

Are there sources I could access which would help me better understand the role of a school board member?

▲ The role of school board members and how it relates to increasing student achievement is outlined in the *Key Work of School Boards*. The eight components define how school boards work to improve student learning.

www.nsba.org

▲ When school board members are elected, they receive a copy of *A Handbook for Arkansas School Board Members*. This publication outlines the roles and responsibilities of school board members, as well as other important information. The Arkansas School Boards Association will provide you a copy at your request.

www.arsba.org

▲ The skills necessary to collaborate as a school board-superintendent team are defined in *Team Leadership for Student Achievement*. This book describes the process of improving student achievement and how to build a team to design and implement the process.

www.nsba.org



Good school board members are people who:

- ▲ put children first in education
- ▲ enjoy working with other people
- ▲ are good listeners and respect others' opinions
- ▲ rely on facts and weigh all sides of an issue before making a decision
- ▲ are well informed about current issues in public education
- ▲ accept the will of the majority
- ▲ respect district staff and deal with them professionally
- ▲ are willing to learn and receive ongoing training as a board member



Arkansas School Boards Association

808 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive
Little Rock, Arkansas 72202

(501) 372-1415 Voice

(501) 375-2454 Fax

(800) 482-1212 WATS

www.arsba.org

arsba@arsba.org

So you want to be a School Board Member

Some questions and answers about school board service.



It's about leadership...and the future. School boards provide the critical link between schools, parents, and the community. With one foot in the community and the other in schools, school board members are uniquely positioned to listen to the concerns of the people who all have a stake in education.

To be most effective, a school board must work together as a team—not as individuals representing individual interests. Boards must work collaboratively with superintendents and the entire district and community to be able to reach higher levels of student achievement, as well as higher levels of performance from administrators, staff, teachers, and students.

Who is eligible and what is required to run for a school board position?

Anyone who is a qualified school elector is eligible to run, which means that you must reside in the school district and you must be a registered voter of that school district.

▲ You must be a qualified voter.

▲ You must circulate a petition no earlier than 90 days prior to the election.

▲ At least 45 days before the election, you must file that petition with the county clerk who must certify it.

▲ The petition must contain at least 20 qualified, registered voters who are residents of the district and respective electoral zone, if school board members are elected from zones.

How do I get started?

Go to your county clerk's office and ask for a packet of materials about running for office. The State of Arkansas publishes a book, *Running for Public Office*, that contains information about petitions, certifying as a candidate, information sheets, campaign contributions, financial statements, and other important facts.



Where does a school board get its power?

The school board is a uniquely American institution. It represents the most fundamental form of democracy. School board members are elected by their community to oversee the education of the children of that community. No school board member has the right to make decisions for the rest of the board. The only time board members have any legal power—the only time they can legally transact business—is when they are meeting as a group, in a legally called session.

An Arkansas school district legally is a minor political subdivision of the state. A school board is a local body, also created by state law, which is charged with operating the school district. A school board, therefore, is a legislative—not administrative—body, and its members are state officials who are charged with fulfilling the mandates of the General Assembly. A school board has no powers except those specifically given by the General Assembly.

What are the duties of school board members?

Major responsibilities of a school board are to:

▲ be the governance arm, the policymaking body of the school district

▲ comply with the laws of the State and the regulations of the state education authority

▲ hire a competent superintendent whose job it is to manage the daily operation of the school district

▲ be advocates for schools and children

▲ work with the community to create a shared vision for the school district

▲ provide the necessary resources to operate the school district

▲ advance increasing levels of student achievement

▲ receive six hours of inservice training in the duties and responsibilities of a school board member and in school finance. This training is provided by ASBA for newly elected school board members following the fall school elections.

