



GRAND RAPIDS

— **AREA SCHOOLS** —

Resilience ♦ Readiness ♦ Excellence

School Board Handbook

Last Updated: July 8, 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Current Board of Education & Superintendent](#)

[Public Education](#)

[About the Grand Rapids Area Schools Board of Education](#)

[School Board Responsibilities and Duties](#)

[Minnesota School Board Association \(MSBA\) Guidance Documents](#)

[About Grand Rapids Area Schools](#)

[Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan](#)

[Board Policies and Procedures](#)

[Board Meeting General Information](#)

[Types of School Board Meetings](#)

[School Board Meeting Schedule, Agendas and Documents](#)

[Other Communication Resources for Board Members](#)

[School Board Committees](#)

[School Board Professional Development](#)

[Expectations for School Board Service](#)

[Role of the Superintendent](#)

[Bargaining Units](#)

[Education Definitions and Acronyms](#)

[Checklist: First Steps after Election to the School Board \(November - December\)](#)

[Checklist: Prior to taking office in January](#)

CURRENT BOARD OF EDUCATION & SUPERINTENDENT

School Board Members

David Cowan, Chair	2025-2028	651-592-3535	dcowan@isd318.org
David Marty, Clerk	2023-2026	218-259-8215	dmarty@isd318.org
Ashley Goodman, Treasurer	2025-2028	707-580-8496	agoodman@isd318.org
Malissa Bahr, Director	2023-2026	218-259-4391	mbahr@isd318.org
Tom Gustafson, Director	2025-2028	218-780-3928	tgustafson@isd318.org
Mark Schroeder, Director	2023-2026	218-256-5303	mschroeder@isd318.org

Other contact information and current term dates can be found on the Board of Education page on the Grand Rapids Area Schools website: <https://www.isd318.org/domain/27>

The School Board values and recognizes the importance of student voice in the governance of the school district and to encourage student engagement as leaders in our school community. The School Board values student citizenship and wishes to encourage student involvement and promote a communications link between the school board and the students of the Grand Rapids Area Schools. The School Board will appoint two students to be advisory, non-voting School Board student representatives. Current Student representatives are: Owen Racine & Jaden Hebeisen

Superintendent

Matt Grose mgrose@isd318.org
218-327-5704 office
218-360-1103 cell

Confidential Assistant to the Superintendent & School Board

Julie Rasmussen jrasmussen@isd318.org 218-327-5704

In addition to serving as the assistant to the Superintendent, this position is the legally appointed Deputy Clerk, fulfilling the duties as outlined in [Policy 202 - School Board Officers](#).

Public Education

Public education is a fundamental right for all students with access and equity as the foundational principles.

About the Grand Rapids Area Schools Board of Education

The Grand Rapids Area Schools Board of Education, or School Board, is a body of locally elected individuals who represent the communities they serve; whose power and authority are granted to school boards by the state; and whose purpose is to ensure effective, efficient, and equitable delivery of high quality education to all the School District's students through adoption of policy.

The Grand Rapids Area Schools Board of Education has six voting members, called *Directors*. The Superintendent is a non-voting, ex-officio member of the School Board. Each School Board member serves a 4-year term.

School Board positions are filled by election on an at-large basis. Each School Board member represents the entire school district. Elections are held in even-numbered years according to the following schedule ([Policy 201 - Legal Status of the School Board](#))

Minnesota Statutes Section 123B.09 governs removing School Board members, School Board vacancies, appointments to fill vacancies and special elections.

The officers of the School Board are Chair, Clerk, and Treasurer. The term for each officer position is one year or until their successors are elected and qualify. Elections occur at the first meeting in January. [Policy 202 - School Board Officers](#) describes the roles and responsibilities and process for election and removal of officers.

School Board member compensation:

- \$2,500/yr for 19 regular meetings.
- \$425 additional per year for the Board Chair.
- \$65 per extra meeting (up to 4 hours) not to exceed \$195 per day.

