



Did You Know? And Frequently Asked Questions

BOE Member	BOE Duties & Responsibilities
School Board Member Candidate Qualifications	• 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, and • Does not reside with another member of the same school board or is a member of the same family, and • Does not hold another incompatible public office.
The Process	Candidates must submit nominating petitions to the district clerk by a predetermined published date with the signatures of qualified voters equal in number to 2% of the voters in the previous annual school board election, or at least 25 names, whichever is greater. 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 of office. • Advocate for public education. • Create and revise district policies. • 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. • Perform their duties without compensation (except in the 5 largest cities).
School Board Member Responsibilities	• They take an oath of responsibility as local officials to support the state and federal constitutions and perform the duties of their office. • They learn their district's goals and policies set by their boards. They participate in a periodic review of policies and goals—to help define policy and to develop long-term plans. • They make decisions based on law, district policies, and governmental regulations. They work to inform the process of developing state and federal laws and regulations. • They seek adequate state and federal support for 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. • Boards of education act only during publicly convened meetings. A school board is a corporate body and has power only when meeting. • Boards of education frequently hold study sessions to discuss and review proposals without taking official action. • School boards create and revise their districts' mission statements and goals, as well as the district policies that support them. • School board members visit district schools and monitor the academic performance of students in every aspect as well as progress toward becoming productive citizens. • School boards annually adopt a school district budget to support the operation of the district. • School boards ratify contracts with employee bargaining units. They study labor issues and set parameters for the negotiations process; they include funds in their budget proposal for negotiated salaries. • School boards hire the superintendents for their districts. This decision is considered their most important decision since the superintendent serves as the chief executive officer for the school district. Superintendents recommend actions for board approval and implement board decisions. • No one board member may 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. • School boards gather input from concerned citizens and explain controversial decisions. • School board members must defend and support controversial board decisions. • Some board decisions are routine: - o Approving agendas and minutes; - o Accepting reports, warrants, or bills; - o Staff placement; - o Program placements for special education students; - o Meeting schedules, topics, and times. <i>* Decisions made by the school board are implemented by the district's superintendent and staff</i>
BOE Meetings & Meeting Elements	Action Items generally require formal board approval or disapproval. Some matters may appear to be dealt with in a cursory manner, but this is only because they have been previously studied or discussed. Community Comment is a formal opportunity for the public to address the board. To use this opportunity, please see the board clerk if you are unable to find the sign-in sheet. Comments/Remarks should be limited to three minutes. This is a time for the board members to listen, rather than respond, to your comments. Items relating to personnel should not be discussed during a public session. Consent Agenda is a grouping of routine business items that normally require no discussion. Executive Session may be held before or after the regular board meeting. This is a closed session, as required by law, during which the board can discuss personnel matters, collective bargaining, or other legal matters.

	Reports are an opportunity for board members and central administrators to update one another on brief items or activities of general interest. • Instructional Presentations are given at one meeting of the month and are rotated between elementary, middle, and high school topics. The board may request a presentation on a specific topic, or the topic may be chosen by the building principal.
Public Comment Portion of Meeting	Board of education meetings are held in public. This allows the public to learn how the board takes actions. During the meeting there will be an opportunity for the public to share comments with the board. The Board Agenda includes time for public comment. It may seem unusual, but the board will not respond to comments or questions at the meeting. Responses will be heard or, if appropriate, made in writing to the speaker. The Public Comment section will be no more than 15 minutes. Each person will be limited to no more than three minutes to express their thoughts. Residents should refrain from comments regarding specific personnel or students; items of a personal nature should be discussed with the student's teacher or with the building principal.
Role of the Board of Education	State law determines that power belongs not to individual members of a board of education but to the board of education itself. Board members have authority only when acting as a board in a legally constituted session, a quorum being present. The statement or action of an individual member or group of members of the board does not bind the board itself, except when that statement or action is authorized by an official act of the board. As the only elected officials that represent children, the fundamental role of the board is to focus on the learning and achievement of all students. School boards do not manage the daily operations of school districts. The board sets policy while the superintendent is responsible for carrying out board policy and managing the district. Executive Sessions are portions of the meetings that are closed to the public. No formal action may be taken in executive session, and executive session can only be used to discuss specific personnel matters, collective bargaining issues, legal matters, and law enforcement issues, to name a few. Community input is very important to the board, and time for public comment is built into the agenda at each meeting. Comments are limited to three minutes per speaker for a total of 15 minutes per meeting.
Role of Board Member and Role of Superintendent	The board works with the superintendent to create a district vision, set goals, and establish a framework of desired outcomes. The board reviews, modifies, and approves all district policies. The board adopts a budget, puts it to voters for approval, and sets school tax rates within legal limits. The board hires, supervises, and manages the superintendent. S/he is their only employee. The board has a clear chain of communication (board president and superintendent) that helps to avoid confusion and misinformation. The superintendent implements the school board's vision by making day-to-day decisions about educational programs, spending, staff, and facilities.

	The superintendent ensures policies are implemented and practiced district-wide. The superintendent hires, supervises, and manages the central staff and principals. The board should ask questions directly to the superintendent who will gather information and provide a response. Superintendents want well-informed board members!
--	--

If you have any questions you would like to ask the WCSD Board of Education, please email jrichardson@webstercsd.org.