



A GUIDE FOR 2023 SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES

Ohio's public school board members, one of the largest groups of elected officials in the state, are charged with major responsibilities in government — providing the best educational opportunities possible for Ohio's youth and managing and controlling the political subdivision of the school district.

What does a school board member do?

The broadest definition of a school board's role is that it acts as the governance team for the school district. School boards adopt policy and oversee the district's policy manual. The board's most important role is to employ the superintendent and treasurer and work closely with them to establish and set policy, vision and long-range goals and be accountable for the fiscal health and opportunities provided to the district's students and families.

School board members need to be strong district ambassadors to the community and work to build public support and understanding of public education. Remember, individual board members do not hold authority unless it has been delegated to them. The board's legal authority is held by the governing body as a whole and is exercised through voting in public meetings.

Board member responsibilities

The role and function of board members often are misinterpreted by the public. The board is a policymaking body, and members are the chief advisers to the superintendent on community attitudes. Board members do not manage the day-to-day operations of a school district; they see to it that the system is managed well by professional administrators.

Board members do not evaluate staff, other than the superintendent and treasurer, nor do they typically become involved in employment interviews, other than those of the superintendent, business manager and treasurer. Board members may be consulted during the hiring process for other positions, such as assistant superintendent.

KEY DATES

AUG.
9

Nominating petition must be filed with county board of elections by 4 p.m.*

NOV.
7

Election Day

JAN.
1

Newly elected board members take office

* If your district is one of the few with a primary election, your nominating petition will be due earlier. Check with your county board of elections.



OHIO SCHOOL BOARDS
ASSOCIATION

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
[GETONBOARDOHIO.ORG](https://getonboardohio.org)

WHAT IS A GOOD BOARD MEMBER?

We often hear that one person is a good board member or another is a bad board member, yet we seldom hear a clear definition of what constitutes a “good” board member. In reality, there are about as many philosophical theories about board governance as there are board members. Members must recognize that people usually don’t react to the same problem in an identical manner, so flexibility is necessary. However, there are some acceptable guidelines.

A good board member:

- Knows that they can legally act as a board member only when the board of education is in session. No single person can act for the board. No board member, unless authorized, should speak on behalf of the board.
- Avoids administrative decisions or attempting to second-guess the administration. The superintendent is the chief administrator, and the board has no administrative function.
- Is well acquainted with school policies.
- Votes at all times in the best interests of the school district.
- Is flexible and realizes there are times when changes must be made, when tradition cannot be honored and when pressure must be ignored.
- Remembers that board business often requires confidentiality, especially in processes involving students, personnel, land acquisition, negotiations and security.
- Is able to support a decision when it is made.
- Is interested in obtaining facts but also remembers that the administration is responsible for operating the schools and cannot spend all its time making reports to an individual board member.
- Is a good listener at board meetings, in the community or anywhere else, but never commits themselves, the board or the administration.
- Knows that the reputation of the entire school district is reflected in their behavior and attitude.

RUNNING FOR YOUR LOCAL BOARD OF EDUCATION

HOW TO BECOME A SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATE

To run for a school board seat you must be:

- a U.S. citizen;
- at least 18 years old;
- a resident of the school district for at least 30 days preceding the election;
- registered to vote in the school district for at least 30 days preceding the election.

Conflicts of interest

There are conflicts of interest of which all board members must be aware to prevent jeopardizing their reputation or that of the school district. In addition to actions and relationships prohibited by school statutes, other prohibitions are set out in criminal statutes and statutes enforced by the Ohio Ethics Commission (OEC). If you already are a public employee or officeholder, a position on a board of education may be incompatible with your current position. Before seeking election, potential candidates should make certain they are eligible to serve. For a review of the applicable laws in this area, please see the “Conflicts of Interest” section of the OSBA’s Get on Board website.

Election

Members are elected on a nonpartisan ballot on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November in odd-numbered years. The term of office is four years, although in certain instances two-year terms must be filled to complete an unexpired term. When elected, your term begins on the first day of January after the election and expires on Dec. 31. Most boards of education have five members; however, some larger districts have seven. Two members (or four on a seven-member board) are elected at one general election and three members are elected at a general election two years later.



GETTING STARTED

You can obtain an election packet from your county board of elections office that includes the necessary forms and petitions required to become a candidate. Many of these forms can also be downloaded from the Ohio secretary of state's website.