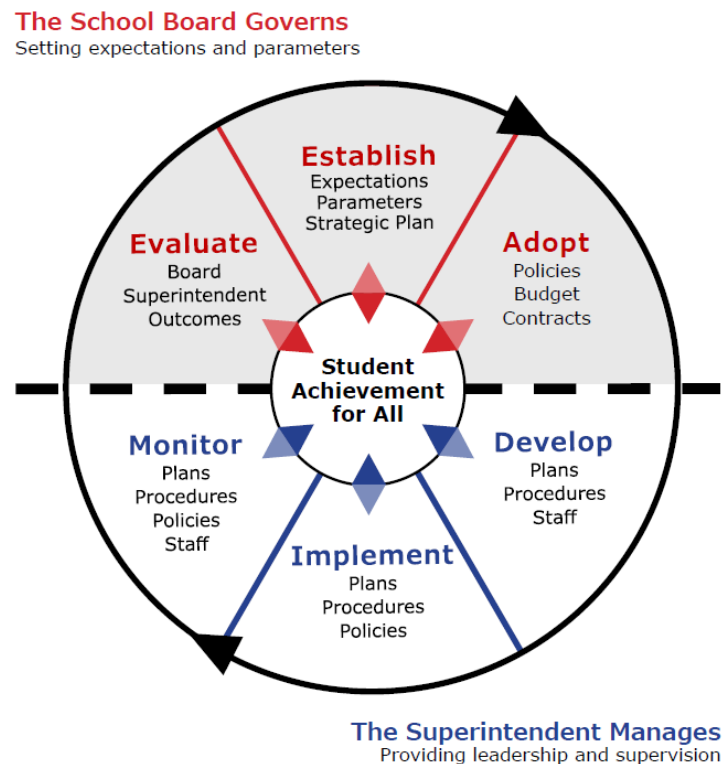
Policies that address other reimbursements for School Board members include:

- [Policy 214 - Out-of-State Travel by Board Members](#)
- [Policy 412 - Expense Reimbursement](#)
- [Policy 421 - Gifts to Employees and School Board Members](#)

Each School Board member must sign an Oath of Office in the presence of a Notary Public prior to the beginning of their term. Each School Board member begins their term at the first meeting in January.

School Board Responsibilities and Duties

Board Governance Model



School Board responsibilities include hiring, directing, and evaluating the Superintendent; setting the budget; and reviewing and developing School District policies. These responsibilities belong to the Board as a whole; no one member acts on their own, and all decisions are made publicly.

The School Board and the Superintendent work together as a team, deciding on how the vision and Strategic Plan are developed and then reflected in policies, which are reviewed systematically as needed and/or as directory by MSBA recommendations. The School Board reviews the following policies annually: 506 Student Discipline, 722 Public Data Requests and 806 Crisis Management Policy.

The budget is then aligned with the Mission and [Operational Plan](#). The District administration develops the budget, which is first reviewed by the School Board in the spring and approved by July 1 for the upcoming school year. Goals and resources are aligned, which can be tricky because the Minnesota State Legislature may not decide until mid/late May the appropriation for the biennium or a supplemental budget for the year. The School Board establishes positive relationships with lawmakers in order to advocate for the needs of students through its legislative priorities and advocacy.

The Superintendent develops and proposes annual goals to the School Board that are aligned with the annual School Board goals and the Operational Plan. The Board approves the Superintendent's annual goals and monitors the progress on the goals. Adjustments to the goals can be made during the course of the year with approval by the School Board. Although State statute does not require an annual evaluation of the Superintendent, MSBA highly recommends that school boards do so and it has been the practice of Grand Rapids Area Schools. This evaluation typically takes place at the end of the school year or in the summer immediately following.

School Board responsibilities are designed to foster student achievement which is at the center of everything the Board and District do, and student achievement is monitored throughout the school year. The School Board does not directly oversee the "how" of the monitoring; the Superintendent (and others under his or her direction) reports periodically to the School Board. The Board then ensures that the direction of the School District is aligned with the vision, Operational Plan, and policies, within the constraints of the budget.

The School Board does not implement policy or specify "how" things should be done by management, only "what" should be done. The School Board does not represent a single constituency or special interest; its goal is to work together to further the well being and academic success of all students in the Grand Rapids Area Schools.

The School Board does not hire, manage, evaluate, or dismiss employees other than the Superintendent, or get involved in the day-to-day management of schools and departments.

The School Board sets the parameters for collectively bargained employee contracts and participates directly in the process. When an agreement is mutually agreed upon by the bargaining group and the District within the parameters set by the Board, the Board then votes to approve the agreement. All contracts (except for the Superintendent's contract), are for two years. By law, the Superintendent contract can be for a period of up to three years.

Through the operational budget and board policies and procedures, the School Board ensures that facilities are safe and adequate; the Superintendent is responsible for ensuring facilities are inspected, maintained, adequately staffed, and meet all required safety and health standards.

Minnesota School Board Association (MSBA) [Guidance Documents](#)

The Minnesota School Boards Association is a private, nonprofit organization founded in 1920. As a leading advocate for public education, they support, promote, and strengthen the work of Minnesota school boards and offer services to school districts in the areas of governance, management, finance, communications, policy, legal matters, elections, and advocacy. MSBA provides workshops, resources, services, and connections designed to help boards save time, reduce expenses, govern efficiently, and stay inspired.

