occasionally attends meetings or makes brief presentations regarding school district issues.

### Board Member Code of Ethics

The School Board has developed a Code of Ethics policy. This policy is in place to assist School Board members with recognizing their roles and the contributions they must make to develop an effective and responsible School Board. Each Board member is responsible for adhering to this policy as it pertains to the following areas:

- Personal Responsibility
- Function of the Role
- Relationships with Fellow Board Members
- Community Engagement
- Interactions with Superintendent and Staff
- Legal Obligations
- Negotiate and approve contracts with unions that represent our employees

A photograph of the Orono Schools District Office building, a modern structure with large glass windows and a brick facade. The words "ORONO SCHOOLS DISTRICT OFFICE" are visible on the glass. The image is partially obscured by a dark blue overlay on the left.

## Committee and Task Force Assignments

School Board members accept assignments to numerous School District committees and task forces which meet periodically to study specific issues, work on special projects and make recommendations to the School Board.

In addition, School Board members represent Orono Public Schools in metro and state education organizations in which the School District has membership. Current committees include:

- Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD)
- Community Education Advisory Council
- Curriculum & Accountability Council
- ECFE Advisory Committee (Early Childhood Family Education)
- ECSU (Educational Cooperative Services Unit)
- Intermediate District #287
- Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL)
- Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) Local Legislative Liaison
- Orono City/School Communication
- Orono Foundation for Education
- Orono Healthy Youth
- Orono Ice Arena Board
- Negotiations Committee
- Co-Curricular Committee
- Facilities & Finance Committee
- Board Policy Committee
- Orono Action Steering Committee
- Special Education Parent Partnership Committee
- Staff Development Committee
- Teacher Meet and Confer



### Time Commitment

The actual time commitment required varies depending on the Board member and number of issues the School Board is addressing at any given time. Typically, a Board member could expect to devote anywhere from 10 to 40 hours a month studying issues, attending meetings, and responding to and communicating with community members.



### Compensation

The Orono School Board has a long tradition of receiving no fiscal compensation. As a result, each board member receives \$0.00 a year.

# Policy Governance

There are many state statutes and federal laws that impact school board governance. School Board members are obligated to follow those laws and regulations.

For years, Orono's School Board has been among the leaders in adopting policy governance as a model of operation. How does it work?

The School Board focuses on policy decisions rather than on operational issues. It adopts policies that provide general principles for guiding the management of the school district. The administration develops regulations that specifically support the School Board's policies. Policies can only be adopted by the School Board, while regulations do not require School Board approval to be implemented.

Group	Roles
Public and Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Primary educator(s) of the child (parents/guardians)</li><li>• Elect School Board members</li><li>• Engage School Board members on educational issues</li><li>• Vote on levy requests</li></ul>
School Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supervision and appraisal for one employee: the Superintendent</li><li>• Development of policies that govern schools and creation of district mission/vision/values</li><li>• Engagement with the public</li><li>• Approval of budgets</li></ul>
Superintendent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Management and operation of school district through implementation of Board policies</li></ul>
Principals and Administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create school-based plans that align with district's operational plans and vision</li><li>• Support for the Superintendent</li><li>• Implementation of policies and procedures</li></ul>
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Educate students on district curriculum</li><li>• Support for Superintendent, principals and administration</li><li>• Implementation of policies and procedures</li></ul>

**City councils vs. ‘policy governance’ School Boards: What’s the difference?**

For a public that’s generally more familiar with city council structures, School Board roles can often be confusing. Simply put, School Boards govern, and city councils manage.

School boards follow a “policy governance” model of leadership that allows the administration to operate the schools according to the policies the School Board sets.

City Council Members	School Board Members
Manage the “hows” at tactical level of organization.	Govern through policies and budgets and by defining “why and what we’re providing,” but not “how.”
Maintain an individual voice after council action.	Have a unified voice after board action.
Operate individually.	Operate as a whole board with no individual member authority.





## VISION

Orono Schools will inspire lifelong learners and ethical citizens who positively impact our world.

## MISSION

Inspiring and empowering every student to achieve their highest potential through exceptional experiences.

## STRATEGIC GOALS

### Scholarship

Through personalized and rigorous learning across all disciplines, we will ensure all students possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to thrive in any post-secondary experience and achieve their life goals.

### Character

We will instill in every child a strong foundation of ethical decision making, responsibility, and integrity, nurturing them to become caring and trustworthy individuals who contribute to their communities.

### Connectedness

We will foster a connected learning community in which empathy, belonging, and strong relationships are cultivated to empower students and staff.

## VALUES

### Excellence

Strive for the highest quality in everything we do through commitment to continuous improvement.

### Resilience

Develop the grit to meet challenges with courage, perseverance, and determination.

### Relationships

Build healthy connections of trust, respect, care, and understanding in our learning community.

### Inclusion

Embrace unique needs, backgrounds, ideas, and talents.

### Global Perspective

Inspire learners to be engaged and adaptive citizens in our interconnected world.

### Stewardship

Demonstrate accountability through ethical management of finances, facilities, and human resources.

### Community

Create connections and support where all individuals grow, thrive, and positively contribute to our collective well-being.