

# A SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATE *guide*



## INTRODUCTION

Are you considering a run for your local school board? In Pennsylvania, nearly 4,500 individuals serve as school board directors across 500 public school districts. Each election cycle brings turnover, with over 1,000 new directors joining boards every other year. Serving on a school board is a significant volunteer role, and being elected or appointed is a vote of confidence from your community. With that honor comes the responsibility to represent the needs and interests of your community effectively, and you will be responsible for the education of their most cherished asset: their children.

Serving on a school board offers a rewarding opportunity to make a positive impact in your community. This role provides a chance to contribute meaningfully and help shape the future of education in your community. While you don't need a background in government, education, public policy or even have children in the district, it's helpful to be aware of the key considerations before running or applying for a board position.

There are several compelling reasons to run for your local school board. These include a desire to improve district success and student outcomes, a passion for public education, and a willingness to use your skills to strengthen your local schools. These motivations align well with the broader responsibilities of a school board director.

To be effective as a school board director, one should approach the role with understanding and respect for overseeing the entire district and ensuring the overarching goal of student success. Pursuing narrow goals of a specific issue can lead to ineffective governance of the district. Successful board directors understand that their role involves overseeing the entire district and ensuring the overall success of the schools.

If you're unsure about your readiness to serve on a school board, it's a good idea to discuss your decision with current or former board directors and the district superintendent. To help with your decision, consider the questions in the box to the right.



## THE SCHOOL BOARDING QUESTIONNAIRE

There may be dozens of questions you could ask before you firmly commit to becoming a candidate for your local school board. Any prudent candidate for a position of this importance must make an effort to understand the responsibilities and expectations before they consider or accept the challenge of serving. Consider the following questions to help determine if school board service is right for you.

- What are my goals for serving?
- What defines my “term” of service: length, commitment, promise, etc.?
- What are my liabilities: legal, financial, moral?
- Are there expectations from those who have encouraged or supported me?
- Do I have an agenda to accomplish, or am I serving for the good of all?
- What is the commitment in terms of time, energy and involvement?
- What is my “passion quotient” about serving?
- Am I willing to be a team player with an open mind?

Adapted from *The Art of School Building: What Every School Board Member Should Know*, Jim Burgett, 2014.

# “School boards do not run the school district; they ensure the district is run well.”

PSBA, *Essentials of School Board Service*, 2023.

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## THE ROLE OF THE BOARD

A school board is the governing authority of a school district, elected by its citizens, which oversees the functioning of the district. As the governing authority, a school board plays a crucial role in steering the strategic direction of a school district, ensuring that all actions and decisions align with and advance the district’s mission, vision and goals. At a business meeting of a school board, official action is taken as required by federal and state law, regulations, and local school board policy. Board actions include, but are not limited to, reviewing and adopting the district’s annual budget, levying and assessing local taxes, officially approving the hiring and compensation of personnel, adopting planned instruction, and appointing a district superintendent to manage the district.

A school board’s job is to govern the district, which means overseeing and guiding its strategic direction and policies, while the district superintendent manages the day-to-day operations by implementing the board’s decisions. Governance involves setting the vision and framework within which the superintendent operates, ensuring alignment with the district’s mission and goals.

Public education is fundamentally a state responsibility and enjoys special status under the Constitution of Pennsylvania. Article II, Section 14 states, “The General Assembly shall provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of public education. ...” Article IX, Section 10 expressly recognizes that school districts have the status of a “unit of local government.” To carry out this mandate, the General Assembly in 1834 first enacted laws creating a system of free public schools, organized into school districts governed by school boards. These laws delegated broad powers to local school boards, conferring a great degree of autonomy in many aspects of their responsibilities. Over time, the General Assembly also enacted laws creating the State Board of Education, the Department of Education, the intermediate unit structure and other state agencies. These agencies administer the state laws and regulations that control various aspects of the state’s public education system. Despite the broad powers delegated to school boards, the work of governing a public school system still must happen in an environment highly regulated at the state and federal levels, involving numerous mandates, restrictions and technicalities with which school boards must comply.