MSBA has developed documents that are excellent resources to understand school board roles and responsibilities. These documents are a central focus in Phase I and Phase II of the MSBA Learning to Lead Workshop Series that every school board member is required by law to complete.

- [Standards for School Board Leadership](#) identifies five standards essential to being an effective, high-performing school board team. Detailed benchmarks are provided for each standard.
- [School Board Governance Model](#) describes the roles of the School Board in governance (setting expectations and parameters) and the Superintendent in management (providing leadership and supervision).
- [School Board Members - Superintendent Leadership Guidelines](#) lists the roles of a School Board member in further detail as it relates to the Superintendent, other School Board members and district staff.

About Grand Rapids Area Schools

Located in picturesque Itasca County, the Grand Rapids Area Schools district is the third largest geographic district located in the state of Minnesota. The District serves approximately 4,000 students, along with additional programs that serve individuals from birth to adults. Our district includes Grand Rapids, Cohasset, Bigfork, Marcell, Warba, and many smaller towns and townships over our 2,200 square mile area. See [district map](#) for exact boundaries.

For more information on the history of ISD #318, see [this website](#) for materials related to the history of educational institutions in our area.

Schools & Programs	Principals/Directors	Est. 2025-26 Enrollment
Bigfork School <i>Grades K-12</i>	Ken Decoster	242
Cohasset Elementary <i>Grades K-5</i>	Ryan Siegle	305
East Rapids Elementary <i>Grades K-3</i>	Jill Wheelock Clayton Lindner, Asst. Principal	599
West Rapids Elementary <i>Grades 3-5</i>	Sean Martinson Clayton Lindner, Asst. Principal	551
Robert J. Elkington Middle School <i>Grades 6-8</i>	Dan Adams Ryan DeBay, Asst. Principal	819

Grand Rapids High School <i>Grades 9-12</i>	Darrin Hofstad Andy Forbort, Asst. Principal	1015
Grand Rapids Area Virtual Academy <i>Grades K-12</i>	Clayton Lindner, K-5 Andy Forbort, 6-12	73
Area Learning Center <i>Grades 9-12</i>	Matt Grose	103
Itaskin Education Center <i>Ages 10 - 18</i>	Ryan DeBay	36
Quest <i>Ages 18 - 21</i>	Justin Sundquist, Special Services Director	14
Early Childhood Special Education <i>Ages 3 - Kindergarten</i>	Justin Sundquist, Special Services Director	80
Invest Early <i>Birth - 4 years</i>	Darla Rahne, Director	188
Community Education	Melanie DeBay, Director	NA

Demographics of Grand Rapids Area Schools for the 2025-2026 school year:

- 85% white
- .1% Black or African American
- 2% Hispanic or Latino
- .01% Asian
- 9.6 % American Indian or Alaska Native
- .01% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- 8% two or more races (included in numbers above)

39.9% of the 2025-2026 student body qualify for educational benefits, which is determined by families who turn in a “Free or Reduced Price Lunch” application. In addition to receiving meal benefits, other impacts of collecting and reporting the forms include, but are not limited to:

- Eligible forms can increase the E-rate Discount percent, allowing for the potential of higher reimbursement related to technology infrastructure and connections.
- Early Learning Scholarships require being eligible for Free or Reduced Priced meals.
- Fees for ACT, SAT, International Baccalaureate (IB) and Advanced Placement (AP) exams are waived if students qualify for Free or Reduced Priced meals.

- Every eligible form submitted by families will allow for federal meal reimbursement, reducing state reimbursement.
- Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) and School Readiness use percentage of Free & Reduced eligible students as a basis for allocating seats by distribution areas.
- Forms are used to determine student eligibility for the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer program (S-EBT).

21% of students receive Special Education services.

Grand Rapids Area Schools Organization Chart

View [the Grand Rapids Area Schools Organizational Chart](#) on our website.

Budget/Finance

The District's fiscal year coincides with the school year, from July 1 through June 30.

Grand Rapids Area Schools operate on a \$60 million General Fund budget. The General Fund contains all revenue and expenses for the general, day to day operations of the District. This includes salaries and benefits for teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, custodians, and clerical; instructional supplies, technology, transportation, textbooks and money spent to operate and repair District buildings. The District breaks out portions of this activity for internal tracking and budgeting purposes. Internal funds include (01) General Fund, (03) Transportation and (11) Student Activities.

