



**So you want  
to be a board  
member?**



***School Board  
Candidate Guide***

***Kansas Association of School Boards  
Fall 2012***



***More than 2,000 men and women serve their communities by providing leadership in the 288 Kansas school districts. These people are local school board members.***

***Now is the time to seriously consider seeking office. Strong public schools need strong leaders...just like you!***

***If you believe you have the interest, time, dedication and competence to help guide your public school system, consider filing for election to the school board.***

***For more copies of this booklet on how to become a candidate and the responsibilities of a school board member, contact:***

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***So You Want to Be A School Board Member  
Guide for School Board Candidates  
2013 Election Edition  
October 2012***

# **2013 Filing Deadlines, Campaign Finance & Governmental Ethics**

## **January 1, 2013**

Clerk must certify list of board member vacancies to county election officer

## **January 22, 2013 Noon**

Filing Deadline

## **February 1, 2013**

Deadline for filing statement of substantial interest

## **February 17, 2013**

Deadline for filing intent to spend and/or accept less than \$500, for either primary or general election

## **February 26, 2013**

Primary Election

## **March 28, 2013**

Deadline to file expenditure report for excess of \$500 expenditures and/or contributions for primary election

## **April 2, 2013**

General Election

## **April 12, 2013**

Deadline for filing the oath of office with the county clerk or county election officer (within 10 days of the election or not later than five days after the issuance of the certificate of election, whichever is later.)

## **May 2, 2013**

Deadline to file expenditure report for excess of \$500 expenditures and/or contributions for general election

**Statutory References:** K.S.A. 25-904, K.S.A. 25-2007  
K.S.A. 25-2010, K.S.A. 25-2017a, K.S.A. 25-2023,  
K.S.A. 25-4143, K.S.A. 25-4148, K.S.A. 75-4302a

## ***An Important Position Within Your Community.***

The locally-elected school board is entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining, developing and operating local schools. School board members make important decisions with long-lasting implications for their community and its citizens. They establish a vision for the public education system in their community, are responsible for hiring and evaluating the superintendent of schools, adopt policies and monitor district finances, among many other responsibilities.

Every school district in Kansas is governed by a locally-elected board of education. In fact, school board members as a whole comprise the largest body of elected officials in our country.



***At the heart of it all,  
members of a district's  
board of education must  
believe, unequivocally,  
in the value of public  
education.***

## Qualifications of a Good School Board Member

Although legal requirements for board members are few, the qualifications for effective service as a board member are many. A board member should:

- have a broad background of experience and knowledge and a sincere desire to serve the community;
- be visionary, able to understand the forces of societal change and plan for the future;
- be tolerant and without prejudice, respecting diverse points of view;
- understand education today is complex and simplistic approaches will not meet today's challenges;
- be willing to invest the time and energy required for meetings, phone calls, conversations, visits to schools, professional development seminars and workshops;
- be responsive to human needs of individuals and groups;
- be willing to be part of a team, supporting group decisions;
- listen for real consensus and not confuse a few vocal constituents with a majority feeling;
- remember the responsibility is to all the children in the state, not solely to those in the local district; and
- learn and grow as you become more aware of your responsibilities.

It is very important for you to work as a team member and cooperate with other board members. Decision-making authority is vested in the board of education, not in individual members.

# ***The Local School Board - An Overview***

School boards share the responsibility for school governance with other elected officials of the state and national government and with the people as electors. The Kansas Constitution makes education a state responsibility while at the same time providing for the operation of public schools by local school boards elected by citizens of the school district. A little over 2,000 dedicated men and women guide a public school system that employs more than 50,000 people and serves nearly half a million children. Board members receive no pay for their service, only the satisfaction that comes from providing an indispensable public service.

## ***Membership on the Local Board***

With the exception of Fort Leavenworth USD 207 – which is on a military base - all Kansas school boards consist of seven locally-elected members, and all unified school districts are responsible for the education of children in grades kindergarten through 12. Fort Leavenworth schools operate with two major differences compared to other Kansas districts. The district only serves grades K-9, and the board is composed of three residents of the base appointed by the commanding officer of Fort Leavenworth.



Increasing numbers of school districts are involved in early childhood and adult education programs as well. Many school districts are also members of interlocal cooperatives or service centers. These cooperatives, whose governing bodies

consist of local board members from participating school districts, provide services ranging from group purchasing to special education.