The Public School Code of 1949, commonly referred to as the PA School Code, is the primary statutory law that addresses nearly every aspect of public school operations, including the organization and general powers of school boards. Per the PA School Code, a school board’s authority is exercised through the collective decisions of the entire board acting as the governing body. The law does not convey any power or authority upon individual school board directors acting on their own merely by virtue of their office. The phrase “Team of 10” is often used to define the entire board of elected school directors and the superintendent as a leadership team. The PA School Code states that “the district superintendent shall have a seat on the board of school directors of the district, and a right to speak on all matters before the board, but not to vote.”

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**“Your work as a school board member or superintendent is based on human relations: working as a team, with clear roles, toward a common goal.”**

**Richard Mayer, *How Not To Be a Terrible School Board Member*, 2011.**

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A school board primarily governs through directives, or decisions made at official board meetings. The district’s superintendent then implements the board’s directives and policies through management of the day-to-day operation of the school district. The superintendent must operate within federal and state laws and regulations while adhering to board-approved district contracts and policies, which are set by the board in collaboration with the superintendent. A high-functioning school board collaborates closely with the superintendent, who serves as their primary administrator on all matters brought before the board. In Pennsylvania, the superintendent is regarded as a nonvoting 10th member of their school board, providing critical data, research and recommendations to guide board decisions.

The list below delineates some of the duties of the school board vs. those of the superintendent:

The school board <b>GOVERNS</b> by:	The superintendent <b>MANAGES</b> by:
 Approving the district vision, mission and goals	 Developing and implementing plans to achieve the district vision, mission and goals
 Adopting and monitoring the district budget	 Developing recommendations and executing the district budget
 Adopting policies for the operation of the district	 Developing recommendations and implementing board policies
 Monitoring student achievement and reviewing data to make informed decisions	 Collecting data and providing progress updates on district goals, academic initiatives, etc.
 Annually evaluating the district superintendent	 Directing the evaluation of district administration and staff
 Engaging with the school community and keeping the superintendent informed	 Engaging with the school community and keeping the board informed
 Providing oversight of district compliance with laws, regulations and codes	 Ensuring district compliance with laws, regulations and codes

While the law does not grant individual school board directors specific powers beyond their voice and vote at school board meetings, they do have important responsibilities that are crucial for contributing to a high-functioning school board. These responsibilities, along with the collective duties of the school board, are outlined in PSBA's Principles for Governance and Leadership. School board directors must be prepared to invest the necessary time and engage in continuous learning around these areas to fulfill their roles effectively.

## **PRINCIPLES FOR GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP**

Developed by a committee of experienced school board directors and superintendents, the **Principles for Governance and Leadership** offers school boards a framework that underscores how decisions made in the boardroom directly impact the classroom. The Principles highlight both the responsibilities of the school board as the collective governing body of a school district as well as key responsibilities of individual school board directors in contributing to a high-functioning school board.



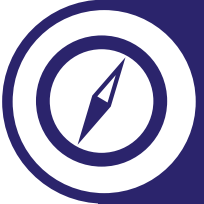
# Pennsylvania School Boards Association PRINCIPLES FOR GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Pennsylvania school boards are committed to providing **every** student the opportunity to grow and achieve. Our actions, as elected and appointed board members, ultimately have both short- and long-term impact in the classroom. Therefore, we pledge that we will...



