



GET ON
BOARD



SELECTING A SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATE: FIVE KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Now is the time to think about the candidates running for your local school board and determine who will earn your support. IASB has compiled several key areas to consider in order to make an informed decision prior to casting your vote in the election on November 4.

COMMITMENT TO TIME

Board members must have a commitment to public service. Today's board members say they can easily spend 30 or more hours per month on school issues: negotiating contracts, planning, work sessions, community meetings—not to mention personal phone calls and other communication with citizens as locally elected officials.

Question to consider:

- How have the candidates demonstrated they are willing to devote extensive time commitment needed for public service?

COMMITMENT TO TEAMWORK

Board members are part of a governance team, and the most productive boards work cohesively with each other and their superintendent. Occasionally, a board will find itself in turmoil. Board members don't always have to agree, but good board members listen to differing perspectives, make tough decisions, and then after a vote, support the will of the board.

Questions to consider:

- How have the candidates demonstrated working well with others in situations where everyone might not agree on a topic or the outcome?
- How do the candidates demonstrate the ability to respectfully disagree with others while moving the work of the group forward?

FOCUS ON IMPROVING LEARNING FOR ALL STUDENTS

Most board members share they ran for the board because they wanted to make a difference for students. The most effective board members serve in the best interest of **all** students, not just of their own, of their neighbors or of those who elected them. It is important for candidates to understand that their knowledge and perspectives about the diverse needs of students—across the entire district—will continue to grow over time.

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Questions to consider:

- How are the candidates talking about the potential student learning needs of the district?
- Are the board candidates focused on a narrow education issue, or do they take a broader approach to providing the best possible education for all students?

SERVICE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE ENTIRE SCHOOL DISTRICT

A key responsibility of board members is to keep a wide view of the district in mind while serving. It can be challenging, especially when people have different passions and interests such as sports, fine arts, special education, etc. However, elected school board members must recognize the value of every program offered by the district and work together to support and develop them all to their highest level of quality.

Question to consider:

- How do the candidates demonstrate their ability to keep a wide view of the district vs. keying into what may be a favored topic?

WILLINGNESS TO LEARN

Iowa law requires few qualifications for service as a school board member. Some individuals are elected with more immediate knowledge and skills than others. But no one, regardless of occupation or personal skills, begins their board work knowing all they need upon election. Those who approach their service with a desire to be more knowledgeable and skilled become more effective school board members.

Questions to consider:

- How have the candidates shown they are committed to learning about the work of the board?
- What have the candidates committed to learn in their first 30, 60 and 90 days (about 3 months)?



Provided by the Iowa Association of School Boards