



INTERESTED IN SCHOOL BOARD SERVICE?

Learn Why Serving Matters

Cultivating excellence in locally-governed school districts





EDUCATE.
ADVOCATE.
ELEVATE.

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The background image shows three students sitting at a table in a classroom. A woman, likely a teacher, is on the left, and two young girls are in the center and right. They are all looking towards the camera. The table has some papers and a small container on it. The entire image is covered with a semi-transparent orange filter. The text "BECOMING A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER" is overlaid in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

BECOMING A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER



We applaud your interest in becoming a member of your local school board

Local school boards embody a unique American institution and are a cornerstone of our nation's public education system. These boards exist to place the governance of public schools in the hands of communities and thereby tailor them to meet local community needs.

Elected by voters in their respective school districts during general elections in even-numbered years, school board members play a pivotal role in shaping the educational landscape of their communities. The Arizona School Boards Association (ASBA) is wholeheartedly committed to fostering excellence in locally-governed school districts. Our dedication extends to supporting the aspirations of potential and future school board governing members.

To determine if serving on a school board is right for you, it is important to understand the duties and responsibilities, the legal requirements and election process of the position. Additionally, understanding the personal attributes necessary for effective board membership, including adherence to a code of ethics once elected, is essential.

By considering these factors, you not only evaluate your suitability for the role but also recognize the profound impact you can have on your community by actively contributing to your local school district. ASBA is here to guide and support you on this meaningful journey of community service through school board membership.

A photograph of a young woman with long dark hair, smiling and wearing a purple graduation cap and gown. She is holding a large bouquet of white and yellow flowers in her left hand and a framed diploma in her right hand. The diploma features a crest with a tree and the text 'UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN'. The background is blurred, showing other graduates. The entire image has a warm orange tint.

DUTIES

Duties of a School Board Member

School board members are responsible for broad, forward-thinking, careful analysis and decisive action in all areas that affect students and staff in their schools. Some roles and responsibilities are implicit. Others are specifically mandated (A.R.S. §15-341) or permitted (§15-342) by Arizona law. Board members must carefully navigate the difference between power and influence. School board members have no individual legal authority; the power of a school board exists only in a quorum. While individual board members have no legal power (authority), they are influential members of the community they serve. Everything board members do should be focused, through the lens of educational equity, on providing the best education possible for every child in their community.

Set Direction

The governing board is responsible for envisioning the future of local public schools with extensive input from the staff and community. After setting the vision and mission for the district, the governing board works collaboratively to establish a strategic plan and strategic goals to move the organization toward the community's vision for its schools and students.

Establish Structure

Board policies and goals establish the structure and foster the environment to meet the needs of all students. The superintendent uses this structure to manage day to day operations. Although the superintendent may suggest changes to policies, only the board has the legal authority to adopt policy.

Provide Support

The board provides support to its school district by ensuring the alignment of resources to established goals. The board also provides support by recognizing and encouraging excellence throughout the district.

Duties of a School Board Member

Ensure Accountability

As the community's representative in the local schools, the board is responsible for ensuring that schools are run effectively, that resources are used wisely and that district and school leaders set high standards for academic performance. The board must also monitor performance to meet all established academic, financial and operational goals.

Advocate for Your Students

One of the board's most important roles is to be the ambassador for public education in the community. Individual board members can help communicate how local schools are supporting student educational needs, parent and community aspirations and state and federal standards. Together, board members can model collaboration and respect as conducive to providing the best education for children.

Abide by a Code of Ethics

Most school boards adopt a code of ethics for board members (see page 22) and it is incumbent on individual board members to follow that adopted policy.

Specific Duties

Among the specific duties of school board are three that are mandatory:

- Hire and evaluate the superintendent.
- Approve the district budget.
- Establish and approve school district policies.

Other duties may relate to employment, purchasing, budget preparation, students and other action on policies.

Duties of a School Board Member

- Provide guidance in the development of the budget to ensure funding is adequate to meet board established goals.
- Monitor the budget.
- Set employee salaries.
- Approve purchases.
- Approve curriculum materials.
- Adopt the school calendar.
- Review regulations for compliance with policy.
- Approve personnel actions based on the superintendent's recommendation.
- Approve the closure, repurpose, or construction of schools.
- Assess board effectiveness.
- Monitor progress toward goals.

Mandatory duties of school boards are defined in A.R.S. §15-341. Discretionary powers are defined in A.R.S. §15-342.

