



## Filling a Board Vacancy by Appointment

*A Simple Guide to the Fundamentals of Board Vacancies*

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## Mission Statement

The mission of the Michigan Association of School Boards is to provide quality educational leadership services for all Michigan boards of education, and to advocate for student achievement and public education.



## Filling a Board Vacancy by Appointment—*A Simple Guide to the Fundamentals of Board Vacancies*

Nothing can be more disruptive to a board of education than a mid-year vacancy, but it doesn't have to be that way with the right information and planning. The Michigan Association of School Boards is committed to providing training and development for school board members in order to ensure the effective and successful governance of public schools, which in turn, positively impacts hundreds of communities and thousands of students. Use this guidance to ensure your bases are covered when appointing a new board member to a vacant position. School board members are elected in November of even years, but what happens when a sudden or unexpected resignation occurs mid-year? Just as



it's important to prepare hundreds of newly elected members, it's equally important to help prospective candidates approach boardsmanship with a clear understanding of the demands, expectations and rewards of being a public school trustee.

In many ways, recruiting and appointing a new member to fill a vacancy on your school board should follow the same format as hiring someone for a position in business or industry. In most cases, you should conduct formal interviews with candidates to determine the most qualified, committed person wanting to serve the students, school and community for the right reasons.

When a vacancy occurs, establish a protocol or process for appointing a candidate. This should include scheduling and interviewing candidates by asking some challenging questions or posing some real-life scenarios of board service.

First, members of the board must agree in advance on the qualifications they'll seek in a new member and should produce a list of attributes that all members can agree on and then use to evaluate potential candidates.

The goal of the school board should be to appoint a candidate with a deep commitment to public education and to all of the children in the district, not someone who's interested in bolstering his or her own status, image and agenda. After all, if administrators are expected to do a good job of selecting staff members for employment, the board should do a good job of handpicking a board member for appointment.

### What Do Board Members Do?

A school board, working with its community, has four major leadership responsibilities and an unlimited amount of decisions to make on a wide range of issues.

#### Leadership Responsibilities

1. To envision the district's education future and set goals and define strategies to guide the district toward that vision.
2. To hire a superintendent who'll effectively implement the board's policies and manage the district to accomplish its goals.
3. To monitor and assess the district's performance and to keep the public informed and engaged.
4. To advocate for students and public schools within the community, state and national levels.

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### Boards Deal With a Wide Range of Issues

- Create a master plan for technology.
- Set priorities for school district expenditures.
- Establish and oversee the district's educational programs.
- Develop options for school improvement.
- Approve contracts, including collective bargaining agreements and individual administrator contracts.
- Not the least of a school board member's responsibilities is establishing a good working relationship with the superintendent. The superintendent is accountable to the school board for managing the district according to board bylaws and policies.
- Carefully observing the fine line between policymaking and administration is one of the keys to successful board-superintendent relationships. Board members must refrain from getting involved in day-to-day operations of the schools.
- Community relations is a key element of board work. School boards help build community understanding of and support for public education. The board is the vital link between the school system and the public.
- School board members serve an important, political role in the improvement of public education. In this proactive role, individual board members lobby their state legislators and U.S. congressional representatives for passage of laws and adoption of funding programs to enhance education.

### What Makes a Good Board Member?

Effective school board members share a number of common characteristics. But it's important to realize no one will become fully effective the instant they're elected. These qualities are gained through experience on the board, through training provided by MASB and through individual, ongoing efforts to become informed, skillful and effective. Common characteristics of effective trustees include:

- Accepts the office as a public trust of the highest order and actively encourages community input and public involvement.
- Attends boardsmanship workshops to hone leadership skills and knowledge.
- Relies on facts, is open-minded and respects others' ideas, suggestions and criticisms.
- Shows courage in thought and action to safeguard good schools for all children.
- Respects district staff and deals with them professionally.
- Advocates for openness and democratic processes in all board activities with emphasis on team decision-making and consensus.
- Represents and reflects a deep and abiding faith in the social significance of public education.
- Seeks first to understand the issues, knowing that their decisions have a tremendous impact on their communities.
- Understands that he/she has no legal authority as an individual. It's only around the board table that decisions are made and a board member exercises any authority. Accepts the will of the majority.