Filing your petition

A candidate must file a petition to run for a seat on a board of education. This nominating petition must be filed with the county board of elections by 4 p.m. on Aug. 9, 2023, the 90th day before the November general election (RC 3513.254, 3513.255). As of April 2023, the filing fees were \$30.

Candidates may obtain the petition forms and discuss questions about filing with their county board of elections. For more information on filing your petition, please see the "Campaign First Steps" video on OSBA's Get on Board website, which walks candidates through the nominating petition form and the process for gathering signatures.

Campaigning

After filing your petition, it's time to begin gathering support. Candidates for boards of education run their campaigns in a variety of ways. Some campaigns are conducted primarily by word-of-mouth. Others are large-scale campaigns, with many signs, appearances and fundraisers. Each candidate decides how to structure their campaign. For a review of the different types of campaigns frequently used by board candidates, please see the "Campaign First Steps" video on OSBA's Get on Board website.

Candidates who want to receive campaign contributions and/or make campaign expenditures are required to form a campaign committee and must track all campaign contributions and expenditures. A candidate's ability to solicit contributions and spend campaign funds is heavily regulated by state law. For more information about the types of permissible contributions and expenditures, and the rules that must be followed when using campaign signs, literature, posts and other campaign items, please see the "Contributions and Expenditures" video on OSBA's Get on Board website.

Finally, it's important to note that most candidates for boards of education are required to periodically file an itemized statement of campaign contributions and expenditures with their county board of elections. Candidates for a board of education of a school district or ESC having a total student enrollment of 12,000 or more must also file a financial disclosure statement with OEC.

For a review of the required reports and their deadlines for the 2023 campaign season, please see the "Reporting Requirements" video on OSBA's Get on Board website. You also can contact your county board of elections or the Ohio secretary of state elections section at (614) 466-2585 or visit www.sos.state.oh.us.

SIGNATURES NEEDED

The number of registered voters' signatures needed varies.

TYPE OF SCHOOL DISTRICT/NUMBER OF SIGNATURES REQUIRED

Local and exempted village
25

City
Population
under 20,000
25

City
Population
20,000 to 49,999
75

City
Population
50,000 to 99,999
150

City
Population
greater than 100,000
300

Educational
Service Center
(ESC)
50



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ATTEND A BOARD CANDIDATE WORKSHOP OR WEBINAR

JULY
22

10 a.m. to Noon
Free

Pre-Board Candidate Webinar

Register for this session by
scanning the QR code below



AUG.
9

Cost \$55

Condensed version of Board
Candidate Workshop available
as an on-demand webinar

In-person Board Candidate Workshops

Scan the QR code for more
information about all of the
Board Candidate Workshops



TRAINING AVAILABLE FOR SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES

Learn about being a board member at a free workshop

OSBA will conduct a free, two-hour Pre-Board Candidate Webinar on Saturday, July 22, 2023. Led by OSBA staff, this session is for those considering running for a school board seat and current school board members who were appointed to office and now must run for election. Register for this session at <http://links.ohioschoolboards.org/preboard-candidate-workshop>.

School board candidate training: Attend a Board Candidate Workshop or Webinar for insight on running your campaign

OSBA is offering Board Candidate Workshops for those who have been certified to run by their boards of elections. These sessions will explain the roles and responsibilities of being a board member and the legal aspects of campaigning and being a board member. In-person Board Candidate Workshops will be offered at three locations across the state. The registration fee is \$55.

As an alternative, OSBA also is offering a condensed version of this workshop as an on-demand webinar beginning Monday, Aug. 9. The first half of the Board Candidate Webinar will focus on board roles and responsibilities, and the second half will cover campaign finance and legal issues. The cost is \$55.

Workshop and webinar registrants will receive a Board Candidate Kit, which includes "Candidate: A practical guide to running for school board;" a subscription to the OSBA Journal, the premier bimonthly magazine for school board members; and a subscription to Briefcase, a semimonthly newsletter.

Session details and registration information is available at www.getonboardohio.org/board-candidate-workshops-and-webinar.

What is the Ohio School Boards Association?

The Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA) was founded in 1955 to serve the needs of the state's public school boards of education. The nonpartisan, not-for-profit association's vision is to lead the way as the respected voice of Ohio public education.

OSBA is an association of member boards of education. Members have a wide range of services available to them, including training, advocacy, legal assistance, administrator searches, transportation consulting and policy development, among others.

OSBA's website (www.ohioschoolboards.org) is an excellent source for boardmanship information, including the latest in education-related legislation and issues.



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