



2024

# CANDIDATE'S GUIDE TO SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS

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# INTRODUCTION

The MSBA Candidate's Guide to School Board Elections provides an overview of the legal qualifications and procedures related to electing a board of education seat. Additionally, the guide gives candidates an introduction to the roles and responsibilities of school board members. This edition has been prepared for the November 5, 2024 election.

The following information is intended to inform candidates on:

- Qualifications for nomination
- Nomination procedures
- Relevant election procedures
- Minnesota's Campaign Finance Act
- The role of an effective school board member
- Where you can get more information

We encourage you to become an active MSBA member if you're elected to a school board. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to contact the MSBA office if you have any questions regarding school board elections.

# KEY DATES



Filing  
Deadline  
August 13, 2024  
by 5 p.m.



Withdrawal  
of  
Nomination  
August 15, 2024  
by 5 p.m.



First Day  
Absentee Ballots  
for General  
Election  
September 20, 2024



General  
Election  
November 5, 2024



Term of  
Office Begins  
January 6, 2025

# HOW TO BE A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER

Serving on a school board is more than just a volunteer role; it's a chance to make a lasting impact on the success of each student. More than 2,400 dedicated individuals serve as school board members for Minnesota's 331 public school districts. Every two years, board members are elected by voters for their local district to govern with integrity for a term of four years.



**Eligibility:** To run for your local school board, on the date of the election, you must be a U.S. citizen; at least 21 years of age; a resident of the school district 30 days prior to the election; a registered voter in the school district where you intend to run; and not be convicted of a felony.

## What DO School Board Members Do?

- The board governs the district's work at the highest level by establishing policies and overseeing the superintendent's performance.
- The board monitors the performance of the superintendent and student success. It also sets new goals for the superintendent aligned to the district's strategic plan.
- The board approves the district's budget.
- The board hires and evaluates the superintendent.

## What DON'T School Board Members Do?

- The board does not manage day-to-day operations.
- The board does not oversee district communications to parents and students.
- No single board member has any power outside of a legally called school board meeting. During such meetings, the school board votes in trust with the entire local community.

### GOOD GOVERNANCE PRACTICES TO FULFILL THESE CORE RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

- Setting the direction and vision of school district
- Creating, reviewing and amending school policy
- Connecting with the community
- Employing and evaluating the superintendent
- Controlling the expenditure and receipt of school funds
- Delegating authority
- Determining matters related to school employees and contractors
- Directing the acquisition and disposal of school property
- Monitoring district performance and goals
- Develop a Professional Development plan for individual and school board

# TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN

**Seek Information**—Attend school board meetings. Be familiar with procedures for conducting meetings. Know the current issues, including funding, student achievement, hiring practices, contract negotiations, technology, and building needs.

**Study Board Policies**—Most districts keep a manual of established policies. Those policies are also publicly available on the school district website. Your awareness of guidelines the board has developed will prevent you from making misleading statements publicly during your campaign.

**Know your Community's Concerns**—Study those issues that particularly gain community interest. Know what's already done and considered. Don't make promises unless you are sure of what is involved in keeping them. Board members elected on promises often find themselves in the awkward position of having to back down when they learn all of the facts.

**Keep Your Faith and Commitment**—Win or lose, your school district needs people like you who care about all children and who are willing to get involved in the democratic student success processes to improve public education.

MSBA offers a wealth of free resources on their website, including the 2024 Candidate's Guide to School Board Elections. This comprehensive guide provides an overview of legal qualifications and election procedures.

## Key 2024 Election Dates



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Deadline**  
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2024



**General  
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November 5,  
2024



**Term of  
Office Begins**  
January 6, 2025

**For more information, visit  
[https://mnmsba.org/resource-  
library/#elections](https://mnmsba.org/resource-library/#elections)  
or scan this QR code.**



# WHAT MAKES AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER?

Effective school board members share a number of common characteristics. But it's important to realize you won't become fully effective the instant you're elected. These qualities are gained through experience on the board, training provided by MSBA, and personal, ongoing efforts to become informed, skillful and collaborative.

## **The Standards for School Board Leadership are:**

### **Code of Ethics**

The school board, as a whole, provides leadership to the community on behalf of the school district by conducting its business in a fair, respectful, legal, and responsible manner.

### **Vision**

The school board, with community input, envisions the educational future of the community and then formulates the goals, defines the outcomes, and sets the course for the school district.

### **Structure**

The school board, to achieve its vision, establishes organizational and physical structures for students and staff success.

### **Accountability**

The school board is accountable to the community for constantly monitoring the conditions affecting the school district as a whole.

