



Monroe County School Boards Association

School Board Member

Effective Leadership for Education

New York State Education Law assigns school district leadership responsibilities to boards of education and the superintendents they hire. How these leaders interact with one another as they carry out their assigned tasks determines the success of their districts and their students.

Effective School Board Members

- Strive to provide the best education possible for all students in their care
 - Consider FIRST the needs of all the young people they serve
 - Work collaboratively with fellow board members
 - Provide financial support for programs, services, and staff development
 - Seek community support for the district's efforts

- Act as result-oriented planners
 - Develop and monitor goals that meet the mission and vision of the district
 - Encourage board-superintendent cooperation and trust
 - Let the superintendent administrate
 - Hold the superintendent accountable

- Are prepared
 - Attend all board meetings, on time, and are committed to the process
 - Prepare for meetings by reading BOE information packets
 - Ask questions and get clarification on board packet information prior to meetings
 - Allow sufficient time to study proposals

- Are open to new ideas
 - Explore alternatives during meetings
 - Listen carefully, compromise, and disagree agreeably
 - Base decisions on available facts
 - Suspend judgment until all facts are known
 - Act in best interest of all students without fear or favor from the community or special interest groups

- Promote the cause of public education
 - Discuss board policy and decisions with interested people and groups
 - Take a position on controversial issues
 - Make effective public presentations
 - Support and defend adequate and equitable funding for public schools

- Act as team players
 - Promote board policies and actions
 - Act on school matters only through the board
 - Act after considering the superintendent's recommendations
 - Accept and support board decisions
 - Elect officers who are good meeting facilitators and articulate spokespersons
 - Follow district communications protocol, allow board officers to speak for the board
 - Respect confidentiality rules
 - Keep comments succinct and aligned with the approved agenda
 - Conduct meetings with professional decorum
 - Model ethics and integrity expected from staff and students
 - Refer complaints to the superintendent
 - Utilize workshop opportunities to get to know board colleagues and promote functional working relationships
 - Subordinate personal interests
 - Avoid perceived or actual conflicts of interest
 - Maintain relationship with local, state, and federal legislators, and invite them to board meetings and school events

- Support staff and student efforts
 - Publicly applaud successes
 - Encourage staff input
 - Deal fairly and tactfully with all stakeholders

- Are informed
 - Listen objectively to constructive input
 - Stay current on educational issues
 - Use data to drive decisions
 - Be visible and available for community input

- Focus on Governance
 - Establish comprehensive written policies with input from those affected
 - Hire the superintendent
 - Give the superintendent authority to deal with responsibilities of the day-to-day school operations
 - Support staff in working to implement board policies and goals
 - Recommend and communicate the budget proposal to the community

Enable Collaboration

- Keep the superintendent informed about board and community opinion
- Encourage diversity of thought
- Collaborate with other groups to influence governmental policy and support
- Communicate effectively with all stakeholders

- Stay well informed
 - Invest time and resources to board development and training
 - Provide orientation for new board members
 - Stay current on educational issues

- Solve problems
 - Encourage improvement
 - Use data, positive or negative, to drive continuous improvement
 - Discuss issues AFTER getting the facts
 - Explore alternatives

- Evaluate
 - Evaluate themselves, staff, and programs in terms of policies and goals
 - Establish policies governing board responsibilities
 - Evaluate the superintendent openly based on mutually accepted goals

- Maintain ethical standards
 - Operate in open, public sessions
 - Develop a code of ethics
 - Abide by all laws and regulations
 - Deal honestly with staff and stakeholders
 - Negotiate fairly with employees
 - Stick to the approved agenda
 - Follow communications protocols
 - Hear from all board members on all issues
 - Behave as a high functioning team
 - Make decisions only when you are meeting as a quorum
 - Deal openly and directly with controversy