## Legal Qualifications

School board members must be registered voters in the school district and cannot be an employee of the board on which they are a member. If board members are elected from certain areas of the district rather than at-large, they must live in the area of the district from which they are seeking office. School board members serve staggered four-year terms, so the entire board is not up for election at the same time.

School board elections are held the first Tuesday in April of each odd-numbered year. A primary election must be conducted if more than three people file for the same school board position. Primaries must be held on the Tuesday five weeks preceding the general election.

## Filing for Office

There are two ways to file as a candidate for election. The first is to pay a \$5 filing fee to the county election officer of the county in which the district is located. A person may also become a candidate by filing a petition with the county election officer. The petition must contain signatures of 50 registered voters of the school district or of the geographic area from which the board member is to be elected. No candidate may withdraw their candidacy after the filing deadline.



## ***Campaign Finance, Governmental Ethics and Oath of Office Responsibilities***

Most candidates for school board generally do not spend large amounts of money or accept large contributions. However, they have responsibilities under Kansas campaign finance laws.

If a candidate intends to spend a total amount or value of less than \$500 in either the primary or general election, he or she must file an affidavit stating that intent with the county election officer of their home county, usually the county clerk. That affidavit also notes he or she intends to receive contributions of an amount or value of less than \$500. The affidavit must be filed no later than nine days prior to the primary election.

If he or she has signed such an affidavit and incurs expenses, exclusive of their filing fee, in excess of \$500 or receives contributions in excess of \$500 for either the primary or the general election, the candidate must file a more detailed report.

This report must be filed with the county election officer within 30 days after the primary and general election. It includes an itemized statement of all expenditures the candidate made or obligations contracted or incurred in connection with the primary and general election.



The report also needs to include the name and address of each person who contributed more than \$50 with the amount and date of the contribution. These obligations also apply to a person who is working on behalf of a candidate. Please note candidates for Wichita USD 259 have unique standards and a different timeline for filing reports.

Candidates also have to file a statement of substantial interest. It must be filed within 10 days of the filing deadline and is filed where the declaration of candidacy was filed. The statement details business holdings that may cause a successful candidate to be required to declare a conflict of interest on a board motion.

Winning candidates need to have on file with the county election officer the oath of office within 10 days of the election or not later than five days after the issuance of the certificate of election, whichever is later.

## Voting Plans

The voting plan to elect members varies among school districts. In some districts, all board members are elected at-large by the citizens of the district. In other school districts, some members are elected from certain areas of the district, and other board members are elected at-large. Contact your local county election office or school district superintendent if you need further information about the voting plan in your district.



## What is the Federal Government's Role in Local Public Education?

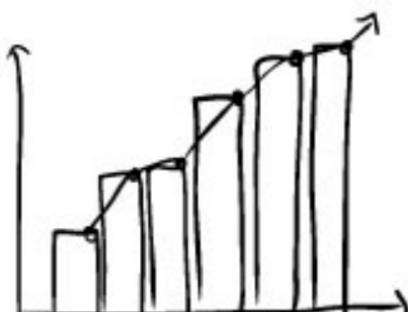
ESEA stands for Elementary and Secondary Act passed in 1965 as part of President Johnson's "War on Poverty." ESEA emphasizes equal access to education and establishes high standards and accountability. The law authorizes federally funded education programs (Title I, etc.) administered by the states. In 2002, Congress amended ESEA and reauthorized it as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

Among other things, NCLB mandates state accountability systems that rely on state designed assessments to track student progress, particularly in reading and math.

## The State's Role

In July 2012, the Kansas State Board of Education received approval for a waiver from certain provisions of NCLB. The plan submitted by the State Board will lead to greater accountability and higher standards through four provisions: (1) college and career-ready expectations; (2) state-defined differentiated recognition, accountability and support; (3) supporting effective instruction and leadership; and (4) reducing duplicating and unnecessary burdens.

Much of what this will mean to your work as a school board member is under development. It is apparent, however, that the role a locally-elected school board plays in student achievement is more critical than ever!



## ***Improving Student Achievement***

Our public schools are about preparing students for the future. Our students must be prepared to compete on a global economic field and this means we must continue to improve student achievement. Boards of education need to work within the framework of a continuous improvement model to make sure our schools are preparing every student to succeed. Goal setting is an important part of that process. Boards must work with administrators, teachers and the community to set district goals, and board decisions should logically follow from board goals and objectives. The board should also establish procedures to annually evaluate the progress of the district.