### **Advocacy and Communication**

The school board advances its vision at the local, regional, state, and national levels.

# HOW TO BE A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER

## **QUESTION :**

What group of Minnesota Centric public officials annually oversees expenditures of \$23.2 billion, sets policies affecting the futures of 850,000 students, and makes decisions that impact cultural and economic life in more than 330 school districts.

## **ANSWER :**

Minnesota's 331 School Boards

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- Are you willing to take the time to study current education issues with the same effort and interest you exert in your own business or personal affairs?
- Are you willing to pursue the skills, the knowledge and the training necessary to become a fully engaged and effective board member?
- Are you able to work as a governance team member, putting personal agendas aside and working cooperatively for the best interest of all students in your school district?
- Are you ready to champion an effective public school system to serve our youth despite diminishing resources and increasing demands of the global economy?
- Are you prepared to speak up and serve as an advocate for public education in your community?
- As a duly elected public official, are you willing to uphold state and local laws when you exercise the authority of your office at legally called school board meetings? And, when voting on the issues, are you always willing to put learning first and give priority to what's best for all students?

If you answered YES to these questions, then you are ready to seek the trust of your community through active school board service.

# WHAT DO SCHOOL BOARDS DO?

A school board, working with its community, has five major leadership responsibilities:

1. To envision the district's education future and set goals to guide the district toward that vision.
2. To ensure district resources (financial, personnel, facilities, etc.) and policies are aligned in a manner that supports goal attainment and actualization of the district's vision.
3. To hire, work closely with and evaluate a superintendent who will effectively implement the board's policies and manage the district to accomplish its goals.
4. To monitor and assess the district's performance, and to keep the public informed and engaged.
5. To advocate for students and public schools within the community and at state and national levels.
6. All school board decisions should logically follow goals and objectives for education in the district according to their strategic plan.
7. While a board member must be an informed decision-maker, they must also remember that decisions can be made only by the board acting as a whole in a public meeting.
8. Typically, a school board member is expected to make decisions on a wide range of issues including:
  - Approving plans for facilities and technology.
  - Setting priorities for school district expenditures.
  - Overseeing the district's educational programs.
  - Monitoring and ensuring the efficacy of school improvement efforts.
  - Approving contracts, including collective bargaining agreements and administrator contracts.

9. Establishing a good working relationship with the superintendent is an important responsibility of a school board member. The superintendent is accountable to the school board for managing the district according to board policies.
10. 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.
11. Community relations is another key element of board members' 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.
12. Finally, school board members serve an important advocacy role in the improvement of public education in our state. 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 improve our public schools.



SCHOOL BOARDS  
DETERMINE THE WHAT



SUPERINTENDENTS  
DETERMINE THE HOW

# HOW TO BECOME A CANDIDATE

Local school board elections are held at the even-year November election. In 2024, the election will be held on November 5.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

To be eligible, a person must be a registered voter. This means that the candidate must be a registered voter in the school district where they are a candidate.

A candidate must be at least 18 years of age; a citizen of the United States; and a resident of the school district on or before the 30th day prior to the date of the election.

Under the Minnesota Constitution, a person is ineligible for election or appointment to any state or local elective office if the person was convicted of a felony.

## **FILING FEES**

School Board candidates have the option of paying a nonrefundable filing fee of \$2 to the school district filing official instead of filing a nominating petition. If paid by the appropriate due date, the fee has the same effect as filing a nominating petition.

## **FILING DEADLINE**

Nominating petitions or filing fees for local school board candidates must be filed no later than 4 p.m. on the 15th Tuesday preceding the date of the election. For the November 5, 2024 election, the filing deadline is July 23, 2024. **See Appendix 1 for filing form.**

# FILING FOR OFFICE CHECKLIST

Candidates are solely responsible for meeting the legal requirements of the filing process as provided in Minnesota Election Law. Minnesota Election Law is the final authority in all matters, not this checklist.