## LEAD RESPONSIBLY

- Prepare for, attend and actively participate in board meetings
- Work together with civility and cooperation, respecting that individuals hold differing opinions and ideas
- Participate in professional development, training and board retreats
- Collaborate with the superintendent, acknowledging their role as the 10th member of the board and commissioned officer of the commonwealth



## ACT ETHICALLY

- Never use the position for improper benefit to self or others
- Avoid actual or perceived conflicts of interest
- Recognize school directors do not possess any authority outside of the collective board
- Accept that when a board has made a decision, it is time to move forward collectively and constructively



## PLAN THOUGHTFULLY

- Implement a collaborative strategic planning process
- Set annual goals that are aligned with comprehensive plans, recognizing the need to adapt as situations change
- Develop a comprehensive financial plan and master facilities plan that anticipates short- and long-term needs
- Allocate resources to effectively impact student success



## EVALUATE CONTINUOUSLY

- Make data-informed decisions
- Evaluate the superintendent annually
- Conduct a board self-assessment on a recurring basis
- Focus on student growth and achievement
- Review effectiveness of all comprehensive and strategic plans



## COMMUNICATE CLEARLY

- Promote open, honest and respectful dialogue among the board, staff and community
- Acknowledge and listen to varied input from all stakeholders
- Promote transparency while protecting necessary confidential matters
- Set expectations and guidelines for individual board member communication



## ADVOCATE EARNESTLY

- Promote public education as a keystone of our commonwealth
- Engage the community by seeking input, building support networks and generating action
- Champion public education by engaging local, state and federal officials



## GOVERN EFFECTIVELY

- Establish and adhere to rules and procedures for board operations
- Develop, adopt, revise and review policy routinely
- Align board decisions to policy, ensuring compliance with the PA School Code and other local, state and federal laws
- Remain focused on the role of governance, effectively delegating management tasks to the administration

*Updated and Approved by the PSBA Governing Board October 30, 2022*

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School boards in Pennsylvania adopt the Principles for Governance and Leadership as board policy or by resolution. To find out if your school board has adopted this governance framework as policy, please review your district's publicly accessible board policy manual and see Policy #011: Principles for Governance and Leadership.

## SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

The Sunshine Act, Pennsylvania's open meetings law, requires that official action and deliberations by a quorum of a school board and most board committees take place at a meeting open to the public. School boards must announce to the public, in advance, when and where meetings will be held in order for the public to attend, post the meeting agenda, and provide the opportunity for members of the school community to comment before the board takes official action. The PA School Code, Sunshine Act, a board's adopted parliamentary procedure (such as Robert's Rules of Order), and a board's adopted policies establish the rules and requirements for how a school board meets and conducts its business. Per the Sunshine Act, a meeting is "held for the purpose of deliberating agency business or taking official action." During official business meetings, the school board's role is to review and discuss the information presented on the agenda and to take official action by voting on motions related to that business — for example, approving the hiring of personnel recommended by the administration.

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**"Always keep in mind that while meetings are open to the public and the public has a way to provide input, it is a meeting of the board, not a meeting of the public."**

*PSBA, Essentials of School Board Service, 2023.*

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The Sunshine Act permits school boards to discuss a limited number of items in a closed meeting or "out of the sunshine." Such meetings are called executive sessions and may be held only for the following reasons:

- Personnel matters
- Information, strategy and negotiation related to negotiation or arbitration of a collective bargaining agreement
- Consideration of the lease or purchase of property
- Consulting with an attorney or other professional adviser about active or pending litigation

- Discussing agency business which, if conducted in public, would violate a lawful privilege or lead to disclosure of information or confidentiality protected by law
- Discussion of certain public safety issues if disclosure of the information would be reasonably likely to jeopardize or threaten public safety or preparedness or public protection

In addition to executive sessions, the Sunshine Act also permits school board directors to attend a conference or a seminar, such as training sessions and informational briefings, without the public present. This is known as the conference session exemption.