- Willingness to spend the time necessary to be well-informed on issues coming before the board and remains reasonably knowledgeable about local, state, national and global education.
- Represents the entire community and doesn't surrender to special interests or political groups. The "entire community" includes citizens who may not have a direct relationship with its public schools.
- Responds accordingly and appropriately through challenging events. Board governance is an immense responsibility and a trustee's public actions and words will impact the district, its image and integrity.
- Willingness to listen thoughtfully to others. Although board members can't be expected to agree with everything colleagues and constituents say, they're expected to listen respectfully to their opinions and concerns.
- Willingness to express one's own opinion and participate in discussions openly and honestly while encouraging and respecting the free expression of opinion by colleagues.
- Respects the confidentiality of privileged information and takes no private action that would compromise the board or administration.
- Willingness to model continuous learning by taking advantage of development opportunities, such as those offered by state and national school board associations.
- Abides by and supports the board operating procedures as adopted by the board.

### Need Not Apply, Need Not Appoint

- Micromanagers, single-issue candidates and those with personal agendas.
- Candidates who don't understand the distinction between governing a school district and running it.
- Candidates who don't understand the best way to communicate with parents on emotional issues.
- Candidates who undermine the public's confidence in schools and alienate parents.
- Candidates who don't respect the will of the majority vote.
- Candidates who don't understand the time commitment and importance of preparation.



### What to Do When a Board Vacancy Occurs

**A**s soon as a vacancy occurs on a local board of education, the board has 30 calendar days to fill the vacancy. If a vacancy still exists after 30 days, the vacancy shall then be filled by the intermediate school district. When a vacancy occurs on an ISD board where members are elected by constituent districts, notice of the vacancy must be filed within five days of its occurrence with the state board of education. The state board would then have the responsibility to fill the vacancy if the ISD board doesn't fill it within 30 days.

When filling a vacancy created by one of the circumstances cited in Section 310 of the Election Code (resignation, death, loss of residency, etc.), boards have the authority to fill the vacancy by appointment as long as a majority of the board offices remain occupied.

Because neither the Revised School Code nor the Election Code dictates the process used by a board in appointing a new member, the method of filling the vacancy should be clearly outlined in a board's bylaws. The procedures adopted by a board, however, must be consistent with the requirements of the Open Meetings Act. When a committee or a board meets to reduce the pool of candidates, the meeting must be open to the public. If a board decides to interview the candidates, the interviews must be conducted during an open

session. And, when a board makes its final decision and appoints a person to fill the vacancy, the vote must be taken in such a way that a person attending the open meeting can see how each board member voted.

**As soon as a vacancy occurs on a local board of education, the board has 30 calendar days to fill the vacancy.**

by law. A copy of the acceptance of office must also be forwarded to the school district election coordinator.

The timing concerning how long an appointee "fills in" for a vacated seat and when that appointee is to be replaced by an elected individual, who may either serve out the remainder of the vacated term or be elected to fill a new full term, is effected by several factors. These factors include the length of the position at issue in relation to when it was vacated as well as when the vacancy occurred in relation to the nominating petition filing deadline. Please refer to Page 10 of this guide for a more in-depth explanation regarding this process and matters of "timing."

### Legal Qualifications for Board Members

To be eligible, a person must be a qualified school elector. This means that the candidate must be a registered voter in the school district where he or she is a candidate.

A candidate must be at least 18 years of age; a citizen of the United States; a resident of the state of Michigan for at least 30 days; and a resident of the school district on or before the 30<sup>th</sup> day prior to the date of the election. Property ownership isn't a requirement for candidacy.

