

Considerations for Elected Board of Education Service



1) What questions should I consider before seeking a school board position?

- What **skills** would I bring to board service? (Other board or leadership experiences or service).
- What **goals** do I have for the district that can be reached better through elected board service than through other opportunities?
- How much **time** do I have to devote to board service?
- Does my **family support** the time I will need to dedicate to being an elected official?
- Am I prepared to take on a **public role** in my community?

2) What qualifications do I need?

Education Law governs school board election. Eligibility requirements are (must meet all requirements):

- ✓ **Be able to read and write,**
- ✓ **Be a citizen of the United States,**
- ✓ **Be 18 years of age or older,**
- ✓ **Be a resident of the school district for at least the past year on election day** (moving *within* the district is allowable),
- ✓ **Not be a district employee,** (may be employee of BOCES or teacher/staff in another district)
- ✓ **Not be a convicted felon** (unless you have a certificate of relief),
- ✓ **Not be in the family of a currently seated board member** (spouse, relative in same home).

3) What is the time commitment necessary to do the job well?

Board service typically requires 10-20 hours per week, and will include:

- reading Board packets, reading reference & educational materials and getting any questions clarified by board president or superintendent,
- attending Board meetings and study sessions, workshops and retreats,
- serving on board and district subcommittees,
- attending arts or athletic events, community forums and public hearings,
- attending staff and students celebrations (such as graduation) and,
- attending professional development and advocacy opportunities.

4) How do I get nominated?

- **Nominating Petitions** are obtained from your District Clerk. They will have necessary forms, local policies and rules, timelines, etc. District clerks will provide guidance on the documents.
- **You MUST file your petition on time** (2021 deadline is April 19th by 5 pm). **Make sure you really want to run before filing. Only district residents may sign your petition.**
- Ballot position is assigned by lottery the day after petitions are due.
- **You are required to keep track of all expenses and report them to the district clerk on 3 occasions:**
 - ✓ 30 days BEFORE the vote,
 - ✓ 5 days BEFORE the vote, and
 - ✓ 20 days AFTER the vote (even if you didn't win).

Expenses over \$500 must be reported to Commissioner of Education.

5) Is Board Service really for me?

Being a board member means being a part of the whole and working as a team. It is difficult to run or serve as a "single issue" board member. As a Board member you are responsible for conducting **all the District's business** needed to provide for students and staff. Other characteristics you should consider are:

- Am I **continuous learner**?
- Am I an **active listener** and can I take criticism without taking it personally?
- Can I work for consensus and **support Board decisions** if I am not in the majority?
- Can I support what is best for **all** children?
- Am I free from any **conflict of interests**, perceived or otherwise that would inhibit my service?

6) What resources are available to help me learn about my district?

- **District Website:**
 - District Mission and Vision Statement,
 - Board of Education Policies (**By-Laws for Board in the 1000 series**),
 - Board meeting minutes & audits.
- **Board of Education meetings.**
- **District mailings & publications including Code of Conduct.**

7) How do I prepare for a campaign?

- **Prepare a biography & have a picture made.**
Keep biography short! List relevant qualifications only. You will need this for mandated district vote publications, potential media requests and for your own campaign.
- **Set a budget for both your time and money and stick to it.**
- **Be aware some forms of communications cost money** (postage, lawn signs, advertisements). Be cognizant of community norms and regulations on lawn signs.
- **Be Cautious with Social Media.**
Monitor what others post on your behalf. Keep communications positive. Be informed on issues.
- **Decide if you wish to run on a slate.**
Know positions of all candidates on slate before you agree.
- **Decide if you will seek endorsements.**
Know the implications. Don't over promise, remember your authority as a board member is limited by laws and regulations.
- **Be aware electioneering** may not occur within 100 feet of polling locations. Legally you can not use district communication channels or students to distribute partisan materials (includes PTSA organizations). You can not appear at school functions for partisan purposes.
- **Screen your calls.** Make sure you have time and are in appropriate setting to speak with people over the phone. Return calls in a timely fashion, be respectful of media and publication deadlines.

REMEMBER TO USE A GOOD HANDSHAKE.

DO NOT BE SHY, ASK PEOPLE TO VOTE FOR YOU.

If you don't win, prepare for next year. Attend board meetings, get involved in your community, organize early, reflect on your past plan.