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**"The information shared in executive session is considered privileged, so it is imperative that school directors keep any matters discussed in executive session confidential. Confidentiality is necessary because you will learn very private information about students, teachers, medical issues and legal matters."**

*PSBA, Essentials of School Board Service, 2023.*

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## LESSONS LEARNED

When asked, experienced school board directors often identify the following as the most difficult lesson or fact they had to learn about serving on their local school board:

- Acknowledging that you have no power and authority as an individual school board director except your voice and vote at school board meetings
- Realizing the primary focus of all board decisions must be student achievement, growth, and success
- Learning how to respond to complaints and concerns from the community; directing community members through the chain of command
- Recognizing the difference between setting policy (board's job) and administering those policies in the schools (superintendent's job)
- Understanding that you can't solve everyone's problems by yourself

**“The job requires someone who cares about the schools and has the confidence to believe he or she can make a difference, someone with the will to lead and the ability to be part of a team, someone with the desire to meet a challenge. I tell strangers that school board service requires someone unusual, but board members hear me say that it takes someone extraordinary.”**

*Lynn Hamilton, **The Secrets of School Board Success**, 2014.*

- Being able to hold the minority viewpoint when voting, then openly supporting the majority vote of the board
- Realizing that no matter what you think you know, you still have a lot to learn
- Understanding your function on the school board and how to accomplish it most effectively

## **SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS**

Most school board directors in Pennsylvania are elected to office by their school communities. A portion of school board directors are elected every other year in the municipal election, which occurs in November of odd-numbered years. The terms of office of school board directors begin and end on the first Monday of December following that election. The PA School Code provides that in each school district, nine school board directors are elected for four-year terms, with five to be elected in one municipal election and four to be elected two years later in the next municipal election. This five-four rotation helps ensure continuity, so that there are always at least some members of the board who have two or more years of experience.

School districts have the option to adopt one of three election plans for selecting school board directors: at large, by region, or a combination of regional and at-large seats.

### **At-Large**

In an at-large election plan, candidates must be residents of the school district, but they can live anywhere within the district. These candidates are elected by all voters within the district, meaning every voter in the district has the opportunity to vote for each candidate running for the board.

### **By Region**

Under a by-region plan, the school district is divided into regions, and each region elects school board directors who reside within that region. Voters from each region select an equal number of directors, who must maintain their residence within that region in the district throughout their term in office.

### **Combined**

In a combined plan, some board directors are elected by voters from specific regions within the district, while other directors are elected at large from throughout the district.

## **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

To qualify for election or appointment to a school board office, candidates must meet several key requirements. First, they must be at least 18 years old on the date of the November municipal election. Additionally, candidates must demonstrate good moral character and have been a resident of the school district for at least one year before the November municipal election, or before appointment if they are seeking an appointment.

Candidates must also have a clean criminal record, specifically, they should not have any felony convictions or misdemeanor convictions related to dishonesty or “moral turpitude.” Under the Hatch Act, a federal law, federal employees and state or local government employees whose positions are fully funded by federal sources are prohibited from running for partisan political offices. This includes school boards in Pennsylvania, which are considered partisan elections — even though candidates have the option to appear on both Democratic and Republican ballots. However, the Hatch Act does not prevent individuals from holding an elective office if appointed to fill a vacancy. Active-duty military personnel, including reservists on active duty, are barred by federal law and Department of Defense regulations from running for or holding partisan political offices. Additionally, many employers, both governmental and private, have policies requiring employees to notify or seek permission before engaging in outside activities, including running for elective office.

Furthermore, school board directors are prohibited from being employed by their own school district during their term in office. The role of school board director is also deemed incompatible with most other local government elective offices, meaning that one cannot hold multiple incompatible offices simultaneously.

## BECOMING A CANDIDATE

To become a school board candidate, you must file nominating petitions signed by at least 10 registered members of the political party for which nomination is sought. A petition signature is valid only if the signer would be eligible to vote for that candidate in the primary election based on residence and party for which the voter is registered. Only registered members of the political party for which nomination of that party is sought may circulate nominating petitions. Signers may sign the petitions of more than one candidate for the office of school director for up to the total number of seats available in the election cycle. Any and all documents must be notarized. The Election Code permits candidates to “cross-file” for nomination, allowing them to seek the endorsement of more than one major political party simultaneously. Cross-filing means that a candidate can appear on multiple party ballots during the primary elections, potentially increasing their chances of advancing to the general election. To cross-file, you must fulfill the petition requirements noted above.