There are other funds within the District's budget: Food Service Fund, Community Service Fund, Debt Service Fund, OPEB Revocable Trust Fund, Health Insurance Fund, and Capital Projects Fund. It is helpful to know there are significant legal restrictions on how school districts must spend and account for the public funds that are received. It is important to be aware of the fund structures because, with very few exceptions, money cannot be transferred from one fund to another. There are also revenue streams within the funds that are restrictive.

The Business Manager provides Budget & Finance updates to the School Board on a regular basis.

Staff Directory

Staff at all ISD #318 schools and programs can be found through our [Staff Directory](#) on the District website. You can search for individuals by name or department. A [Building Directory](#) is posted under the Administration tab. Building administrators, teachers and staff can also be found on each individual school or program webpage.

District Calendars

View the Grand Rapids Area Schools [school calendars](#) on our website.

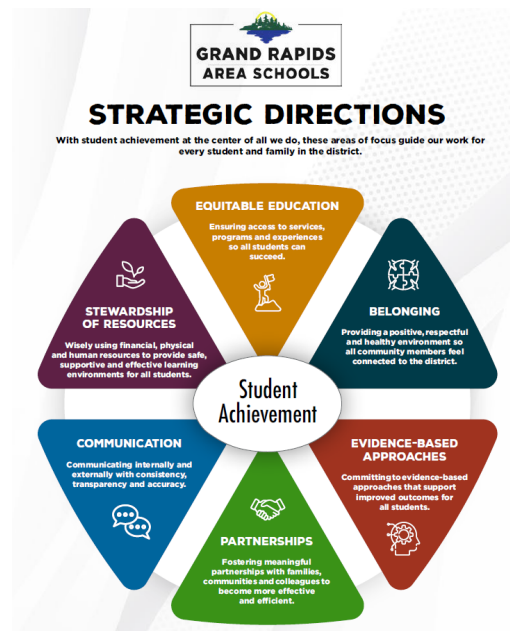
Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan

Mission Statement

Teaching and Learning for Life to Achieve Excellence

Strategic Directions

In the fall of 2021, the school district began the process of examining what our communities, families, staff, and students expect from our schools. We held focus groups around the district, talked to alumni, surveyed the community, met with students, and gathered information from staff, asking questions about their hopes and dreams, things the district is doing well, and things the district needs to improve upon. The result was a [community report](#) that was presented to the school board on June 16, 2022.



Minnesota State Statute and [Policy 601 - School District Curriculum and Instruction Goals](#) requires the School Board to adopt a comprehensive, long-term strategic plan and sets the parameters for the content and monitoring of the plan.

The School Board approved the District Operational Plan on November 14, 2023.

Teaching & Learning Model

The primary work of our school district is Teaching & Learning. The framework below is how evidence-based approaches in Teaching & Learning are prioritized.



Board Policies and Procedures

[Policy 208 - Development, Adoption, and Implementation of Policies](#) states: “Formal guidelines are necessary to ensure the school community that the school system responds to its mission and operates in an effective, efficient, and consistent manner. A set of written policies shall be maintained and modified as needed. Policies should define the desire and intent of the School Board and should be in a form that is sufficiently explicit to guide administrative action.”

Procedures are created to accompany some policies. Procedures are “administrative guidelines and directives to provide greater specificity and consistency in the process of implementation.”

Policies and Procedures are available at the [ISD #318 website](#)

Policies and Procedures are organized into the following categories:

- 100 - School District
- 200 - School Board
- 300 - Administration
- 400 - Personnel
- 500 - Students
- 600 - Education Programs
- 700 - Non-Instructional Operations And Business Services
- 800 - Buildings And Sites
- 900 - Community Relations

The School Board Policy Review Committee is responsible for ensuring that all policies and procedures are reviewed on a consistent cycle and presented to the School Board.

The Policy Review Committee meets monthly to review policies and procedures as recommended by the Superintendent and the MSBA Model Policy Newsletter. The review also includes monitoring of how effectively policies and procedures are being implemented.

It is recommended that new School Board members become familiar with all School District policies and procedures before their first meeting, especially all policies and procedures in [Section 200 - School Board](#).

Board Meeting General Information

Minnesota Open Meeting Law

The Minnesota Open Meeting Law requires that meetings of governmental bodies generally be open to the public. [Policy 205](#) discusses the groups and types of meetings covered by the open meeting law, and then reviews the requirements of and exceptions to the law and the penalties for its violation.

