

Are you considering school board service?



Qualifications and Characteristics of Being a School Board Member

Serving on a school board is more than a volunteer role; it's a chance to make a lasting impact on the success of each student. Many dedicated individuals serve as school board members for Minnesota's public school districts. Every two years, board members are elected by voters in their local district to govern with integrity, for a term of four years.

School Board Member Qualifications

Minnesota's public education system relies on the dedication of school board members who serve their communities by shaping the future of local schools. If you're contemplating this impactful role, understanding the qualifications, responsibilities, and expectations is essential. The governance of local school districts

Legal Criteria

To be eligible for election to a Minnesota public school board, a candidate must:

- Be at least 21 years old at the time the term begins.
- Have resided in the school district for at least 30 days prior to the election.
- Be an eligible voter, which includes being a U.S. citizen.
- Not be convicted of a felony without having civil rights restored. You cannot run for school board if you are on the Predatory Offenders Registration list.
- Have no other affidavit on file for another election office — other than township board — during the same election.

by elected individuals lies at the core of American democracy and the public education system, with board members chosen by voters every two years to represent their communities on local school boards. These elected officials are entrusted with the responsibility of reflecting the values and needs of their local communities. Public schools are uniquely positioned to serve all students across the United States without exception, ensuring that every child has access to a quality education. In doing so, they prepare young people to become informed and engaged citizens who contribute to the vitality of one of the world's oldest continuous democracies.

School Board Member Responsibilities

School boards serve as the guiding leadership bodies for public school districts, with a primary role in shaping the educational vision and goals of the district. They work closely with their communities to **set a strategic direction, ensuring that long-term educational goals are clearly defined and pursued**. This involves making high-level decisions that influence the future of education within their jurisdiction.

To realize this vision, school boards **align resources such as funding, personnel, and facilities** in support of their goals. They are also responsible for **hiring and evaluating the superintendent**, who acts as the district's chief executive and is tasked with implementing district policies and managing daily operations. A strong, cooperative relationship between the board and the superintendent is essential, with board members **focused on governance while avoiding micromanagement of administrative tasks**.

Monitoring and assessing district performance is another crucial responsibility. School boards must stay knowledgeable about educational outcomes, improvement efforts, and overall district health, while ensuring the public is kept engaged and informed of progress. Boards approve key decisions related to budgeting, contracts, educational programs, and facilities, **making collective choices during public meetings to maintain transparency and accountability**.

In addition to their governance role, **school board members serve as advocates for public education**. They build strong community relationships and act as liaisons between the school districts and the public. On a broader scale, board members also lobby for legislative support and increased funding at state and national levels. Their proactive advocacy ensures the needs and interests of students and schools remain a priority in public policy.

School Board Members in Minnesota are Entrusted with:

01

Hiring and evaluating the superintendent, who serves as the chief executive officer of the district.

02

Setting and overseeing district policies, ensuring they align with educational goals and legal requirements.

03

Managing the district's budget and resources, including facilities and personnel.

04

Engaging with the community, representing the interests and needs of students, parents, and residents. Board members are responsible for advocating for the needs of all students.

05

Participating in collective bargaining and ensuring fair labor practices.



Characteristics of Effective Board Members

Successful school board members often exhibit:

Thoughtful decision-making, considering the implications of policies and actions focused on student success.

Strong communication skills, effectively conveying ideas and listening to community members.

Dedication to public service, demonstrating a genuine interest in the success of all students.

Ability to work as part of a team, collaborating with others to achieve common goals.

Willingness to learn, staying informed of educational trends and district matters.

Standards for School Board Leadership

As the entity legally charged with governing a school district, each school board is responsible to its community for governing efficiently and leading effectively to provide for equitable education, resulting in high student achievement. The following five standards are essential to being an effective, high-performing school board.

- **Standard 1: Conduct and Ethics** The school board, as a whole, provides leadership to the community on behalf of the school district by conducting its business in a fair, respectful, legal, and responsible manner.
- **Standard 2: Vision** The school board, with community input, envisions the educational future of the community and then formulates the goals, defines the outcomes, and sets the course for the school district.
- **Standard 3: Structure** The school board, to achieve its vision, establishes organizational and physical structures for student and staff success.
- **Standard 4: Accountability** The school board is accountable to the community for constantly monitoring the conditions affecting the school district as a whole.
- **Standard 5: Advocacy and Communication** The school board advances its vision at the local, regional, state, and national levels.

Election Information

Election Timing: School board elections are held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. The election year depends on each individual district.

- **Term Length:** Board members typically serve four-year terms.
- **Filing Period:** Candidates must file affidavits of candidacy during the designated period, usually in late July to mid-August.
- **Check for specific dates and procedures** at your local school district or the Minnesota Secretary of State's office.



Preparing for Service

Prospective candidates should:

- **Attend local school board meetings**, gaining insight into current issues and board operations.
- **Review district policies and strategic plans**, understanding the framework guiding decisions.
- **Engage with the community**, listening and building relationships.
- **Consult with current board members and the superintendent**, seeking mentorship and advice.

The Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) offers resources and training for new board members. An overview of all these resources is available at www.mnmsba.org.

Summary

The Minnesota School Boards Association's mission articulates the value MSBA aspires to bring to our members. "MSBA supports and empowers Minnesota public school boards through policy, advocacy, and board development which positively impacts student success."

Our focus and commitment to local control and our belief in working collaboratively to strengthen relationships with school boards across the state allows us to leverage our collective strength to make a difference in public education and student success across the state of Minnesota.

