



The locally-elected school board is responsible for maintaining, developing and operating local schools. School boards establish a vision for the public education system in their community, are responsible for hiring and evaluating the superintendent of schools, establish a yearly budget and adopt policies, curriculum and handbooks - among many other responsibilities!



Kansas Association of School Boards

School Board Election Guide

What does it take to be a school board member?

It takes an election!

Every school district in Kansas is governed by a locally-elected board of education. They are unpaid public servants. School board members as a whole comprise the largest body of elected officials in our country.

The qualifications for effective service as a board member are many, even though the actual legal requirements are few. School boards elections are nonpartisan. Terms of office for a school board are staggered so seats don't become open all at once.

School board members must be registered voters in the school district and cannot be an employee of the

board on which they are a member. If board members are elected from certain areas of the district rather than at-large, they must live in the area of the district from which they are seeking office.

School board elections are held the first Tuesday in November of each odd-numbered year. A primary election must be conducted if more than three people file for the same school board position. Newly elected board members take office the second Monday in January following the election and serve four year terms.

2019 Election Cycle Filing and Election Dates

Filing Deadline

- ▶ Monday, June 3, 2019

Primary election

- ▶ Tuesday, August 6, 2019

General election

- ▶ Tuesday, November 5, 2019



Curt Herrman
Manhattan USD 383 Board of Education
KASB Board of Directors Region 4 Vice-President

"One of the most satisfying things I get to experience every year is high school graduation. Few things in life are better than seeing the enthusiasm and the energy of the young minds that the district has developed and is now sending out into the world to make a difference."

It takes vision!

Creating a clear vision with high expectations for teaching and learning involves making choices, not only about where the district is headed, but also about how it will get there. For this reason, establishing a vision may be the most difficult responsibility any school board faces.

This involves:

- ▶ Keeping students as the focus of the work of schools;
- ▶ Adopting a shared vision based on community beliefs to guide local education; and
- ▶ Demonstrating a strong commitment to the shared vision and mission by using them to guide decision-making and communicating them to others.



"We have lofty goals with Kansans Can; we have to fully fund it now. I see a lot of push back and that is why we have to advocate for public education."

Art Gutierrez
Emporia USD 253 Board of Education
KASB Board of Directors Region 2 Vice-President

It takes teamwork!

To accomplish the mission and goals of the school district, it is important that board members work as a team and cooperate with other board members. Decision-making authority is vested in the board of education, not in individual members. A board member should:

- ▶ Have a broad background of experience and knowledge and a sincere desire to serve the community;
- ▶ Be visionary, able to understand the forces of societal change and plan for the future;
- ▶ Be tolerant and without prejudice, respecting diverse points of view;
- ▶ Understand education today is complex and simplistic approaches will not meet today's challenges;
- ▶ Be willing to invest the time and energy required for meetings, phone calls, conversations, visits to schools, professional development seminars and workshops;
- ▶ Be willing to be part of a team, supporting group decisions;
- ▶ Listen for real consensus and not confuse a few vocal constituents with a majority feeling;
- ▶ Learn and grow as you become more aware of your responsibilities.

What does it take to be

It takes advocacy!

School boards serve as the leading advocate on behalf of students and their schools in the community. Both individually and collectively, school board members need to remain informed of issues at the local, state and national levels.

In a time when children come to school with more challenges than ever before, schools acknowledge they cannot meet all these needs alone. Instead, they collaborate with families, community organizations and other public and private agencies to benefit both the children and the community they serve.

The advocacy role is increasingly important for school board members. Informing citizens about the schools' accomplishments, challenges and needs is an essential part of school board leadership. Through their actions, board members represent the community and help foster understanding and support for the schools.

Specific responsibilities for school boards include:

- ▶ Seeking others who can help expand educational opportunities to meet the needs of the whole child;
- ▶ Advocating for children and families and establishing strong relationships with parents and other mentors to help support students;
- ▶ Leading in celebrating the achievements of students and others in education; and
- ▶ Promoting school board service as a meaningful way to make long-term contributions to society.

These responsibilities mean school boards cannot work in isolation. They must bring together the entire community (parents, community groups and others concerned about education) in effective and responsible ways to initiate and sustain lasting school improvement.



