



Qualifications & Questions

When Running for a School Board

Education Law governs school board elections in New York State. The following eligibility requirements must be met:

- *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 allowed).*
- *Not be a district employee (You may be an employee of BOCES or employed by 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 (ie...spouse, relative in the same home).*

Know your role as a School Board Member:

A board member has three main jobs. An individual board member cannot make decisions. Decisions are made when the board meets in public as a board. A board member's three primary responsibilities are to:

- *Approve of an annual budget.*
- *Hire the Superintendent.*
- *Establish Policy.*

** In addition, the board member needs to develop a clear vision and goals for the district. The vision and goals will help to define policies and procedures and establish the framework for the budget. School Board Members serve as leaders in the community and are advocates for students, the school district and public education.*

What Questions Should I Consider Before Deciding to Run for the School Board?:

- What skills do I bring to board service?***
- What goals do I have for the district?***
- How much time do I have to devote to board service?***
- Am I willing to attend workshops and information sessions to learn more about public education and information that will help me to do my job?***

Are there Limitations?

As a School Board Member, there are powers that are defined by statutes in sections 1709, 1804, 2503, and 2554 of New York State law. Additional powers are defined in the following areas:

- The Constitution***
- Federal and State Laws and Regulations***
- Board of Regents***
- Board of Education Policies***
- Contracts***

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

This will vary slightly district by district based on the number of meetings, board practices and committee membership. Board service can require between 10-20 hours per week /month and will include:

- Reading of board packets, reading reference and educational materials and getting any questions clarified by the board president or superintendent prior to board meetings.***
- Attending board meetings, work sessions, committee meetings, workshops, and retreats.***
- Attending other venues ie...community groups, booster clubs, parent groups, community forums.***
- Attending student performances, art shows, athletic events and public hearings .***
- Attending staff and student celebrations and recognitions such as graduation, end of year banquets, retirement events.***
- Attending professional development programs through Erie County Association of School Boards, New York State School Boards Associations, and other***

organizations.

How Do I Get Started?

- Nominating Petitions will be obtained by the District Clerk. District clerks will provide you with guiding documents which will outline the number of signatures required as well as important dates.

- Petition must be filed on time. For 20__ the deadline is _____ (month) _____ (date) at _____ pm.

- Only district residents may sign your petition.

- Ballot petitions is based on a lottery the day after petitions are due.

- Keep track of all expenses and report them on the appropriate forms:

- 30 days before the vote.

- 5 days before the vote.

- 20 days after the vote (even if you don't win).

***Expenses in excess of \$500 must be reported to the Commissioner of Education at the State Education Department.**

Is Serving On a Board of Education Right For Me?

Serving on a board means working as part of a team. As a board member you will be responsible for conducting all the district's business, not just on one or two issues that you may have campaigned for. Additionally, you should ask yourself the following questions:

- Am I a life long learner?

- Am I willing to keep an open mind and listen to all viewpoints?

- Am I able to maintain confidentiality? Failure to do so could result in you being sued in a court of law as an individual.

- Can I support Board decisions even though I may be in the minority?

- Am I good listener and good communicator?

- Am I able to follow rules and policies.

- Can I support what is best for children at all times?

Resources Available to You As A Board Member:

The following resources are available to you as a board member, and may assist you in getting to know the District that you are hoping to serve:

- ***District Website***
- ***District Vision and Mission Statements***
- ***Board of Education Policy Manual***
- ***Board meeting agendas and minutes***
- ***District mailings, Budget Newsletter,***
- ***District Code of Conduct***
- ***New York State Education Law Book***
- ***Erie County Association of School Boards resources: (library, website, etc.)***
- ***New York State School Board Association resources***

Be Aware:

Once you are elected to serve on the School Board, you will have up to 1 year to complete your 6 hour mandated training course in Governance Training and 6 hour mandated training in Fiscal Oversight Responsibility Training. Failure to complete the training will result in your inability to serve on the Board of Education .

Campaigning for The School Board:

- ***Prepare a brief bio and have picture available for district newsletter and/or local newspaper as well as for any flyers you may produce.***
- ***Establish a budget for both your time and money. Save all receipts.***
- ***Be wary of social media.***
- ***Be cautious about making campaign promises you may not be able to keep because you are not familiar with the policies, procedures, your role as a board member or the laws.***
- ***Decide on whether you will see endorsements .***
- ***Be aware of electioneering. You may not have signs or solicit votes within 100 feet of the polling locations. You may not use district communication channels (includes PTSA organizations to distribute campaign materials.***
- ***Be available for “Meet the Candidate Nights”.***
- ***Be respectful of returning calls in a timely fashion to your constituents, the media, and the clerk of the board.***

- *For additional resources and information, contact your district clerk or Erie County Association of School Boards.*
- *2/15/2021*