Policy 205 defines a meeting as “a gathering of a quorum (for Grand Rapids Area Schools Board of Education, four members or more) of the School Board, at which members discuss, decide, or receive information as a group on issues relating to the official business of the School Board. A gathering of members that does not include a quorum of the Board is not a “meeting” for the purpose of this policy or the Open Meeting Law, unless the Board has expressly delegated decision-making authority to the committee. In the absence of an express delegation, all committees are advisory only and do not have decision-making authority. The term “meeting” also does not include a chance or social gathering or the use of social media by members of a public body so long as the social media use is limited to exchanges with all members of the general public. For purposes of the Open Meeting Law, social media does not include email.”

Robert’s Rules of Order

Board meetings are conducted in accordance with Robert’s Rules of Order ([Policy 203.1](#)).

Voting

Action items are approved by a majority vote of those present at the School Board meeting. Most votes are taken by acclamation or voice. Roll call votes may be requested by any Board member or the Deputy Clerk on any agenda item. Roll call votes are required in certain situations, for example, for the termination of a teacher contract after a probationary period and when members are attending remotely.

School Board Members Attending Meetings from a Remote Location

School Board members may attend meetings from a remote location using interactive technology. The requirements of Minnesota Statute Section 13D.02 must be met.

Public Participation at Board Meetings

At each regular Board meeting there are allotted times for public participation with the Board during the Open Forum before the regular board meeting and during Public Input as placed on the agenda during the regular meeting. The time at both Open Forum and Public Input is limited to 5 minutes or adjusted to the time allowed to ensure those who wish to participate have time to do so.

[Policy 206 provides](#) detailed guidance regarding Public Participation.

Types of School Board Meetings

[Policy 205](#) - Open Meetings and Closed Meetings describes the types of School Board meetings. Any meeting, with the exception of closed meetings, are open to the public.

- *Regular Meetings* are typically held on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month at 6:30 p.m. The School Board may take action (vote) on agenda items at a Regular Meeting. These dates are scheduled at the Organizational Meeting, the first meeting in January.
- *Open Forum/Workshops* are typically held on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month at 6:00 p.m. preceding the Regular Meetings.
- *Workshops* - The Board meets monthly, typically at 5:30 p.m. unless otherwise specified, for strategic planning, goal setting, and vision work.
- *Special Meetings* - A meeting is labeled a “special meeting” if it is called after the meetings for the year have been established and approved at the Organizational Meeting in January. For a special meeting, the School Board will post written notice of the meeting’s date, time, place, and purpose. The School Board’s actions at the special meeting are limited to those topics included in the notice. The notice will also be delivered, by electronic mail, to each person who has filed a written request for notice of special meetings. The notice will be posted and sent at least three days before the date of the meeting.
- *Emergency Meetings* - An emergency meeting is a special meeting called because of circumstances that, in the judgment of the School Board, require immediate consideration.
- *Organizational Meeting* - The Board is required to hold an organizational meeting in January of each year. The primary purpose of this meeting is to elect members to serve as Chair, Treasurer, and Clerk. Additionally, the school board calendar is set for the upcoming year as well as other organizational tasks.

Closed Sessions

- State law provides that all meetings of governmental bodies (including school boards) shall be open sessions unless a closed session is expressly permitted by law.
- The law permits closed sessions for discussion of non-public data, discussion of preliminary consideration of allegations or charges, dismissal of a licensed teacher, student expulsion hearing, labor negotiations strategy, mediation services, employee evaluations, attorney-client meetings, purchase/sale of property, and security issues. For specific examples of each of these categories, see [Policy 205 - Open Meetings and Closed Meetings](#).
- An affirmative public vote of the majority of School Board members present at the meeting is necessary to hold a closed session.
- Closed meetings must be recorded and the recording must be preserved. Policy 205 - Open Meetings and Closed Meetings describes the number of years that the recording must be preserved; the number of years varies by the purpose of the closed session, and who can access the closed session recording.
- Following a closed session involving labor negotiations, the School Board may vote to approve a contract at the reconvened regular meeting following the closed session.

School Board Meeting Schedule, Agendas and Documents

School Board Meeting Schedule

In January of each year, the Board sets its meeting schedule for the upcoming year. Additional “special” meetings may be called, as needed, throughout the year. All meetings not previously approved in January are considered special meetings, and must be noticed to the public as described in [Policy 205 - Open Meetings and Closed Meetings](#). The School Board typically has two Regular Meetings and one Workshop each month. View the calendar of [Grand Rapids Area Schools Board meeting dates for 2026](#).

There may be situations where weather requires cancellation and rescheduling of a School Board meeting. If a School Board meeting is canceled because of weather, notice will be provided via the District website, District social media and to the District’s media outlets. The canceled meeting will be rescheduled with required notice.

