


Running for the School Board 101
Essential Tips for Candidates

An IASB Webinar
 Tuesday, August 17, 2021



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Quick Poll



Who is participating?

1. I am thinking about running for the school board.
2. I have decided to run for the school board.
3. I am not running; I'm learning about work of the school board.
4. I am a current school board member.
5. I am a superintendent.
6. I am a school business manager and/or a board secretary.

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Goals for Today

Exploring:

- Authority of the Board
- The Role of the Board
- District Finances
- Time Commitments
- Steps to Learn About the District
- Filing as a Candidate

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Tip – Understand the Authority of the School Board



Authority as a Whole Body



Board works as a whole, at the board table

Deliberations and decisions “in the view of the public”

Common misperceptions about board authority

Avoid making promises, especially before learning background information

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Avoid Making Promises – Some Cautions



Authority of the Board – As a Whole Body

Give yourself a chance to learn before the board votes

The board's authority exists when deciding as a body

You are only one vote



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Understanding Authority of the Board

Insights and Advice



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Quick Poll



People have already asked me to promise I will vote a certain way on a specific issue/topic.

1. Yes
2. No

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Tip – Learn about the Role of the Board

Maintain “big picture” view

- Board role—governance **vs** Superintendent role—management
- Serve as a governance team with the superintendent – while having different duties
- Common misperceptions about role of the board


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Learning about Role of the Board
Insights and Advice



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Quick Poll 

Choose the statement which you believe reflects community members' general understanding about the role of the board.

1. Most community members understand the role of the school board
2. Some community members understand the role of the school board.
3. A few community members understand the role of the school board
4. This is something I am just learning. I do not know how well community members understand the role of the board.

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Tip – Understand District Finances



Big Considerations

Enrollment: A big influencer—What are the trends?

Silos: Separate “pots” of funding

July 1 – June 30: The district’s fiscal year

Takes time to learn. There is support.

Be persistent. You are not alone.



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Understanding District Finances

Insights and Advice

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Quick Poll



The following reflects my level of understanding about the district student enrollment trends over the past few years.

1. I have a good level of understanding about enrollment trends and could describe trends to a neighbor.
2. I have some understanding of enrollment trends but need to learn more; I would not be very confident in describing trends to a neighbor.
3. I only have a little awareness of enrollment trends and need to learn a lot more; I would not be able to tell a neighbor what the enrollment trends are like.

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Tip – Consider the Time Commitment



Board work – more than most people realize

- Beyond 1-2 meetings per month
- Committees and other obligations
- Review materials before board meetings (background information)

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Considering Time Commitments and Expectations

Insights and Advice

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Quick Poll



What have you done or plan to do to learn more about time commitments and expectations of being a board member?

1. Talk with a current or former school board member.
2. Talk with the superintendent.
3. Talk with the board secretary/school business manager.
4. Attend a school board meeting.
5. Other

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Tip – Learn about the School District



Priority Initiatives and Big Picture District Information

Guiding documents: Vision, mission and goals/priorities

Key initiatives (teaching and learning, programs, and facilities)

State of the district – other areas: staffing trends, district boundaries, etc.



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Learning about the School District

Insights and Advice



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Quick Poll



What have you done to learn more about the work of the board?

1. Talked with one or more school board members.
2. Met with the superintendent or board secretary.
3. Attended or served on a district or school committee.
4. Reviewed school board agendas, meeting minutes, etc.
5. Explored the school district's website for information about big picture district priorities, goals or initiatives.
6. Explored IASB's website for school board candidates.

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Tip - Filing as a Candidate 



Getting Started: Filing 101

Key info

- Aug. 23 – First date to file nomination papers
- Sept. 16 – Last date to file nomination papers

Where to learn more

- IASB, Secretary of State, Iowa Campaign Ethics and Disclosure Board websites or offices.
- IASB Webinars, Tuesdays, Aug. 31 & Sept. 21 @ noon – will be recorded.


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Filing as a Candidate
Insights and Advice



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Tuesday Talks with IASB – Register Today! 

**Maintaining Your Community’s Trust—
Legal & Ethical Campaigns for the School Board**
Tuesday, Aug. 31, Noon-1 p.m.

Student Learning—Do Boards Really Make a Difference?
Tuesday, Sept. 21, Noon-1 p.m.

Visit www.ia-sb.org/learninghub for more information.

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Mark Your Calendars! 

76th IASB Annual Convention & Trade Show
 Nov. 17-18; Iowa Events Center, Des Moines

Pre-Convention Workshop
New Board Member Academy Workshop Series:
Ready, Set, Govern! New Board Member Onboarding Workshop
 Wednesday, Nov. 17

Convention
 Thursday, Nov. 18
 Visit www.ia-sb.org/convention for more information.

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QUESTIONS?

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