To monitor achievement Kansas has a performance-based system implemented in 1992 called Quality Performance Accreditation (QPA). The process and criteria have undergone frequent review, and in 2002 the actions of the federal government forced the state to make major changes in QPA. The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) brought significant changes to education all across the nation. The legislation addressed a segment of government funding known as Title I and tied it to higher accountability standards for districts and buildings receiving Title I funding. The law also required each state to design an accountability system based on the one the federal government mandated for Title I districts and buildings.

Actions by the Kansas State Board of Education in December 2002 embedded the non-Title I portion of the law into a revised accreditation system for all schools in Kansas. The revised QPA process was again revised in 2005. In July 2012, the state of Kansas received a federal waiver for flexibility in meeting certain requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act. Any resulting changes to QPA because of the wavier have not yet been announced as of this writing (October 2012).

# What Does a School Board Do?

Boards of education have several functions, including establishing the vision for the district, setting goals, establishing policies for a school system, hiring and evaluating the superintendent of schools, holding the superintendent accountable for accomplishing district goals and helping build support for public education.

## The Vision

Setting a vision is not just another way of saying “goal setting” or “long-range planning.” The word comes from the Latin *videre*, which means “to see,” and a vision for a school district should, in fact, give people another way to see their schools, clearly showing the district not only as it is, but also what it might become.

As a school board member, you will have a central role in defining your district’s vision, but yours should not be the only viewpoint considered. Teachers, administrators, community members and students are more likely to support the board’s vision if they feel they have played a part in developing it.

The process of creating a vision involves making choices, not only about where the district is headed, but also about how it will get there. For this reason, establishing a vision may be the most difficult responsibility that any school board faces. But it is also perhaps the most important.

Specific responsibilities for school board members include:

- keeping students as the focus of the work of schools;
- adopting a shared vision based on community beliefs to guide local education; and
- demonstrating a strong commitment to the shared vision and mission by using them to guide decision-making and communicating them to others.

## Structure

The board must also put in place an organizational framework that can allow the district to achieve its vision. School boards are responsible for providing a planning, policy and management structure that reflects local expectations and circumstances. This begins by employing a superintendent, adopting missions and goals in harmony with its vision through a strategic planning process, developing and approving policies, formulating budgets and setting high instructional standards for students and staff. The board must create an environment in the school system that encourages innovation and supports staff members in a process of continuous improvement of education.

Specific responsibilities for school board members include:

- employing a superintendent and establishing a district management system that enables all people to contribute meaningfully to achieve the district's vision;
- establishing direct processes to use information and make effective decisions;
- ensuring short- and long-term plans are developed and annually revised through a process involving extensive participation, information gathering, research and reflection;
- supporting student learning and school renewal when reviewing and adopting policies and allocating resources that support student learning;
- setting high instructional standards based on the best available information about the knowledge and skills students will need in the future; and
- encouraging an environment conducive to innovative approaches to teaching and learning and supportive of continuous improvement in education.

## Accountability

The genius of America's education system is that local boards are directly accountable to the communities they serve. Effective boards engage in continuous assessment of all conditions affecting education. These should include:

- monitoring student achievement;
- using student achievement data and all other available information as a basis for making program corrections and modifications as needed;
- keeping the public informed on the status of the district's programs and students' progress;
- ensuring all functions of schools as institutions of teaching and learning fit together harmoniously;
- providing appropriate staff and board training opportunities;
- encouraging curricular and assessment innovation; and
- fulfilling governance responsibilities as required by state and federal law.

A comprehensive accountability system can improve the effectiveness of schools by keeping the primary focus on student achievement and on what can and should be done to improve that achievement. Specific responsibilities for school boards include:

- receiving regular reports on student progress and needs based on a variety of assessments in order to evaluate the quality and equity of education in the district;
- evaluating both superintendent and board performance;
- evaluating progress toward the achievement of district long- and short-term goals and ensuring policies and allocation of resources effectively support the district vision; and
- reporting district progress to the community and parents on a regular basis.

## Advocacy

School boards serve as the leading advocate on behalf of students and their schools in the community. Both individually and collectively, school board members need to remain informed of issues at the local, state and national levels. In a time when children come to school with more challenges than ever before, schools acknowledge they cannot meet all these needs alone. Instead, they collaborate with families, community organizations and other public and private agencies to benefit both the children and the community they serve.