Meeting Agendas and Documents

Each School Board meeting has an agenda, and each agenda item has background information and/or related documents, and may or may not have a resolution for action. These agendas, along with minutes and recordings of each School Board meeting can be found on the [Grand](#)

[Rapids Area Schools Board of Education page](#). The procedure for setting the agenda can be found here in [Policy 203.5](#)

School Board meeting agendas are organized into the following categories:

1. Call to order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Approval of agenda
4. Evidence-Based Approaches
5. Belonging
 - a. Recognitions
 - b. Student reports
6. Equitable Education
 - a. Principal Reports
 - b. Indicator Reports
7. Stewardship of Resources
 - a. Approval of prior meeting minutes
 - b. Approval of claims
 - c. Approval of Gifts and Donations
 - d. Approval of Retirements
 - e. Consent agenda (see policy 203.6)
 - f. New Business
8. Partnerships
 - a. Board reports
 - b. Superintendent's report
9. Communication
 - a. Meeting announcements
10. Other business
11. Public input
12. Adjournment.
13. Closed sessions for negotiations/personnel issues

Setting the Agenda

- The Board Chair and Superintendent set the draft agendas for School Board meetings. The draft agenda is approved at the beginning of every School Board meeting.
- Persons wishing to place an item on the agenda must make a request to the School Board Chair or Superintendent in a timely manner. The person making the request is encouraged to state the person's name, address, purpose of the item, action desired and pertinent background information. The Chair and Superintendent shall determine whether to place the matter on the tentative agenda.
- Agendas are considered tentative until the School Board approves the agenda at the beginning of each meeting.

Availability of Agendas and Question and Answer Process

- Draft agendas and documents are available to School Board members 72 hours prior to Regular Meetings and Workshops.
- Board members should submit their questions on agenda items to the Confidential Assistant to the Superintendent no later than 24 hours before the meeting.

Other Communication Resources for Board Members

- The Superintendent sends out periodic updates on major District news and initiatives via email to Board members.
- The Superintendent's Office will provide School Board members with notice of press releases, staff notifications, District-level automated messages to parents, and school incidents.
- [School Board Communications & Interaction Protocol Guide](#)

School Board Committees

The School Board has a number of committees to facilitate development of policies, procedures and recommendations for action. The School Board collaborates with community partners and stakeholders through membership on community boards and liaisons to committees.

[Policy 213 - School Board Committees](#) govern school board committees and membership. Current board member assignments can be found in [this document](#).

The School Board has the following committees:

- Activities Council
- Bigfork School Advisory Committee
- Community Engagement Committee
- Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness Committee
- Endowment Committee
- Facilities Steering Committee
- Finance Committee
- Fringe Benefits Committee
- IASC - Itasca Area Schools Collaborative
- Itasca Area Schools Community Education Advisory/Regional Council
- Labor/Management Committee (District)
- Labor/Management Committee (ESP Unit)
- Meet & Confer
- Policy Review Committee

- Special Education Advisory Committee
- Staff Development Committee (District)
- Wellness

School Board members serve as liaisons to and attend meetings of the following organizations:

- Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC)
- Boys & Girls Club
- Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL Voting Member)
- Reif Center Board

The committee assignment process is the responsibility of the School Board Chair and considers the preferences of School Board members. Committee terms are based on the meeting calendar for the committee - some committee terms are on a calendar year basis, and some are on a school-year basis. The [Grand Rapids Area Schools Board of Education Committee Participation Guide](#) provides more information on each of the committees and the role of the School Board member. School Board members are expected to attend the meetings of their committees and to report on committee activities during “Board Reports” at regular meetings.

School Board Professional Development

It is critically important for School Board members to participate in professional development and attend training in governance and education issues so that each person not only understands their role as a School Board member but can also intelligently and fully participate in its decisions. [Policy 212 - School Board Member Development](#) sets “expectations for the members of the School Board to participate in professional development activities designed for them so that they may perform their responsibilities as efficiently and effectively as possible.” These professional development activities include:

- Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) [Learning to Lead Workshop Series](#) - Travel, lodging, meals, and registration expenses are covered for these four training sessions.
 - Phase I: Learning to Lead – School Board Basics (Per Minnesota Statute, every School Board must complete)
 - Phase II: Leadership Foundations – School Finance and Management (Per Minnesota Statute, every School Board must complete)
 - Phase III: Building a High-Performance School Board Team
 - Phase IV: Representing your Community through Policy and Engagement
- MSBA Leadership Conference
 - Annually, two days in early January in Minneapolis.
 - Travel, lodging and meals are covered for School Board members. There are no registration fees.
- MSBA Summer Seminar- annually; typically the first Monday in August

- MSBA also provides various opportunities throughout the year for governance and management training and networking opportunities through webinars and in-person events.
- Grand Rapids Area Schools Professional Development - School Board members may attend professional development offered to School District teachers and staff during professional development days.
- School Board Mentors - New School Board members will be assigned an experienced School Board member to serve as their mentor.

