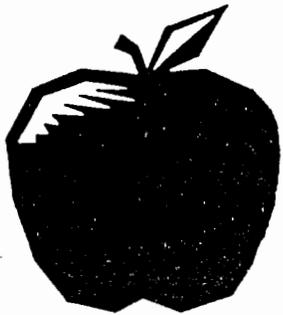


Have *YOU* considered running for the school board?

What you should know about school board service



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The board of education is a uniquely American institution. It keeps the country's public schools flexible and responsive to the needs of their local communities. A member of a board of education in New York State takes on one of the most important responsibilities that can be assigned to any citizen: helping to plan the education of the state's youth.

What makes a good school board member?

The legal requirements for board membership are few, but qualifications for effective service are many. The most effective board members possess most or all of these attributes:

- **Effective Communicator**—Can describe what he or she wants and describe what others want; a good listener.
- **Consensus Builder**—Capable of working toward decisions that all can support and willing to compromise to achieve that goal.
- **Community Participant**—Enjoys meeting a variety of people, can identify the community's key communicators and reaches out to the community.
- **Decision Maker**—Knows his or her own as well as others' decision-making styles, can support group decision-making.
- **Information Processor**—Can organize priorities and schedule to handle lots of verbal and written information.
- **Leader**—Willing to take risks, be supportive of board colleagues, district staff and community.
- **Team Player**—Helps promote the board's vision and goals.

What does a board member do?

With children always their ultimate focus, school board members act officially only at the board table, working with other board members to accomplish the following:

- Create a shared vision for the school district.
- Establish district goals and set priorities.
- Oversee the general operation of the district, setting directions for academic programs, public relations, facilities and contracts.
- Establish the educational program of the district.
- Adopt and maintain current policies in written format.
- Approve and adopt the annual budget.
- Hire and evaluate the superintendent.
- Ratify collective bargaining agreements.
- Set high standards of governance.
- Maintain strong ethical standards.
- Maintain good community relations.

How do I become a candidate?

Generally, school board candidates must be at least 18 years old, qualified voters in the school district and able to read and write. They must be residents of their districts continuously for one year (as little as 30 days or as long as three years in some city school districts) before the election, and cannot be employed by the board on which they serve or live in the same household with a family member who is also a member of the same school board. Special rules apply to candidates for New York City's 32 community school boards.

Local school board members in New York

State are elected, except for those on the New York City Central Board of Education and the Yonkers board who are appointed. The method of election may vary from district to district. Check with your superintendent of schools or your district clerk to learn about the voting plan in your district.

With limited exceptions, school board members serve three-, four- or five-year terms. Terms are staggered so all board positions are never open at the same time. By state law, school board and budget elections, in all districts except Albany and the Big 5, must be held on the third Tuesday in May. The vote may be held on the second Tuesday in May if, at the request of a school board, the commissioner of education certifies no later than March 1 that the third Tuesday in May would conflict with religious observances. New York City's community school boards are elected for three-year terms on the first Tuesday in May.

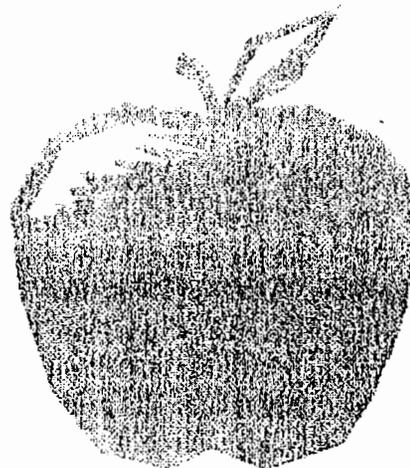
School board members in New York State, except for those in the five largest cities—Buffalo, New York City, Rochester, Syracuse and Yonkers—receive no remuneration except the satisfaction that comes from rendering an indispensable public service.

Procedures for filing petitions for vacancies on a school board vary depending upon the type of school district. Generally, candidates must submit a nominating petition to the school district clerk. The petition must be signed by at least 25 qualified district voters or 2 percent of the number of those who voted in the previous annual election, whichever number is greater. In small city school districts, nominating petitions must be signed by at least 100 qualified voters. The petition must include the candidate's name and residence, the vacancy in question,

the incumbent's (if any) name, the residences of the persons who signed the petition and the length of the term of office for which the candidate is being nominated. This petition must be filed with the district clerk at least 30 days (20 days in small cities) before the election meeting, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

State law requires all candidates for election to a board of education, except community school boards in New York City, to file a sworn statement with the district clerk disclosing their campaign expenses. If expenditures made by the candidate or by others on the candidate's behalf exceed \$500, a statement also should be filed with the commissioner of education. Expenditures of not more than \$25 may be made without the candidate's permission if the donor or donors file a sworn statement with the clerk and the commissioner stating that the candidate did not approve the expenditure.

Details concerning these requirements may be obtained from your district clerk or from the Bureau of Finance, Management and Information Services (FMIS), New York State Education Department, Albany, N.Y. 12234.



The New York State School Boards Association

The New York State School Boards Association was founded in 1896 in Utica, N.Y., and incorporated in 1935. The Association's headquarters are in Albany.

NYSSBA coordinates activities designed to serve the interests of New York State's school boards. It provides information and advice on school board issues to its members and cooperates with other educational organizations for the welfare of public school children in the state. During the legislative session the Association advocates for adequate state support of education and enactment of legislation that favors the interests of the public schools.

NYSSBA conducts a wide-ranging program of education for school board members and administrators as well as an annual delegate assembly and convention. One of the most important Association services is its orientation academies in July and September for new school board members. Participating in one of these is perhaps the most effective way a new board member can learn about his or her job quickly.

The expenditure of public funds for the New York State School Boards Association has legal basis in section 1618 of the Education Law.

**For more information about
NYSSBA programs and services,
contact the Association at
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Or check out our website at
<http://www.nyssba.org>.**