As a result, the advocacy role is increasingly important for school board members. Informing citizens about the schools' accomplishments, challenges and needs is an essential part of school board leadership. Through their actions, board members represent the community and help foster understanding and support for the schools. Specific responsibilities for school boards include:

- seeking others who can help expand educational opportunities to meet the needs of the whole child;
- advocating for children and families and establishing strong relationships with parents and other mentors to help support students;
- promoting the schools' instructional and other programs;
- leading in celebrating the achievements of students and others in education; and
- promoting school board service as a meaningful way to make long-term contributions to society.

These responsibilities mean school boards cannot work in isolation. They must bring together the entire community (parents, community groups and others concerned about education) in effective and responsible ways to initiate and sustain lasting school improvement.

## Setting Policy

While it has been said the board makes policy and the superintendent administers it, the exact line between policy and administration is a fine one. Typically, a superintendent recommends a particular policy to the board, and the board considers it. They then accept, modify or reject the recommendation. Once a policy is adopted by the board, the superintendent is responsible for implementing the policy. The board and individual board members should refrain from becoming involved in the day-to-day operation of the schools. Kansas law states the superintendent manages the district on a day to day basis, subject to the rules and regulations set by the board of education.

## Hiring the Superintendent

Because the day-to-day operation of the district is the superintendent's responsibility, selecting and retaining the right superintendent of schools for the district is a critical board decision. Hiring the right superintendent can mean having a school system in which children learn, administrators and teachers work together harmoniously and parents are satisfied and supportive. Perhaps no single decision a board makes has more impact than the selection of the superintendent.



# The Importance of Teamwork



A board member should also be skilled at working with others to reach decisions. Each member must remember, however, decisions binding the school district may only be made by a majority of the entire board at a public meeting. Individual opinions can

and should be defended vigorously, but once the board has made a decision, it should be accepted gracefully and implemented wholeheartedly. No individual board member may bind the board of education to a course of action.

Effective board members establish good working relationships with the superintendent and with their colleagues on the board. They understand and appreciate their role as the leadership team of the district and work together to improve the educational system.

## A Great Resource - The Key Work of School Boards

Everything the board oversees must focus on increased student learning. The National School Boards Association (NSBA) has coupled that focus with the need for increased public involvement by promoting The Key Work of School Boards.

This is a framework of eight interrelated action areas that provide focus and guidance for boards. These include vision, standards, assessment, accountability, alignment, climate, collaboration and community engagement and continuous improvement.



## **About KASB**

Serving Educational Leaders,  
Inspiring Student Success

### ***KASB will:***

- Provide a culture of collaboration and service.
- Be a voice of public education.
- Improve student education outcomes.

### ***We Believe . . .***

- All students can learn. Education encompasses lifelong learning.
- An educated and responsible citizenry is essential to a free and changing society.
- Universal public education is a fundamental right.
- Local control of public education is the cornerstone of our democratic system of government.
- The responsibility for providing suitable and equitable funding rests with the state of Kansas.
- Public education prepares students for a diverse, global society.
- Leadership impacts student achievement.

### ***Operational Beliefs . . .***

- Innovation is necessary for continuous improvement.
- Trust, integrity and honesty are necessary for credibility.
- Goals are best accomplished through teamwork and collaboration with others.
- Success depends on an informed, engaged board, membership, and staff.
- Leadership requires honoring diversity of thought and opinions.
- Transparency is necessary for integrity.

KASB is a not-for-profit organization located in Topeka, Kansas dedicated to serving members of governing boards for unified school districts, community colleges, area vocational-technical schools and cooperatives, interlocals and regional service centers. Membership is renewed annually during the summer months at board meetings. As of 2012, 288 of 289 school districts are members of KASB. More than 30 other education entities are members as well. KASB services are supported in different ways:

- services used by all members and supported by district dues (such as include lobbying, staff consultations, several KASB publications and most KASB research information);
- specific services largely supported by fees (such regional meetings, seminars, workshops and convention); and
- unique services totally supported by fees (such as the Legal Assistance Fund (LAF), negotiations services, written policy services, consultants, staff development onsite training, superintendent and executive leadership search services and insurance services.)

The Association’s Board of Directors is made up of three elected officers and 15 regional vice-presidents. The regions include 10 geographic regions and five additional regions representing the five member school districts with the greatest full-time equivalent enrollment at the time of regional elections.





**2013 KASB Workshops  
New School Board Members**

*(Revised January 2013)*

**April**

- 16 Garden City
- 17 Oakley
- 18 Beloit
- 20 KC-area
- 23 Greenbush (Girard)
- 24 Clearwater
- 25 KASB

**May**

- 4 Hutchinson

**June**

- 22 Hays

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