## AFFIDAVIT OF CANDIDACY

1. Determine correct filing period.
2. Determine correct filing officer. Confirm office hours during filing period.
3. Completed, signed, and notarized filing paperwork and filing fees can be mailed or delivered by another person to the filing officer. Must be received in the appropriate filing office during the filing period.
4. Determine correct name of office sought and determine if there are different seats numbers/letters for a similar office title.
5. The name that you list on the top of the affidavit is the name that will be placed on the ballot; exactly – as is. Make sure it is clearly written and verify with filing officer any details such as hyphenations, Mc names, irregular spacing, etc.
  - a. Names are placed on the ballot in upper and lower case, so, be very specific as to what letters are to be capitalized.
  - b. If needed, provide name pronunciation instructions to filing officer for programming of audio features of assistive voting devices.
6. Affidavit is complete, signed, and notarized.
  - a. Before the filing event (no more than 60 days before the first day of the filing period).
  - b. Or at the filing event. Filing officers may serve as notarial official for affidavits of candidacy.
7. What is a “complete” affidavit?
  - a. Name – exactly what will appear on the ballot (upper- and lower-case letters).
  - b. Review M.S. 204B.06, subd. 1(3), para. 2 regarding “true name and commonly/generally known in the community.”
  - c. Office & District # - be specific. Clarify the exact name of the seat up for election and make it clear the seat number/letter if similar offices are on the ballot. If there are special elections for vacancies, clearly state which seat you choose.

- d. A phone number is required for all affidavits except for some federal, judicial, county sheriff or county attorney offices.
- e. A non-government issued email address is required for all affidavits (or check the box to affirm that you do not have a non-government issued email address).
- f. Residential address – this is required for many offices. There are a few exceptions. A candidate may be eligible to request to classify their residence as private data. In these instances, an additional form must be completed.
- g. Campaign Address & Contact – Required and optional items depending upon the office sought. Avoid the use of government phone numbers, addresses or e-mail addresses.
- h. Read through the Affirmation and decide if everything is true and accurate for you and the office you seek before signing.
- i. Sign affidavit in front of a notary public or other officer empowered to take and certify acknowledgements. Filing officers usually have this authority.

# AFTER THE CAMPAIGN

## **CAMPAIGN FINANCE CERTIFICATE OF FILING FORM**

The Campaign Finance Certificate of Filing form is in your Campaign Finance Manual you receive when you file for office. It is a simple one-page sheet that asks if you spent or received more than \$750 for your campaign. This sheet must be turned into the school election officer within 7 days after the election. **See Appendix 2 for Certificate of Filing form.**

## **OATH OF OFFICE**

Each person elected to the school board must take the prescribed Oath of Office. The oath may be given at any time after the Certification of Election. Because a school board member-elect must file an Acceptance of Office with the secretary of the board within 30 days after receiving a Certificate of Election, many school districts administer the official oath at the board's administrative office when the Acceptance of Office is filed. A second "ceremonial oath" can then be reenacted at the organizational meeting.

The Oath of Office for a newly elected or re-elected member of a local school board must be administered by a notary public, judge, clerk of a court or member of the state Legislature. In the case of an intermediate board member-elect, the oath may be administered by any of these officers or a member of the intermediate school board. The oath is filed with the secretary of the school board. **See Appendix 3 for legal Oath and Acceptance form.**

## **TERM OF OFFICE**

School Board members for a local school district are elected for 4-year terms. A school board member's term of office begins the first Monday in January following the election. Thus, incumbent members serve until that first Monday in January and the current board may conduct business during the "lame-duck" period.

# MSBA: YOUR STATE GO-TO ORGANIZATION

The Minnesota School Boards Association exists to serve your needs as an elected school leader, for board training, up-to-date information and representation throughout Minnesota and in Washington, D.C. EVERY public school board in Minnesota belongs to MSBA is strong proof that MSBA delivers what school boards need.

In the state Legislature, in legislative committee hearings and in the state Department of Education, as well as in Congress, MSBA addresses school boards' concerns and interests.

School Boards who share membership in MSBA believe that their strength rests in a united force, consisting of well-informed members whose coordinated effort gives them a strong position at the state level of decision-making affecting schools.

Whether you are hiring a superintendent or evaluating one, negotiating a new school employees' contract or looking for custom-developed leadership services, MSBA is your resource for information, advice and specialized services.

## Professional Development and Guidance

- Learning to Lead workshops
- Policy and Legal guidance
- Advocacy at both state and federal levels
- Superintendent Search
- Strategic Planning
- Third Thursday hot topic webinars
- Conferences



# OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD HIGH-PERFORMING SCHOOL BOARDS

**The Annual MSBA Leadership Conference**— The Leadership Conference features nationally recognized speakers, workshops on a variety of topics, an Exhibit Hall, a School Excellence Showcase, and a Recognition Luncheon. An Early Bird Session will be provided the evening before the conference.

**Day at the Capitol**— Members from MSBA and the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) will gather for networking and learning, and to hear from some of Minnesota’s education policy and finance decision-makers. In the afternoon, attendees are welcome to meet with their school district’s legislators. Attendees will have to schedule these meetings on their own.