Under Pennsylvania’s Public Official and Employee Ethics Act, commonly referred to as PA’s Ethics Act, each candidate for the office of school director must file a Statement of Financial Interest for the preceding calendar year with the school board secretary of the school district. A copy of the statement also must be attached to the nomination petition filed with the county board of elections. Pennsylvania’s Campaign Expense Reporting Law also requires candidates to file campaign finance reports listing campaign expenditures and contributions received.

Prior to each election year, the Commonwealth’s Department of State Bureau of Elections distributes a complete election calendar with specific dates and other legal requirements to all county offices. Forms for nominating petitions, Statements of Financial Interest, campaign finance reports and other information about these requirements can be obtained from the county board of elections and other municipal offices.

## NOMINATING PETITIONS FOR PRIMARY ELECTIONS

Candidates seeking nomination for political parties, including the Republican, Democratic and other parties certified by the secretary of the commonwealth, are nominated through primary elections. However, political bodies not certified as parties can still have their candidates appear on the November ballot by filing nominating papers with the board of elections by the second Friday after the primary. This process is described under “Running as an Independent.”

For party candidates, nomination petitions must be filed with the county board of elections no later than the 10th Tuesday before the primary election.

The process of circulating these petitions to gather signatures occurs during a three-week period that begins on the 13th Tuesday before the primary and ends on the 10th Tuesday before the election. It is crucial to confirm all dates with the election calendar provided by the Pennsylvania Department of State.

There is no filing fee for a school board nominating petition. The petition must be signed by 10 qualified voters who reside in the school district and are registered with the political party for which the nomination is sought. Additionally, if a candidate is running for a regional seat in a district with a regional or combined regional and at-large election plan, petition signers must reside within that specific region. This means that a petition signature is valid only if the signer is eligible to vote for the candidate in the primary election, based on both the voter’s residence and party registration.



Circulators of nominating petitions must be residents of Pennsylvania and registered members of the political party for which the nomination is sought. They do not need to be residents of the school district where the election is taking place. The Election Code permits a candidate to circulate their own petition for their registered party and to accompany individuals circulating petitions for other parties.

Signers of petitions are limited to supporting only one candidate for any office, unless multiple candidates can be elected to that office, such as in the case of school director. In such cases, a voter may sign as many petitions as there are votes they are allowed to cast for that office. Candidates should ensure the voter’s registration reflects their current residence address to avoid issues. The addresses provided on petitions and affidavits must include both the post office address and the municipality in which the candidate or signer resides.



Candidates for school director have the option to cross-file for nomination in the primary, allowing them to seek nominations from multiple major political parties. To do so, separate petitions must be circulated for each party by a registered member of that party, with each petition requiring the same minimum number of signatures. If successful in the primary, a cross-filed candidate will appear on the November municipal election ballot as the nominee for each party from which they won the primary nomination.

## **RUNNING AS AN INDEPENDENT**

The Election Code does not provide a specific provision for running as an independent. Instead, the term “independent” refers to a process where a candidate is nominated by a named political body. To pursue this route, candidates must file nominating papers with the board of elections after the primary, with a final deadline of August 1. Although the Election Code states the deadline as the second Friday following the primary, court rulings have clarified it as August 1.

Before nominating papers can be circulated for signatures, they must specify the political body the candidate represents in three words or fewer, such as “Citizens for Smith.” Simply stating “independent” is not sufficient, even if the candidate is registered as an independent voter. The named political body does not need to be previously organized or have a formal structure, but the name must not resemble or be the same as any other political body for which nominating papers have been filed.

Candidates using this method cannot be registered members of a party at any point starting 30 days before the primary or have a party nominating petition filed on their behalf. To qualify, a candidate must have ended any party affiliation before the 30th day prior to the primary.