Expectations for School Board Service

Board members should become familiar with the [Policy 209 - Code of Ethics](#) which is reviewed at the organizational meeting each January.

Among the multiple issues addressed in the Ethics Policy, here are a few highlights that Board members should be aware of:

- All Board members are expected to attend all meetings. However, it is recognized that sometimes scheduling conflicts will occur. A member should notify the Board Chair and the Confidential Admin Assistant whenever they are unable to attend a scheduled meeting.
- Board members should accept and support the decision of the Board, even if the individual Board member holds a differing opinion.
- It is expected that Board members will review the agenda and related documents, and submit questions to the Superintendent or Board Chair at least 24 hours prior to the School Board meeting.
- No one person, or group of persons, acts in the name of the Board. Members of the Board are without authority to act independently as individual Board members. ([Policy 201 - Legal Status of the School Board](#))

When an item of business comes before the Board in the form of a motion, it is necessary that a majority of votes be cast in favor of the motion for the Board to act.

- [Policy 203.1- School Board Procedures: Rules of Order](#)

School Board members have obligations related to confidentiality:

- [Policy 209 - Code of Ethics](#)
- [Policy 515 - Protection and Privacy of Pupil Records](#)

Addressing Concerns

View [this chart](#) for step-by-step processes for addressing concerns from staff, students, parents, and community members.

Communication

All communication, including emails and text messages related to School Board business, may be subject to a public records data request. Communication regarding School Board issues should be conducted through the School Board member's District email account. It is unwise and not recommended to use a personal email account for School Board communication.

Visits to School Buildings and Attendance at District Events

School Board members are frequently invited to visit school buildings during the school day and to attend school and District events in the evenings and on weekends. School Board members should make efforts to attend these events when possible to establish good relationships with our District community and be visible to students, families and staff.

Time Commitment for School Board Service

In the past, School Board members have reported that they spend a range of 20 to 50+ hours per month on School Board business and activities. These include:

- School Board meetings - Generally twice a month; Mondays beginning at 6:00 p.m.
- School Board Workshops - Generally once a month at 5:30 p.m.
- Committee meetings - Highly variable depending on committee assignments. Occasional daytime availability may be required, especially if serving on committees that involve District administration/staff or if serving as a representative to an outside group such as MSHSL, Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce, Reif Center Board, or Boys and Girls Club Board.
- Preparation time for meetings.
- E-mail.
- Professional development such as mandatory MSBA trainings, conferences, etc. Out-of-town travel may be required.
- Attendance at District and community events.
- Conversations with constituents.
- Research and general awareness of educational issues and current events.

Role of the Superintendent

MN Statute 123B.143 requires that school districts employ a licensed Superintendent who must be licensed as a Superintendent in the state of Minnesota.

The Superintendent serves as a non-voting ex-officio member of the School Board. The School Board hires the Superintendent and, with the assistance of the School District's attorney if necessary, negotiates a contract of up to three years. New School Board members should become familiar immediately with the dates and stipulations contained in the Superintendent's contract and with the Superintendent's goals for the current year.

The Superintendent reports directly to the School Board, and is the only employee who reports directly to the School Board. Good governance practices and School Board protocol dictate that the Superintendent, not School Board members, give direction and assignments to other School

District employees.

Bargaining Units

The District negotiates with designated bargaining units on contracts and non-union groups that have a work agreement. The School Board sets financial parameters for the District team to use in negotiations on contracts and work agreements.

The District negotiations team is composed of people who have specific expertise in areas relevant to the bargaining unit plus people with district-wide responsibilities relevant to the negotiation. Negotiation Team assignments are made at the Organizational Meeting in January.

The School Board is provided with updates on the labor negotiations, when an agreement is reached on a contract, or when the Superintendent has a recommendation regarding a work agreement. The School Board always meets in Closed Session to hear the progress or results of labor negotiations and terms of the agreement. The School Board must vote to approve a contract or work agreement at an open meeting.