The Michigan Election law, MCL 168.11, defines the term "residence" as:



"A place at which a person habitually sleeps, keeps his or her personal effects, and has a regular place of lodging. If a person had more than one residence, or if a wife has a residence separate from that of the husband, that place at which the person resides the greater part of the time shall be his or her official residence for the purposes of this Act."

Thus, even though a candidate may still be a registered voter in a school district and the candidate's drivers' license includes a school district address, he or she could still fail to satisfy this definition.

Be aware that the Michigan Constitution was amended in 2010 to make a person ineligible for election or appointment to any state or local elective office if the person was convicted of a felony involving dishonesty, deceit, fraud or a breach of the public trust within the preceding 20 years, and the conviction was related to the person's official capacity while holding any elective office or position of employment in local, state, or federal government.

Any person registered as a voter in the school district may run for election to the school board. Men and women who become school board members may be taxpayers, parents, business people and community leaders. They may be young or senior citizens and come from all races, creeds and ethnic groups. In short, school board members are people representative of the community they serve.

### Incompatibility of Office Considerations

Compatible is a legal term applied to a combination of public offices that can be occupied simultaneously by one person without creating a conflict of interest. "Incompatible," when applied to a combination of public offices, means that a conflict of interest would exist if one person held them at the same time. PA 566 of 1978 prohibits a person from holding incompatible public offices at the same time. MCL 15.181 et seq.

In determining if an incompatible situation exists, courts will examine the purpose and function of each position to determine whether the exercise of the powers of one office would prevent the proper fulfillment of the duties of the other by resulting in: (1) the subordination of one public office to another; (2) the supervision of one public office by another; or (3) a breach of duty of public office.

For example, Michigan's attorney general has ruled that a school employee, such as a part-time athletic coach or school bus driver, may not serve as a member of the board of education of the district where he or she is employed. The rationale underlying this conclusion is that persons hired by a school district aren't able to function as employees and serve on the board of education at the same time. An employee sitting as a member of the board in such a situation would have control over the terms of employment of his or her own position. See, OAG No 6642 (Jan. 2, 1990). In short, the subordinate and supervisory authority of the board rendered the office of board of education member and the position of employee within the same school system incompatible.

*See Incompatibility on page 7*

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## Incompatibility from page 6

Additionally, the attorney general has concluded that a subordinate and supervisory relationship results where: (1) one office sets and approves the compensation of another office, OAG, No 6713 (Feb. 24, 1992); (2) where one office has the power of appointment or removal over another office, OAG, No 6834 (Feb. 3, 1995); or (3) where one office reviews the accounts of the other public office. OAG, No 6713 (Feb. 24, 1992).

The attorney general's interpretation on incompatibility is reinforced by the statute regulating political activities by certain public employees. PA 169 of 1976. Section 3 of that act sets forth the conditions under which a public employee may be a candidate for election to a school board and then states:

[A] Public employee of a ... school district ... who is elected to an office within that ... school district

shall resign or may be granted a leave of absence from his employment during his elected term. MCL 15.403.

In 1981, the attorney general analyzed this provision as it affects school employees. A school district employee who's elected to the board of education of the district in which he or she is an employee must resign his or her employment unless he or she is granted a leave of absence prior to assuming office on the board. OAG No 5863 (March 26, 1981).

A "breach of duty" results when a person can't protect, advance and promote the interests of both offices simultaneously. A breach of duty can result in any number of situations. It's well established that a breach of duty results and two offices become incompatible when a person is placed on opposite sides of a

contract between two public bodies. Furthermore, an incompatibility can also arise by virtue of a noncontractual issue coming before one or both of the offices a person holds, if the two public bodies have competing interests on the issue. For example, if the city council considers a noncontractual matter involving or affecting the school district, or vice versa, a person holding the offices of city council trustee and member of the board of education would have competing interests and the holding of both offices would result in a breach of duty.