The nominating papers must include signatures from qualified electors amounting to at least 2% of the highest number of votes cast for any candidate for the office in the most recent general election. This number must also be no fewer than the minimum required for party nomination petitions (which is 10). For instance, if the highest vote count for a school board candidate in the most recent election was 1,000, at least 20 signatures would be necessary. It is advisable to confirm the exact signature requirement with the board of elections.

Independent candidates running for school board positions in Pennsylvania may begin circulating nominating papers for signatures starting on the 10th Wednesday prior to the primary election. Signers of these nominating papers must be registered voters residing within the candidate’s district or region. Voters cannot sign more nominating papers for an

office than the number of candidates they are allowed to vote for in that election; that is, they may only sign as many nominating papers as positions they can vote on for that office.

The rules for nominating papers are similar to those for party candidate petitions, with the notable exception that the party affiliation of signers or circulators is irrelevant. Additionally, there is a filing fee for nominating papers; for a school board candidate, this fee is \$5.

## **REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE PA ETHICS ACT**

Candidates for the office of school board director are required to file a completed Statement of Financial Interest (SFI) form with the school board secretary by the deadline for filing nominating petitions. Additionally, a copy of this form must be attached to the nomination petition submitted to the county board of elections. Failing to file with both the board of elections and the school board secretary by the specified deadline can result in the invalidation of the nominating petition and removal from the ballot.

The school district must retain these SFI forms for at least five years and make them available for public inspection. Common mistakes under the Ethics Act include submitting the form to the wrong entity, leaving required information incomplete or falsifying the submission date. Backdating the form is a serious violation and can lead to significant penalties, including fines and disqualification from the election.

The SFI form includes detailed instructions for each section, but filers often neglect to complete all sections or fail to provide required information. It is crucial to read the instructions thoroughly. If a section of the form does not apply, the filer should check the box labeled “none” to avoid the appearance of deliberate omission. Block 10 of the form requires listing the filer’s employer as a direct source of income. Even though occupation is recorded in block 6 and the employer is identified in block 13, employers must still be listed in block 10 as direct sources of income. Similarly, blocks 4 and 5 should detail the public position held or sought and the school district in which the filer serves or aims to serve. Refer to the appendix for an example of the SFI form.

Potential school board candidates should consult the Pennsylvania State Ethics Commission regulations for detailed information on SFI requirements. Additionally, under the Ethics Act, if a school district conducts business with a company owned by a school board director, their immediate family or their employer, the director must abstain from any involvement in the contracting process or the implementation of the contract.

## CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTING

Under Pennsylvania's Campaign Expense Reporting Law, candidates are required to meticulously maintain records of campaign expenditures and contributions. This includes documenting the names and addresses of individuals who contribute \$50 or more to the campaign. To ensure transparency, candidates must file a preelection report detailing these contributions and expenditures with the county board of elections by the second Friday before the primary election. Additionally, a postelection report is required to be filed no later than 30 days after the primary election as well as the general election.



Local candidates have the option to file an affidavit instead of detailed reports, provided they certify that they are not supported by a political committee and do not plan to receive or spend more than \$250 in a reporting period. However, even with this affidavit, they are still required to maintain records of their expenses and contributions. If their expenditures or contributions surpass the \$250 threshold within a reporting period, they must then file a detailed report.

The law also imposes strict prohibitions to ensure the integrity of campaign finance. Anonymous contributions, contributions made on behalf of another person and cash contributions exceeding \$100 from a single individual are all strictly forbidden.

