

## **Who can be a school board member?**

Anyone who is--

- \* A U.S. citizen, and
- \* At least 18 years of age, and
- \* Able to read and write, and
- \* A district resident for at least one year prior to the election, and
- \* Not employed by the board on which he or she serves.

## **How does one become a school board member?**

Candidates must submit petitions signed by 2% of eligible voters to the district clerk by a predetermined date publicized by the district.

Candidates campaign among eligible voters.

Voters elect members of school boards.

In Rochester, board members are elected as part of the November general election.

In surrounding districts, board members are elected during the annual vote on the third Tuesday in May.

## **School Board Members**

Take an oath to serve all children of New York State

Advocate for public education

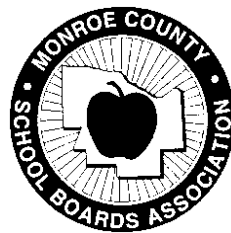
Study issues and regulations

Discuss issues at public board meetings

Vote on issues affecting their districts

Support the decisions of the board majority

Promote public education in their local communities and beyond.



### **Monroe County School Boards Association**

1250 Scottsville Road, Suite 5A,  
Rochester, NY 14624  
(585) 328-1972  
[www.mcsba.org](http://www.mcsba.org)

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# What does a School Board Member do

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## What do school board members do?

- \* They sign an oath of responsibility as an agent of NYS for the education of *all* children and youth of the state.
- \* They learn their district's goals and policies set by their boards in previous years.
- \* They make decisions based on district policies and governmental regulations.
- \* They participate in a periodic review of policies and goals—to help define policy and to develop long-term plans.
- \* They seek to influence state and federal laws and regulations since these mandates often do not include needed funds for compliance, restrict local district decision making, and interfere with existing successful programs.
- \* They seek adequate state and federal support for successful public schools.
- \* They attend workshops/seminars on a wide range of topics to enable sound decisions.
- \* They listen to concerned citizens as the need arises and direct them to the proper district employee for resolution of problems.
- \* They do NOT involve themselves in operating the school district, but DO receive regular process and progress reports.

## What do school boards do?

- \* Boards of education act only as a whole and only during public meetings. A school board is a corporate body and has power only during public meetings.
- \* Boards of education frequently hold study sessions to discuss and review proposals without taking official action.
- \* No one board member can bind the school board to a particular action. Persuasion during open discussion is the only way to influence voting on issues before a school board.
- \* Once a decision is made by the school board, that decision is implemented by the district's superintendent and staff.
- \* School boards annually adopt a school district budget to determine the number of staff members, to reflect changes in student needs, and to support changes in program offerings.
  - In Rochester, the budget is taken to City Council for approval.
  - In the surrounding districts, the budget is presented directly to voters for approval on the third Tuesday in May.
- \* School boards ratify contracts with employee bargaining units.
  - They study labor issues and review the negotiations process;
  - They include funds in their budget proposal for negotiated salaries.
- \* School boards select superintendents for their districts. This decision is considered their most important decision since superintendents serve as the chief executive officers of school boards. Superintendents recommend actions for board approval and implement board decisions.
- \* Some board decisions are difficult or unpopular. A school board's first responsibility is to the children it serves, not to pressure groups.
  - School boards gather input from concerned citizens and explain controversial decisions.
  - Board members must defend and support controversial board decisions.
- \* Some board decisions are routine:
  - Approving agendas and minutes;
  - Accepting reports, warrants, or bills;
  - Staff placement;
  - Program placements for special education students;
  - Meeting schedules, topics, and times.