



MCSBA COAC

Talking Points and Tools for Board Service

Talking Points for those who wish to serve on a Board of Education

What is the most important role of a school board member and how do members work together to achieve this?

- **A BOE's primary responsibility is not to run the school district, but to see that it is run well.**
- It is important that the community sees a well-functioning board; a board that asks appropriate questions but doesn't divert off topic.
- That includes hiring the Superintendent as the CEO and evaluating the superintendent's work.
- That includes supporting and gaining the resources to achieve the goals, mission and vision of the district and then evaluating themselves on the metrics that were put in place.
- The BOE sets priorities for the district, the district builds the budget, and the BOE adopts the budget.

How does a district's board of education impact the culture and climate of a district?

- Leadership begins at the top. BOE members are the most important role models for the district.
- The BOE works on behalf of students, and the manner in which it is done matters.
- BOE members are locally elected, public figures. Whether at the table or wherever they may be found in the community, BOE members will always be viewed as wearing their 'board hat.'
- Boards that are collaborative with one another and the superintendent, and who believe in the mission and vision of the district, send a message to students, staff, parents and the community that they are vested in doing what is best for all children.

If we regard our public schools as one of the most important assets in a community, what is the responsibility of the board to maintain that asset?

- School districts are at the center of most communities. Schools are used for a variety of purposes after the school day/year is done and those that participate in other activities held in the district will make judgments about how the board has cared for that asset.

What is the most rewarding part of serving on a board?

School board service is a commitment to advancing student achievement on behalf of a community. How do school boards collaborate with the district and communicate with the community to advance that noble service?

- Board of Education members must be committed to achieving the mission and vision of the district and to work collaboratively with each other and the superintendent to that end.
- Board of Education members must communicate effectively with families and community partners to support all aspects of education and all students whatever their circumstances or needs.

Other ways to learn about Board service*

- Invite community members to hear Board members talk about Board service.
- Create video vignettes by working with your district communications directors and have each Board member speak on a particular topic (budget, committee work, involvement in district events, etc.).
- Showcase the work of board members in a district newsletter.
- Include student voice and perspective; have students share how the decisions of the BOE have impacted them as students. For example, a student representative reports to the board and shares the students' perspective on an upcoming budgetary decision or change in policy.
- Encourage those thinking of running for a Board seat to attend a BOE meeting.
- Invite community members to participate in district-wide committees, such as budget or strategic planning committees.
- Use the MCSBA Affiliate Network Group (a group of retired BOE members/Superintendents who meet with the Executive Director and MCSBA Officers throughout the calendar year to learn about the current climate and advocacy efforts of the Association) to spread the word about positive BOE experience and Board candidates.
- Visit the MCSBA website (www.mcsba.org).
- Attend the MCSBA prospective candidate seminar. Check the website or contact the MCSBA office for the event date and registration information.
- Contact Amy Thomas, Executive Director, MCSBA (Amy.Thomas@boces.monroe.edu or 585.328.1972).

** We recognize that all districts are different and that you should customize talking points and strategies to your district's needs.*