What School Board Members and Board Do Not Do

School board members do not:

- Implement policy; school boards approve policy, and superintendents are responsible for ensuring that approved policies are enacted.
- Manage the day-to-day operations of the school district; school boards ensure that the district is managed by professionals.
- Evaluate staff, other than superintendent, or engage in employment interviews, other than those for the superintendent

A group of diverse school children, mostly boys, are gathered in a hallway. They are smiling and waving at the camera. The hallway has posters on the wall, including one that says "Hallways" and another that says "BULLDOGS". The word "LEGAL" is overlaid in large, bold, white capital letters across the center of the image. The entire image has a warm, orange-brown tint.

LEGAL

Legal Qualifications for a School Board Member

Pursuant to A.R.S. §15-421 (C), school governing board members must meet these qualifications:

- Be elected by the voters in the district or be appointed by the county superintendent of schools.
- Be a registered voter.
- When assuming office and during the term of office, not be an employee of the school district or be a spouse of a district employee nor have a dependent who is a district employee. "District employee" includes an employee of a third-party contractor providing services to the school district.
 - *A person who is employed, or whose spouse is employed, by a district can stand for election for governing board. However, if elected, the successful candidate and/or spouse must terminate employment with the district before taking office.*
- Reside within the legal boundaries of the school district and have lived in the district for at least one year immediately preceding the day of election.
- Not be subject to registration as a sex offender in any jurisdiction.

Term of Office

Election to a governing board is for a four-year term.



PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

Personal Attributes of a School Board Member

Serving as a member of your local school board is one of the most challenging and rewarding jobs you will ever undertake and is an enormous responsibility. As a school board member, the decisions you make will affect children and their parents, the livelihood of school district employees and the economic well-being of your community. Service on a board requires time, energy, a willingness to learn about issues affecting your schools and a passion for leading a public school district committed to providing the best and most appropriate education for all children entrusted to its care.

Effective school board members share many attributes. Before declaring your candidacy for your local governing board, consider these important qualities:

- A conviction that public education is important.
- A commitment to improving public education for all children in Arizona.
- A sincere desire to serve the community, rather than a desire for personal gain or to achieve a personal goal.
- The ability to understand the forces of change in our society and foresee, to some extent, the shape of the future in order to plan wisely.
- Courage to make difficult decisions, defend the philosophy and goals of the organization and withstand criticism from people who hold opposing views.
- The ability to accept the will of the majority and support a decision that the board makes.
- Respect for diverse perspectives and cultural backgrounds on the board and in the community.
- Commitment to a collaborative team approach to governance.

Personal Attributes of a School Board Member

- Communicate well with others.
- Invest the significant time and energy required for board service.
- Remain available to attend all board meetings and board-related work.
- Strive to be knowledgeable about policies and programs.
- Maintain and demonstrate professional respect for district staff.
- Engage meaningfully in their communities.
- Be willing to learn from others.
- Bring a broad base of knowledge and personal experience to the role.
- Vote with intelligence and confidence on complex issues such as finance, curriculum and student-employee-community relationships.
- Honor the reputation of the entire school district through public behavior and attitude.
- Adhere to the board's roles and responsibilities.



A young woman with dark hair, wearing a black t-shirt, is the central figure. She is holding a small, rectangular sign that features the year '2024' at the top, followed by 'CONSTITUTIONAL', 'SOCIETY', and 'AZBJJL' at the bottom. The background is a blurred classroom setting with other students and a whiteboard. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange filter. The text 'RUNNING FOR ELECTION' is superimposed in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image.

RUNNING FOR ELECTION

Running for Election

School board elections are part of the general election in even-numbered years. Special elections to fill unanticipated vacancies between regular elections may be called by the county superintendent of schools. County school superintendents may also choose to appoint an individual to fill such a vacancy. Because school board elections are non-partisan, primary elections do not pertain to the elections of school board members.

Eligibility to Run

Any registered voter that resides within the legal boundaries of the school district and has done so at least one year immediately preceding the day of election may run for school board.

Other limitations on board service exist:

- Board members may not serve simultaneously on more than one school district governing board.
- Two or more individuals related by marriage, blood or law to the third degree are prohibited from serving simultaneously on a five-member school governing board with a minimum student count of 250 located within a county of more than 50,000 people.
- A person who has an immediate family member sitting on a school district governing board and who has shared the same household residence with that family member within four years prior to the election is ineligible to be a candidate for nomination or election to that governing board if the governing board is composed of five members unless the immediate family member is serving in the last year of a term of office.

Running for Election

The Process for Running

Any registered voter that resides within the legal boundaries of the school district and has done so at least one year immediately preceding the day of election may run for school board.