A public official can't avoid an incompatibility by merely abstaining from any official actions. Abstention in those circumstances is itself a breach of duty. Rather, the official must vacate one of the incompatible offices.

## Recommended Steps to Fill a Vacancy

- 1 Announce/post the vacancy via the media, district website, letters, etc., and ask interested persons to notify the board president. All candidate interviews should be open to the public and follow requirements of the Open Meetings Act. The final vote of the appointment also takes place in a public meeting.
- 2 The total board interviews each candidate. Each board member uses a rating sheet as a guide in asking questions and evaluating responses. Interviews are designed to determine how well the candidate fulfills the board's agreed-upon criteria.
- 3 Following the interviews, each board member individually lists all the candidates who are acceptable and meet the qualifications.
- 4 The board president tabulates the results and determines which candidates show up on all of the lists or at least those that show up most frequently. The lists for each board member must be publicly announced and recorded in the minutes of the meeting. Try to narrow to top three candidates.
- 5 Following discussion, each board member lists a first choice and a second choice for appointment. The president tallies the results, giving two points for each first choice and one point for each second choice. The choices for each board member must be publicly announced and recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- 6 The board president then recommends for appointment the candidate with the most points. This candidate is asked to attend the public meeting at which the recommendation will be made and the vote taken.
- 7 All other candidates receive a letter thanking them for their interest.

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## Sample Questions to Ask Candidates

Provided are some sample questions to start with, but it's always recommended to customize your questions to meet the specific and unique qualities and issues of your board, school and community. Once the questions are selected, you may want to have a rating scale for each question so you can fairly evaluate responses.

1. Why are you interested in serving on the school board?
2. What do you see as the role of a school board member?
3. What contributions can you make to this school district?
4. How do you feel the school district can improve the academic achievement of students and the professional development of the staff?
5. What are the challenges facing our school district?
6. What are the biggest challenges facing public education today?
7. What approach would you take to helping pass millage renewals, millage increases or Headlee override elections? (If applicable now or in the future)
8. What qualities, skills and experience would you bring to the board?
9. If you were faced with a tough issue as a board member (raising taxes, cutting staff, programs), what kind of data would you need to help you make your decision?
10. What do you see as the roles and responsibilities of school board members?
11. At times you may be caught between legitimately opposing points of view. There may be a difference between your personal point of view and the policy or law that you're required to uphold as a trustee. How will you handle this?
12. What do you think are the most important skills for students to have when they graduate?
13. Describe how you'll advocate openness and democratic processes in all board activities with emphasis on team decision-making and consensus.
14. Are you willing to pursue the skills, the knowledge and the training necessary to become a fully functioning and effective board member? Provide examples of how you might accomplish this.
15. When voting on issues, are you always willing to put learning first and give primacy to what's best for children?
16. In the challenging times that we're facing this year, why have you decided to be a part of the decision-making process?
17. What would you like to see changed in the district and how do you envision your role in that change?
18. An average month for a school board member includes about five scheduled meetings and perhaps another five school or community related activities. In addition, there's daily email correspondence, required reading and district updates. How will you fit this into your schedule?
19. As a board member you'll be asked to make decisions where you must put aside what's best for you, your family, your friends and your school to do what's best for the students and district. What does this mean to you?
20. After review and discussion on significant issues, the board operates by a majority vote. When the majority vote is different from your position how would you manage the situation?
21. What are your beliefs about the use of technology in education?
22. Working effectively with other school board members and the superintendent requires skills in communication and decision-making. How do you see yourself working with other members of the leadership team? What is your vision for education in this community?
23. How can a board know if its goals are being accomplished and its policies carried out?
24. How do you view the relationship between the board of education and the administration/staff?
25. If appointed to the board, would you seek re-election when the appointment expires?
26. Describe your response if a parent cornered you in the grocery store and asked for your support on a particularly hot issue?
27. What will you do to become more effective as a board member?
28. Identify a recent board decision that you felt strongly about and describe how you would balance community concerns, student needs, state and federal law, staff considerations and your personal value and beliefs to determine how to vote on the issue.

### Eligibility

To be eligible, a person must be a qualified school elector. This means that the applicant must be a registered voter in the school district. An applicant must be at least 18 years of age; a citizen of the United States; a resident of the state of Michigan for at least 30 days; and a resident of the school district.



### Sample Resolution Board of Education Vacancy

Whereas a vacancy has been caused on this board of education by reason of \_\_\_\_\_; and

Whereas this board of education has by law authority to fill a vacancy for the unexpired term thereof;

Now, therefore, be it resolved by a majority vote of all the remaining members of the board of education of the \_\_\_\_\_ School District that \_\_\_\_\_ be and hereby is, appointed to serve as a member of the board of education of this school district for the unexpired term of \_\_\_\_\_ ending on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_.

### Where to Find Potential Candidates to Fill a Vacancy

Maintaining school board excellence in governance is an important concern for any community—and ensuring a smooth transition when an expected or unexpected vacancy occurs. Consider the following points:

- **Focus on diversity.** If you want to bring in new perspectives and voices, think about whether your board composition really reflects the community it represents. If you're dealing with the whole community, it's only reasonable to have representation from across the community.
- **Think broadly.** Your next great board member might come from citizen work groups, including advisory committees, councils and task forces, members of professional and trade associations related to public education, donors, strong school financial supporters, local business owners, school volunteers, alumni and so on.
- **Identify and contact people who care deeply about the district's mission.** These people shouldn't only have the required skills but should also care enough about the district's mission to make a significant investment of their valuable time.
- **Turn foes into friends.** Although not every opposition leader wants to be or should be a board member, consider well-spoken activists who are eager and able to speak to community issues and public policy debate.
- **Get them to come to you.** Let the community know about vacancies or create opportunities to learn about board service by advertising your mid-term vacancies with the fact that you're looking for new board members.
- **Some boards have citizen advisory committees, councils or task forces** that provide advice and research when needed. This work enables the existing board to see potential candidates in action and at the same time exposes them to the concept of the board's work.

### The Timing of a Vacancy Announcement and its Effect on Appointment

Under Michigan law (MCL 168.311):

1. If less than a majority of the offices of school board member of a school district become vacant, the remaining school board members shall fill each vacant office by appointment. If a vacancy in the office of school board member is not filled within 30 days after the vacancy occurs or if a majority of the offices of school board member of a school district become vacant, the intermediate school board for that school district shall fill each vacancy by appointment. An individual appointed under this subsection serves until a successor is elected and qualified.
2. If a vacancy occurs in an office of school board member more than 7 days before the nominating petition filing deadline as provided in section 303 for the general November election that is not the general November election at which a successor in office would be elected if there were no vacancy, the person appointed shall hold office only until a successor is elected at the next general November election in the manner provided by law and qualifies for office. The successor shall hold the office for the remainder of the unexpired term. This subsection applies regardless of whether an individual is appointed under subsection (1) to fill the vacancy.

According to the Bureau of Elections this means that individuals appointed to a board position which is also “up for election” during the next regular election will serve until the end of that year, at which time the newly elected board member will begin their term starting Jan. 1 of the following year. However, in situations where an individual is appointed to a vacant position which is not “up for election” during the next regular election, that appointee would only serve until an election to fill the remainder of the term eventually occurs, at which time the newly elected individual should be sworn into the position soon after the election results are certified (rather than waiting until the first of the year).

Also note that there has been a recent change in the timing provision of the statute. Under the prior version of the law the timing of the vacancy could change the duration of the appointment depending upon whether or not it occurred “more than 90 days before a regular school election...” This language has been changed to “more than 7 days before the nominating petition filing deadline as provided in section 303 for the general November election that is not the general November election at which a successor in office would be elected if there were no vacancy.”

Here are some scenarios to help with understanding the law and the Bureau’s interpretation:

#### Scenario 1

A board trustee, “John,” was elected to a six-year term in November 2012; therefore, his term is set to expire on Dec. 31, 2018. John announces that he intends to resign from his position effective **July 1, 2018**, a few months prior to the end of his term.

The board conducts a proper search and appoints “Amy” to take John’s place within 30 days after John’s resignation date. As John’s term was set to expire at the end of 2018, his position was “up for election” during the next regularly scheduled election (the November 2018 election). “Bill” wins the election for this position that November. Amy will serve in the position from the date of her appointment through Dec. 31, 2018, at which time Bill will officially begin his regular term on Jan. 1, 2019.

Because John’s board position was already up for election during the very next regularly scheduled election at the time he stepped down, the “timing” of his resignation has no bearing upon Amy’s appointment to the position or Bill’s subsequent election to the position. It does not matter if John announces his resignation before or after “7 days before the nominating petition filing deadline” or even after the election itself takes place. Amy will still serve from the date of her appointment through the end of the year and Bill will still officially begin his full term on Jan. 1, 2019.

#### Scenario 2

Again, John was elected in 2012 to a six -year term that was set to expire on Dec. 31, 2018. In this scenario, John announces that he intends to resign from his board position as of **July 1, 2014**, several years prior to the end of his term.

John’s position is considered “vacated” when his resignation becomes official; in this case on July 1, 2014. For the November 2014 elections, the deadline for filing as a candidate is July 22, 2014, meaning “7 days before” the filing deadline is July 15, 2014. As such, John’s July 1, 2014 resignation occurred “more than 7 days before the nominating petition filing deadline.” Therefore, his board position will now appear on the November 2014 ballot so that an individual can be elected to complete his term through 2018. However, the board must still appoint an individual to serve in John’s place during the interim period between

*See Timing on page 11*

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## Timing from page 10

his resignation and the election, and must make the appointment within 30 days of his resignation.

Amy is appointed to John's board position on July 20, 2014 and begins to serve on the board at that time. Bill then wins the November 2014 election to fill the remainder of John's term. Per the Bureau of Elections, once the election results have been certified Bill should file an acceptance of office and take the oath of office as prescribed by law. Therefore Amy will have served as appointee from July 20, 2014 until Bill's acceptance of office. Bill will now serve until Dec. 31, 2018 as the individual who was elected to complete John's term. The candidate who wins the election for the position during the regularly scheduled November 2018 elections will then begin their full term on Jan. 1, 2019.

## Scenario 3

Once more, John was elected in 2012 to a six-year term which was set to expire on Dec. 31, 2018. In this scenario, John resigns from his board position effective **July 18, 2014**, several years prior to the end of his term.

Again, John's position is considered "vacated" when his resignation becomes official. Here, that's July 18, 2014. This is **not** "more than 7 days before the nominating petition filing deadline" (established above as July 15, 2014); hence his board position will not be placed on the November 2014 ballot. Due to the timing of John's resignation as it relates to the 2014 candidate filing deadline, his position cannot be up for election until the next regularly scheduled election in November 2016.

Amy is appointed to John's board position on Aug. 10, 2014, and begins to serve on the board at that time. She continues to serve until the November 2016 elections, at which point Bill wins the election to fill the remainder of John's term. Again, per the Bureau of Elections, once the 2016 election results have been certified Bill should be sworn in as a board member and begin serving at that time. Amy will have therefore served as appointee from Aug. 10, 2014 until Bill's acceptance of office. Bill will then serve until Dec. 31, 2018 and the candidate who wins the election for the position during the regularly scheduled November 2018 elections will begin their full term on Jan. 1, 2019.

## Board Member Vacancy Announcement

The contents of a vacancy announcement, how it's announced and where it's posted are at the board's discretion. The board may want to consider announcing the vacancy and its intent to fill it by appointment during its meeting and post it on the district's website and in local newspapers. The length of the appointment depends upon whether or not the vacancy occurs within 7 days of the next election's filing deadline as well as when the term of the vacated position was set to expire. (See Page 10, "The Timing of a Vacancy Announcement and its Effect on Appointment".)

### Notice of Board Vacancy

*[The following language can be utilized if the vacancy occurred for a position which was scheduled to expire during the next regularly scheduled election or prior to 7 days before the next election's filing deadline.]*

The \_\_\_\_\_ District is seeking applications for the current vacant position on the board of education. An individual will be appointed to fill the vacant position through Dec. 31, 20\_\_ and will be replaced by the individual elected to the position (based upon the Nov. \_\_\_, 20\_\_ election results) on Jan. 1, 20\_\_\_.

*[The following language can be utilized if the vacancy occurred within 7 days of the next election's filing deadline and is for a position which was not scheduled to expire during the next regularly scheduled election.]*

The \_\_\_\_\_ District is seeking applications for the current vacant position on the board of education. An individual will be appointed to fill the vacant position until the Nov. \_\_\_, 20\_\_ elections have been held and certified and a newly elected individual has been sworn-in to fill the remainder of this position's term.

*[Once one of the above paragraphs has been chosen, the posting can be completed with the following information.]*

Interested persons must submit a letter expressing interest in the board position and their qualifications for the position to the district office no later than \_\_\_\_ p.m. on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

Following a review of the submitted materials, the board will schedule interviews with selected candidates. Not all candidates for the board vacancy will be interviewed. If you have any questions concerning the role of the board of education and the responsibilities of a board member, please contact \_\_\_\_\_, Superintendent of Schools, at \_\_\_\_\_.

## Filling a Board Vacancy by Appointment—*A Simple Guide to the Fundamentals of Board Vacancies*

### Legal Authority of Boards of Education

- Educate students.
- Provide for the safety and welfare of students.
- Acquire, maintain and dispose of school property.
- Determine matters relating to employees and contractors.
- Make joint agreements and cooperative arrangements.
- Set the curricula and courses taught in the schools.
- Employ the superintendent.
- Adopt a budget.
- Decide whether or not to furnish transportation for pupils.
- Negotiate with employee unions regarding salaries and other conditions of employment.
- Individual school board members have no authority to act independently; they can't commit or bind the board by their individual actions; powers and duties of the board must be exercised by the board as a whole.



### Checklist for Qualified School Board Candidates

**Put children first.** A qualified school board candidate should believe that every student deserves an equal, quality education. They should have a true commitment to the successful future of all students in the district and a proven history of advocacy on their behalf.

**No personal or political agenda.** Board candidates shouldn't be running on their own personal agenda or political aspirations. Instead, they must have a passion for public education and believe that all students are entitled to a quality education.

**Provide leadership.** A qualified school board candidate should be passionate about moving the district forward. To accomplish this, a candidate needs to be an innovative problem solver who's effective in building consensus and isn't adverse to change and reform.

**Appreciate diversity.** A qualified candidate values the diversity of cultures and demonstrates a willingness to address the social needs of all children and their families.

**Understand budget and finances.** Qualified school board candidates must understand their role as fiscal managers of the district with the responsibility of dedicating resources to the priorities of the district while maintaining a balanced budget.

**Know educational policy.** A qualified school board candidate should be somewhat familiar with education policy and the role of the school board in policy making.

**Demonstrate integrity.** A qualified school board candidate must be a person who has demonstrated honesty, integrity and trustworthiness and adheres to a high ethical standard.

**Understands community outreach.** A qualified school board candidate understands the importance of engaging the community in the school board's decision-making process.

**Expects accountability.** A qualified school board candidate must be able to hold the superintendent accountable to the goals of the district and in turn recognize they are accountable to the community.