**In-District Mutual Expectations Workshop**— Conducted in a retreat setting, this activity allows board members and administrators to develop ground rules or clear the air concerning the unwritten norms, behavior, responsibilities, etc., they have concerning how they work together as a team. This is an excellent activity for boards who are just beginning to work together, is in a pairing arrangement, or for boards who are undergoing some stress in their relationships.

**Learning to Lead Personal Development Series**— The MSBA Learning to Lead Workshop Series is the most important set of workshops for school board members because it sets the foundation for their work. These sessions cover all aspects of school board service. Complete the entire Learning to Lead Workshop Series (Phases I, II, III and IV) to receive MSBA’s Leadership Development Certificate.

# MSBA SERVICES FOR YOU AND YOUR DISTRICT

**Board Development and Recognition Programs**—How successful you are as a board member depends on your commitment to professional self-development. MSBA annually recognizes individual board member’s efforts to gain new skills, information and effectiveness through its Certified Board Member Award program. There are seven levels of recognition and several subject-area certifications.

**Negotiations Seminars**—Preparation is the key to successful bargaining. MSBA will help school board members and administrators prepare for negotiations.

**Policy Services**—MSBA offers school districts access to the MSBA/MASA Policy Manual, a comprehensive legal guide to be used in the efficient management of all aspects of the school system. More than 370 MSBA members subscribe to MSBA’s Policy Manual.

**Superintendent Evaluation**—A board must have a clear and effective process for evaluating a superintendent’s performance, which include both superintendent and school board goals, identifying superintendent performance standards and clarifying a timeline, expectations and next steps.

**Strategic Planning**—MSBA’s service helps the board set strategic direction and goals by meeting legal requirements, building strong board/superintendent relationships, creating clear expectations, enables performance monitoring and guarantees alignment between community values and school district operations.

**Executive Search Services**—When a district faces its most important task—selecting a new superintendent—MSBA is there to help boards develop an effective and legal recruiting and selection process.

**Publications**—As an MSBA member you will receive these important sources of information and ideas for effective board service:

- **eClippings**—Our daily run-down of K-12 news from Minnesota dailies, weeklies and national education sites. Done M-F during the school year and M,W,F over the summer.
- **The Journal magazine**—Published six times a year and mailed directly to you, the magazine offers in-depth articles on K-12 issues, education trends and research.
- **Organizational Meeting Guide and the MSBA Model Student Handbook**—These are a few of the publications available from MSBA to member boards.
- **Comprehensive Website**—Instant access to resources through MASB’s website. Visit us at <https://mnmsba.org/>
- **The Weekly Advocate**—Find out what is happening at the Legislature and how it could impact you and your district.



# ABOUT YOUR CAMPAIGN

Informed candidates contribute to a district's overall health. Free discussion and debate bring issues into sharper focus and help resolve existing problems.

Uninformed or misinformed candidates can cause problems both for themselves and for the district they wish to serve. When campaigning, follow these suggestions:

**Seek Information**—Attend school board meetings. Be familiar with procedures for conducting meetings. Know the current issues, including funding, student achievement, hiring practices, contract negotiations and technology.

**Study Board Policies**—Most districts keep a manual of established policies. Your awareness of guidelines the board has developed will prevent you from making misleading statements publicly during your campaign.

**Know Your Community's Concerns**—Study those issues that particularly arouse community interest. Know what's already been done and considered. Don't make promises unless you are sure of what is involved in keeping them. Board members elected on promises often find themselves in the awkward position of having to back down when they learn all of the facts.

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# APPENDIX 1

## Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State AFFIDAVIT OF CANDIDACY

Filing # _____
Cash/Check # _____
Amount \$ _____

### Instructions

All information on this form is available to the public. Information provided will be published on the [Secretary of State's website](#). If filing for partisan office and not a major party candidate, you must file both an affidavit of candidacy and a nominating petition. (Minn. Stat. 204B.03)

### Candidate Information

#### Name, Office, and Party

District # \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate Name (as it will appear on the ballot) Office Sought Political Party or Principle (State or Federal offices only) Name of Incumbent (Judicial seats only)

#### Contact Information

Required (federal, judicial, county attorney, and county sheriff candidates are exempt)

Check box if you do not have an email address

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_ Email (non-government issued) \_\_\_\_\_

#### Address Information

**Residence Address** Required (unless box is checked; federal, judicial, county attorney, and county sheriff candidates are exempt)

My residence address is to be classified as private data.  
I certify a police report has been submitted, an order for protection has been issued, or I have a reasonable fear for my or my family's safety; or my address is otherwise private by Minnesota law. I have attached a separate form listing my residence address.

