



GET ON
BOARD



SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION FAQ

Below are some frequently asked questions about school board elections. If your question is not answered below, visit www.ia-sb.org/getonboard or contact Tammy Votava at tvotava@ia-sb.org or (515) 247-7040.

When are elections held?

This year, school election day is **Tuesday, November 2, 2021**. Regular school board elections are held in **odd-numbered years** in each Iowa school district on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. See [IASB's Key Dates](#) for specific deadlines and due dates at www.ia-sb.org/getonboard.

What are the qualifications to run for my local school board?

You must be a United States citizen, 18 years of age or older, a resident of the school district (and director district, if applicable) and eligible to register to vote.

As a school board candidate, should I be aware of any timelines?

Yes. Refer to [IASB's Key Dates](#) at www.ia-sb.org/getonboard.

Can board members or school employees participate in the campaign process?

Yes, but there are some restrictions, especially on what employees may do during work time or what board members may do in their official capacity. For more information, download the [School Board's Role in Ballot Issues PDF](#) at www.ia-sb.org/ballotissues.

I missed my deadline to file for candidacy, what happens now?

You could become a write-in candidate. Space must be provided on election ballots for write-in candidates. The write-in candidate is not required to file a nomination petition. IASB recommends that write-in candidates conduct public and open campaigns to make their views and positions known throughout the community before the election. If a write-in is elected, it must be determined whether the individual is willing and eligible to serve. If the individual meets the eligibility criteria and is willing to serve, then the individual is sworn in at the organizational meeting.

Is there a vacancy if no one files papers AND there are no write-in candidates?

Yes. If no one files papers, there is no write-in candidate, or an individual written-in is unwilling to serve, the board declares the position vacant at the organizational meeting. The board must then fill the vacancy in accordance with law, which provides that the board has 30 days to appoint but they must provide notice that they intend to appoint and the community has the right to file a petition requiring the vacancy be filled by a special election.

If a candidate's spouse or family member works for the school district, can they still serve on the school board?

Yes. Iowa law does not prohibit a spouse or other family member of a school district employee from serving on a school board.

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Can a school employee run for the school board?

Yes. However, if elected, a school employee earning **more than \$6,000 per fiscal year** from the school district (unless the contract is publicly bid in writing) would have to resign the position before serving on the school board. Iowa law prohibits board members from earning **more than \$6,000 in direct compensation** from a school district per fiscal year. In 2021, the Iowa Legislature approved a temporary removal of this cap for board members serving in one of three roles which were considered critical needs: bus driver, substitute teacher and para educator. This was a direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic and is only permitted for the 2020–21 school year. The school year beginning July 1, 2021 will no longer have this option.

I am a school employee of another district. Can I serve on my local school board?

Yes. A person may be an employee of another district or an area education agency and serve on their local school board.

I'm newly elected—when do I take office?

The organizational meeting is to be held on or before the first regular meeting following the final canvass of votes. Check with your school district for a local meeting schedule.

I'm newly elected and can't make it to the organizational meeting—is there another way to take the oath of office?

Yes—**before the organizational meeting or remotely**. *Iowa Code* states that a newly elected board member must take the oath of office at or before the organizational meeting. So, the board member can be sworn in anytime between the final canvass of votes and the end of the organizational meeting, date to be determined by your local school district. If the newly elected board member cannot be sworn in by the end of the organizational meeting, a vacancy is created. If you cannot take the oath of office at or before the organizational meeting and need to be sworn in remotely, contact IASB or your board secretary to work through the provisions.

While campaigning, I promised my neighbor that I would make it a priority to build a new football field. If elected, will I be able to follow through on this campaign promise?

IASB recommends that you carefully consider your campaign promises. As an individual, a board member has no authority. It's only when a majority of the board takes action through a vote that the board's authority is exercised. Remember—state your position on issues, but avoid making promises that you alone cannot keep.



Provided by the Iowa Association of School Boards