1. Pick up or request an information packet from your county superintendent of schools.
2. Pursuant to §ARS 16-311 (H), file a Statement of Interest with the county superintendent of schools before collecting signatures. Candidates can gather signatures without forming a political committee (see below) but must file a Statement of Interest before doing so.
3. Obtain nominating petitions from the county superintendent of schools. Nominating petitions are required for those running for school board. *Important: Ask the county superintendent for the required number of qualified voter signatures.*
4. Obtain the necessary signatures on your nominating petitions in accordance with all legal requirements.
5. File the nominating petitions with the county superintendent of schools during the designated time frame for the current election cycle.
6. Plan and engage in your local campaign.

Running for Election

Campaign Political Committees and Finance Reports

- Pursuant to §ARS 16-905 and 16-931, school board candidates with a combined total of \$1500 in contributions (including the candidate's own monies) and expenses must file a political committee Statement of Organization with the county elections department.
- Consult your county elections office or website for contribution limits, the political committee reporting schedule and for other filing information.
- Obtain reporting forms from your county superintendent of schools.

Note: Unlike candidates for state-wide office, governing board candidates are not required to file personal financial disclosure statements.



APPOINTMENT



Appointment

Occasionally, school board members must leave their positions before they have completed their terms. In the case of a mid-term vacancy, the county superintendent of schools may appoint a new member to fill the position through the end of the term or the next election. Check with your county superintendent of schools for details regarding specific appointments.





FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQs

How often does a school board meet?

It varies. Pursuant to § 15-321, Boards must meet at least once a month during the school year. Some boards regularly meet twice a month year-round while others meet once a month. Boards can also call for special meetings as needed. § 15-321 also requires boards to hold an organization meeting in January of the year following the election of board members.

Will I get paid?

Governing board members receive no payment or other compensation for serving. Members may receive reimbursement for travel and subsistence expenses for authorized school purposes.

As a board member, can I be held personally liable for legal claims against the board or the school district?

As a general rule, no. By state law, governing board members are not liable for actions taken in good faith and within the scope of their authority. Boards also may receive legal counsel to advise them, and the liability insurance of most, if not all, organizations covers board members who are acting in their official capacity. A governing board member is not immune from liability, however, if he or she:

- Acts outside the scope of authority.
- Knows (or should have known) that an action violates a person's constitutional rights.
- Engages in criminal activity.
- Commits an intentional tort, such as assault.
- Violates the open meeting or conflict of interest laws.

Can my company do business with the school district if I am a board member?

Yes, but a board member cannot vote on matters in which he or she has a conflict of interest. In most circumstances, a board member's company may seek only contracts offered through competitive bidding. The conflict of interest restrictions applicable to governing boards vary if the district's enrollment is greater or less than 3,000 students.

A large crowd of students is shown cheering and raising their hands at what appears to be a school event. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange filter. In the center, the text "ASBA: HERE TO SERVE YOU" is written in large, bold, white capital letters. Some students in the crowd are wearing blue jerseys with "BULLDOGS" and the number "62" visible. One student in the background is wearing a "SENIOR" hat. The overall atmosphere is one of excitement and celebration.

**ASBA: HERE TO
SERVE YOU**

ASBA: Here to Serve You

ASBA is dedicated to fostering excellence in locally governed districts by supporting and guiding school board members through their journey of community service. We are proud to provide the following services:

Professional Development

- Provide a **New Board Member Orientation** and ongoing professional development focused on best practices in public school governance.
- Host workshops, seminars, a summer leadership institute, a school law conference, and an annual conference to explore complex educational issues.
- Distribute resource materials specifically tailored to school board issues.

Advocacy

- Represent and advocate for the diverse interests of public school governing boards at the state and national levels.
- Share weekly in-session legislative updates to inform members of pending legislative activity.
- Engage with lawmakers, the Governor's Office, and the Arizona Department of Education to secure **adequate state support and favorable legislation**.
- Provide opportunities for board members to participate in **grassroots efforts** regarding state education issues.

ASBA: Here to Serve You

Legal Services

- Answer general legal questions and conduct limited legal research for member boards.
*Please note that ASBA is **not empowered to provide specific legal advice.***
- Conduct legal advocacy in state and federal courts to advance the association's legislative agenda.

Policy Services

- Assist boards in creating and maintaining policies that comply with current state and federal laws and regulations.
- Provide access to updated policies through **PolicyBridge**, a cloud-based platform.

Superintendent Search Services

ASBA conducts superintendent searches on behalf of member school boards as a fee service.

Communications and Public Relations

ASBA's Communications and Public Relations department provides expert, strategic support to school boards, ensuring they are well-informed and effectively represented to the public

- **Strategic Communication & Member Engagement:** Leads the association's communications strategy by delivering timely, relevant information through member emails, the award-winning ASBA Journal magazine, videos, the ASBA website, social media platforms and dedicated e-newsletters, including ASBA Connect, District Highlights, