

Considering School Board Service?

Participant handout



THE ROLE

School board service is elected public office - public service on behalf of the whole district: students, families, staff, taxpayers, and the future of the community.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Public education matters Public schools serve every child and reflect a community commitment to opportunity.	Authority is collective Individual members have influence, but the board governs only when it acts as a body.	Governance is not management The board sets direction and monitors results. Staff manage daily operations.
Serve the whole district Board members bring experiences and perspectives, but serve all students, schools, and communities.	Expect complexity Finance, labor, facilities, achievement, policy, and state requirements all intersect.	Prepare before filing Attend meetings, read board materials, listen broadly, and reflect honestly on fit.

WHAT THE BOARD DOES

Core responsibilities • Set vision and long-term direction • Adopt policy and approve budgets • Hire, support, and evaluate the superintendent • Monitor progress, conditions, and results	What this does not mean • Board members do not individually direct staff • Board members do not supervise employees • Board members do not manage day-to-day operations • Board members do not represent only one issue or group
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GRAND RAPIDS AREA SCHOOLS CONTEXT

School sites and programs include: • West Rapids Elementary (PK-2), East Rapids Elementary (3-5), Cohasset Elementary (K-5), Bigfork Elementary and High Schools (PK-12), RJEMS (6-8), and Grand Rapids High School (9-12) • GRAVA (online), Area Learning Center, Itaskin Education Center, and Quest	• Approximately 3800 students • ~\$70 operating budget • ~1 million sq ft of facilities • ~160 acres of grounds • ~48 bus routes • ~600,000 meals served annually • 3rd largest geographic district in the state
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EFFECTIVE BOARD MEMBERS PRACTICE:

• Thoughtful decision-making focused on all students and long-term impact • Communication: listen well, convey ideas clearly, avoid surprises • Team orientation: work as one member of a board team	• Willingness to learn finance, policy, law, data, and community context • Public service mindset: serve the whole district with integrity • Respect for role boundaries, confidentiality, and public decision-making
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RUNNING FOR SCHOOL BOARD: 2026 BASICS

Candidate qualifications

- Eligible voter in Minnesota
- At least 21 years old when the term begins
- Resident of the district at least 30 days before the election
- Not registered as a convicted sex offender / predatory offender
- No affidavit on file for another office unless authorized by law

Key dates and filing reminders

- Filing period: July 14-28, 2026; closes 5:00 p.m. July 28
- Withdrawal deadline: July 30, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.
- General Election: November 3, 2026
- Three open seats; four-year terms
- File with the district clerk; Affidavit of Candidacy, \$2 fee, proof of residency, and contact information

Campaign finance and campaign practices

Keep records from the beginning. Candidates who receive contributions or make expenditures of more than \$750 in a calendar year have reporting obligations. All candidates must file a Campaign Financial Report Certification of Filing within seven days after the election. Use official guidance for legal and compliance questions.

BEFORE YOU DECIDE TO FILE

Helpful preparation

- Attend or watch board meetings
- Read board agendas, policies, budget, audit, and strategic plan materials
- Talk with families, staff, students, taxpayers, and current board members

Reflection questions

- Can I serve the whole district?
- Can I work as one member of a team?
- Can I make decisions in public while respecting roles, law, and confidentiality?

RESOURCES

MSBA - Running for School Board	https://mnmsba.org/membership/running-for-school-board/
MSBA Resource Library	https://mnmsba.org/resource-library/
MN Secretary of State - Filing for School Board Member	https://www.sos.mn.gov/election-administration-campaigns/become-a-candidate/filing-for-school-board-member/
Minnesota Campaign Manual	https://www.sos.mn.gov/media/4908/minnesota-campaign-manual.pdf
Itasca County Elections	https://www.itascacountymn.gov/178/Elections
GRAS School Board Election	https://www.isd318.org/administration/board-of-education/school-board-election
GRAS Board of Education	https://www.isd318.org/administration/board-of-education

Local questions: Superintendent's Office - 218-327-5704 | jrasmussen@isd318.org | mgrose@isd318.org