"We need to be actively involved to provide a true and accurate picture of our public school system and be able to take a stand for all Kansas students, present and future."

Frank Henderson, Jr.
Seaman USD 345 Board of Education
KASB Past President
NSBA Board of Directors Western Region Director

a school board member?

It takes commitment!

- ▶ Commitment to serving the public with time and energy committed to meetings, phone calls, conversations, visits to schools and professional development seminars and workshops.
- ▶ Commitment to public education with a belief in the importance of public education and a commitment that every child is deserving of an outstanding education.

Boards of education guide the vision for the local school district, keeping student success as the primary focus of each decision. The decisions you make as a member of the board impact the future of the children in your community and the economic future of our state and nation.

The board must create an environment and organizational framework that encourages innovation and supports staff members in a process of continuous improvement of education.

It takes accountability!

The genius of America's education system is that local boards are directly accountable to the communities they serve.

Board members share the responsibility with educators for the success of their students, but the board is ultimately accountable to the local community to set high academic standards, operate with transparency and integrity and hold the system accountable for student success.

Effective boards engage in continuous assessment of all conditions affecting education. These should include:

- ▶ Monitoring student achievement by receiving regular reports on student progress and needs.
- ▶ Evaluating progress toward the achievement of district long- and short-term goals and ensuring policies and allocation of resources effectively support the district vision;

Hiring the Superintendent of Schools and Setting Policy

The day-to-day operation of the district is the superintendent's responsibility, and selecting and retaining the right superintendent of schools for the district is a critical board decision. Hiring the right superintendent can mean having a school system in which children learn, administrators and teachers working together and parents are satisfied and supportive.

Perhaps no single decision a board makes has more impact than the selection of the superintendent. Kansas law states the superintendent manages the district on a day to day basis, subject to the rules and regulations set by the board of education.



"I've continued to try to help state and federal legislators understand our Kansas public education system. I believe public schools are so important to our way of life. We are educating children for their future. As a member of my local board of education, I strive to improve public education and take care of our students."

Susan Walston
Haysville USD 261 Board of Education
KASB Board of Directors Region 6 Vice-President



- ▶ Using student achievement data and all other available information as a basis for making program corrections and modifications as needed;
- ▶ Keeping the public informed on the status of the district's programs and students' progress;
- ▶ Ensuring all functions of schools as institutions of teaching and learning fit together harmoniously;
- ▶ Providing for appropriate staff training and participating in board training opportunities;
- ▶ Evaluating both superintendent and board performance;
- ▶ Encouraging curricular and assessment innovation; and
- ▶ Fulfilling governance responsibilities as required by state and federal law.

Boards of education adopt policies support the work of the school board by setting guidelines that transform vision into reality. Board policies ensure compliance with the most current case law, rules and regulations.

Once a policy is adopted by the board, the superintendent is responsible for implementing the policy.

The board and individual board members should refrain from becoming involved in the day-to-day operation of the schools.

It Takes You!

The Kansas Constitution makes public education a state responsibility while providing for the operation of public schools by local boards elected by citizens of the school district. Each board consists of seven members. The only exception is Fort Leavenworth USD 207. As a military base school system, the district serves only kindergarten through ninth grade students, and the governing board is composed of three residents of the base appointed by the commanding officer of Fort Leavenworth.

Close to 2,000 men and women guide Kansas public school systems, employing more than 70,000 Kansans and serving nearly 500,000 children. Board members receive no pay for their service, only the satisfaction that comes from providing an indispensable public service!

The mission of public schools is to educate each child to his/her fullest potential. The local board, an integral part of representative government, acts on behalf of the people of each community to translate that mission into reality.



"I have 22,000 kids. They are all my babies. Making that connection with students means everything."

Brenda Jones
Kansas City USD 500 Board of Education
KASB Board of Directors Region 13 Vice-President

Ready to learn more?

Contact your local school district to learn more about what it takes to become a member of the board of education.

Other resources to explore include:

- ▶ **Kansas Association of School Boards board election website:** kasb.org/legalpolicy/boardelections/
- ▶ **National SchoolBoard Association website:** <https://www.nsba.org/SERVICES/school-board-leadership-services/key-work>