## FILLING A BOARD VACANCY

School board vacancies, which can arise for various reasons such as resignation, death or relocation outside the district, are filled through an appointment process conducted by the remaining board directors. If less than two years remain before the former director's term expires, a director appointed to fill that vacancy serves for the remainder of the term. The PA School Code provides that when a vacancy occurs the remaining members of the school board, if still constituting a majority of the statutory membership, must appoint a qualified person to fill the vacancy within 30 days of when the vacancy occurs. The

30-day timeline starts at the official board meeting where the resignation is formally accepted, or the vacancy is announced. The board is responsible for publicly advertising the open position and conducting a selection process, including interviews, before a vote is held by the remaining directors to appoint a new director.

## REQUIRED DIRECTOR TRAINING

The PA School Code requires school board directors serving public school districts to complete specific training upon their election or appointment, and again upon their reelection or reappointment to the local school board. PSBA is an accredited statewide provider of this training, offering live and virtual sessions as well as asynchronous online courses.

### Newly Elected or Appointed

Newly elected or appointed school board directors are required to complete at least five hours of training within their first year in office. For newly elected directors, this first year starts on the first Monday in December following their election, irrespective of the timing of the board organization meeting or the oath of office. For newly appointed directors, the first year begins on the date they take the oath of office. The training must be completed within this first year and cannot be counted if completed before assuming office.

The training for new school board directors must cover the following areas, with at least one hour dedicated to trauma-informed approaches as mandated by Act 18 of 2019:

### Instruction and Academic Programs

- Understanding curriculum standards and educational best practices
- Assessing academic opportunities and student achievement

### Personnel

- Familiarity with hiring practices, staff evaluations and professional development
- Knowledge of collective bargaining agreements and employee relations

### Fiscal Management

- Oversight of budgeting processes and financial planning
- Ensuring responsible allocation of resources and financial reporting

### Operations

- Insight into facilities management, transportation and school safety
- Compliance with state and federal regulations affecting school operations

## Governance

- Roles and responsibilities of school board directors
- Effective governance practices and board-superintendent relationships

## Ethics and Open Meetings

- Understanding ethical standards and legal obligations
- Compliance with the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act regarding public meetings



## Reelected or Reappointed

School board directors who are reelected or reappointed to a new term must complete at least three hours of advanced training during the first year of their new term. For those who are reelected, the first year starts on the date of the November election. For reappointed directors, it begins on the day they take the oath of office. To fulfill the requirement, the advanced training must be completed after the date of reelection or reappointment.

The advanced training must cover updates and information on the following areas:

- Federal and state public school laws and regulations
- Trauma-informed approaches to education
- School finance and fiscal management

## WHAT NOW?

As you reach the end of this guide, we hope that the information provided has given you a comprehensive understanding of the responsibilities and logistics associated with serving on your local school board. The role of a school board director is not just a position of governance, it is an opportunity to directly influence the quality of education that shapes the future of your community. From overseeing budgets to setting policies that impact student achievement, your contribution as a school board director can make a lasting difference.

Running for a school board office is a commitment to public service, requiring time, dedication and a willingness to engage with complex issues. It is important to enter this role with a broad perspective, focusing on the overall success of the school district rather than on single issues. This guide has highlighted the essential qualities of effective school board directors, including the ability to collaborate, listen and lead with integrity. We encourage you to consider this path if you have a passion for public education and a desire to use your skills to support and improve your local schools. Serving on a school board is a significant way to give back to your community, ensuring that every child has access to a quality education. If you feel inspired to take on this challenge, know that you will have the support of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association (PSBA), which offers resources, training and guidance to help you succeed in this vital role.

# PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

Founded in 1895, PSBA is a private, nonprofit membership association dedicated to serving Pennsylvania's school board directors. We provide our members with services, support and counsel as they lead their districts, navigate relationships and promote public education across Pennsylvania. PSBA's multidisciplinary team assists members with professional development related to their role as a school board director, provides timely updates and information related to happenings in Pennsylvania's Capitol, and offers board policy and legal services to member school districts.

Learn more about the Pennsylvania School Boards Association and the services we offer at [psba.org](https://psba.org).



[GreatPASchools.com](http://GreatPASchools.com)



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