Residence Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

#### Campaign Contact Information (Address required if box above is checked)

Campaign Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Campaign Website \_\_\_\_\_

### Affirmation

**For all offices, I swear (or affirm) that this is my true name or the name by which I am generally known in the community. If filing for a state or local office, I also swear (or affirm) that:**

- I am eligible to vote in Minnesota;
- I have not filed for the same or any other office at the upcoming primary or general election except as authorized by Minn. Stat. 204B.06;
- I am, or will be on assuming office, 21 years of age or more;
- I will have maintained residence in this district for at least 30 days before the general election; and
- If a major political party candidate, I either participated in the party's most recent precinct caucuses or intend to vote for a majority of that party's candidates at the next general election.

**If filing for one of the following offices, I also swear (or affirm) that I meet the requirements listed below:**

• **United States Senator** – I will be an inhabitant of this state when elected and I will be at least 30 years old and a citizen of the United States for not less than nine years on the next January 3rd, or if filled at special election, within 21 days after the election.

• **United States Representative** – I will be an inhabitant of this state when elected and I will be at least 25 years old and a citizen of the United States for not less than seven years on the next January 3rd, or if filled at special election, within 21 days after the election.

• **Governor or Lieutenant Governor** – I will be at least 25 years old on the first Monday of the next January and a resident of Minnesota for not less than one year on election day. I am filing jointly with \_\_\_\_\_

• **Supreme Court Justice, Court of Appeals Judge, District Court Judge, or County Attorney** – I am learned in the law and licensed to practice law in Minnesota. My Minnesota attorney license number is \_\_\_\_\_ and a copy of my license is attached.

• **Supreme Court Justice, Court of Appeals Judge, or District Court Judge** – I will not turn 70 years of age before the first Monday of next January.

• **State Senator or State Representative** – I will have maintained residence in Minnesota not less than one year and in this district for six months on the day of the general or special election.

• **County Sheriff** – I am a licensed peace officer in Minnesota. My Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training license number is \_\_\_\_\_ and a copy of my license is attached.

• **School Board Member** – I have not been convicted of an offense for which registration is required under Minn. Stat. 243.166.

• **County, Municipal, School District, or Special District Office** – I meet any other qualifications for that office prescribed by law.

Candidate Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Subscribed and sworn to before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_.

Notary public or other officer empowered to take and certify acknowledgement

(Notary stamp)

# APPENDIX 2

## CAMPAIGN FINANCIAL REPORT CERTIFICATION OF FILING

### Instructions

Each county, municipal or school district candidate or treasurer of a committee formed to promote or defeat a ballot question shall certify to the filing officer that all reports required by Minnesota Statutes 211A.02 have been submitted to the filing officer or that the candidate or committee has not received contributions or made disbursements exceeding \$750 in the calendar year. The certification shall be submitted to the filing officer not later than seven days after the general or special election. (Minnesota Statutes 211A.05, subdivision 1).

### Campaign Information

Name of candidate or committee \_\_\_\_\_

Office sought by candidate (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Identification of ballot question (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

### Certification

Select the appropriate choice below, and sign:



I do swear (or affirm) that all campaign financial reports required to date by Minnesota Statutes 211A.02 have been submitted to the filing officer.



I do swear (or affirm) that campaign contributions or disbursements did not exceed \$750 in the calendar year.

Signature of candidate or committee treasurer \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# APPENDIX 3



## Official Oath and Acceptance of Office Form

### Document Modifications

School districts should fill indicated blanks as they use the model forms. School districts should consult with their legal counsel before making substantive changes to a model form.

#### ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE AND OATH OF OFFICE

To: [The recipient of the Certificate of Election]

The following acceptance and oath of office must be filed with the school district clerk within 30 days of the date of mailing or personal service of the certificate of election.

#### ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

I hereby accept the office of school board member of Independent School District No. (NUMBER) for a term beginning the first Monday in January, (YEAR) and expiring the first Monday in January, (YEAR).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

STATE OF MINNESOTA     )

)

COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_ )

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this (DAY) day of (MONTH), (YEAR) by (NAME OF CANDIDATE).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public

1900 West Jefferson  
St. Peter, MN 56082-3015

www.mnmsba.org  
(507) 934-2450 or (800) 324-4459

Revised 7/15/2020

OATH OF OFFICE

I swear/affirm that I will support the Constitution of the United States and of this state, and that I will discharge faithfully the duties of the office of school board member of Independent School District No. (NUMBER) to the best of my judgment and ability.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

STATE OF MINNESOTA     )

)

COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_ )

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this (DAY) day of (MONTH), (YEAR) by (NAME OF CANDIDATE).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public

