

For
Members

Login

[Being A
Board
Member](#)
[Issues and
Advocacy](#)
[Member
Resources](#)
[Products
and
Services](#)
[Professional
Development](#)
[Who We
Are](#)
[Store](#) [OSBA NewsClips](#) [Administrative Openings](#) [VendorLink](#) [Exhibitor Marketing](#) [Contact Us](#)

Understanding Your School Board

**Public Schools
Make a Difference**

[Role of public
schools](#)

[Understanding
Your School Board](#)

[Bragging about
Ohio public
schools](#)

[Quick facts about
Ohio public
schools](#)

[Proud Products of
Ohio Public
Schools](#)

[District Program
Videos](#)

[OSBA Student
Video Contest](#)

[Proud Products](#)

**Disaster tool kit for
schools**

Education Research

Common Core

OSBA publications

Ohio's school board members, one of the largest groups of elected officials in the state, are charged with one of the major responsibilities in government — to provide the best educational opportunities possible for the youth of Ohio.

What does a school board member do?

Once a person has met the qualifications, been properly nominated, duly elected and officially sworn in, his or her real job begins. No one can know the various pressures, politics and satisfactions of such a position until he or she has had the experience of serving on a board of education.

A school board sets educational goals and establishes policy for the school system based upon state laws and community values. Perhaps the most important responsibility of a school board is to employ a superintendent and treasurer and hold them responsible for managing the schools in accordance with the school board's policies.

Board members make decisions on a wide range of issues, such as hiring and evaluating a superintendent and treasurer; setting district policy; planning student services; goal-setting and long-range planning; adopting curriculum; establishing budgets; engaging parents; being good fiscal stewards; acting in the best interest of the school district and within the scope of their legal authority; and creating community relations programs. A board member should be a skilled decision-maker; however, decisions are only made by the board as a whole at a public meeting.

OSBA Regions**Important links****Promoting public schools****Students on Board****Working with the news media**

Another important part of the board's work is its public relations role. School board members help build public support and understanding of public education, and lead the public in demanding quality education. The school board serves as a link between schools and the public.

What a school board member doesn't do

The role and function of board members often are misinterpreted by the public, and in some cases, by board members themselves. The board is a policymaking body and members are the chief advisers to the superintendent on community attitudes. Board members do not manage the day-to-day operations of a school district; they see to it that the system is managed well by professionals.

Board members are not education professionals. They do not evaluate staff, other than the superintendent and treasurer, nor do they become involved in employment interviews, other than those of the superintendent, business manager and treasurer. Board members may be consulted during the hiring process for other positions, such as assistant superintendent.

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OSBA leads the way to educational excellence by serving Ohio's public school board members and the diverse districts they represent through superior service, unwavering advocacy and creative solutions.

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