[Individual & Unit Agreements can be found here.](#)

Contract groups that are members of a union and current contract/agreement periods:

- Grand Rapids Principals Association
- Education Minnesota Local #1314 (EDMN #1314/Licensed Teachers/Educator)
- AFSCME Local 207-2 Administrative Professionals Agreement
- Education Support Professionals Local #4850
- AFSCME Local 207-1 (Service Employees Agreement including Custodians, Maintenance, Food Service, and Techs)
- Confidential Admin Assistant
- Directors

Non-union individual contracts include:

- Achievement & Integration Coordinator
- Business Manager
- GRIP Coalition Coordinator
- Human Resources Director
- Indian Education Coordinator
- Special Services Director
- Superintendent

Meet and Confer

Representatives from the ISD #318 EDMN #1314 and the District meet regularly during the school year to discuss and resolve issues submitted by the EDMN #1314 membership and/or District.

Education Definitions and Acronyms

- ABE - Adult Basic Education
- ADA - Americans with Disabilities Act
- ADM - Average Daily Membership
- DESC - District Educational Services Center
- EC - Early Childhood
- ECFE - Early Childhood Family Education
- ECSE - Early Childhood Special Educations (Birth-5)
- EL / ELL - English Learner / English Language Learner
- ESEA - Elementary Secondary Education Act (Federal law)
- ESP - Education Support Professional
- FASTBridge - Math and reading assessment
- FTE - Full Time Equivalent
- IDEA - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- IEE - Individual Education Evaluation
- IEP - Individual Education Plan
- ISD - Independent School District
- MARSS - Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System
- MCA - Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment
- MDE - Minnesota Department of Education
- MSBA - Minnesota School Board Association
- MTSS - Multi-Tiered Systems of Support
- OT - Occupational Therapist or Therapy
- PBIS - Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
- PE - Physical Education

- PSEO - Postsecondary Enrollment Options
- PT - Physical Therapist or Therapy
- PTA - Parent Teacher Association
- PTO - Parent Teacher Organization
- SAT - Scholastic Assessment Test
- SAEBRS- Social, Academic, Emotional, Behavioral Risk Screener used to identify student needs
- Section 504 - A federal law that protects a student with an impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, regardless of whether the student receives special education services.
- SCIP - School Continuous Improvement Plan
- SpEd / SPED - Special Education
- SRO - School Resource Officer
- SLEDS - Minnesota Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System

Other Education Terms and Acronyms

- [Glossary of Education Terms](#)
- [Education Acronyms](#)

Checklist: First Steps after Election to the School Board (Nov-Dec)

The Confidential Assistant to the Superintendent will be responsible for ensuring that these tasks are completed:

- File Campaign Financial Report with the School District Elections Clerk.
- Sign “Acceptance of Office” and “Oath of Office” documents (notarized)
- Access to Resources
 - School Board Google account (Drive & Email)
 - Skyward login
 - MSBA login
- A district-owned device with connection to the District network will be issued.

- Meet with Human Resources for payroll setup and other requirements.
- Conflict of Interest Disclosure - [Policy 210](#), Section V. Conflicts Prior To Taking Office
 - “A School Board member with personal financial interest in a sale, lease, or contract with the District which was entered before the School Board member took office and presents an actual or potential conflict of interest shall immediately notify the School Board of such interest. It shall thereafter be the responsibility of the School Board member to refrain from participating in any action relating to the sale, lease, or contract. At the time of renewal of any such sale, lease, or contract, the School Board may enter into or renew such sale, lease, or contract only if it falls within one of the enumerated exceptions for contracts relating to goods or services provided above and if the procedures provided in this policy are followed.”
- Provide contact information for the School Board webpage.
- MSBA Phase I and II Training - Registration and lodging will be set up by the Confidential Assistant. Sessions are typically offered during the MSBA Leadership Conference in January, and must be completed in the first year of the term. View [dates and locations on the MSBA website](#).
- MSBA Leadership Conference in January - Registration and lodging will be set up by the Confidential Assistant.
- Attend the first orientation meeting with the Superintendent, Mentor and Confidential Administrative Assistant.

Prior to Taking Office in January

New school Board Members should read through and review the following documents. The Confidential Admin Assistant will be responsible for providing these documents to new School Board members.

1. School Board Handbook (this document)
2. Review [New Board Member Orientation](#) Agenda
3. Familiarize yourself with the Google Drive for School Board meeting materials
4. [School Board Policies and Procedures](#) 201-214
5. [Student Handbooks](#)
6. [Employee Handbook](#)
7. [Superintendent contract](#)
8. Become familiar with the process already underway for developing the budget for the next fiscal year. The Business Manager will provide new School Board members with a summary of the steps in the budget process that have already occurred.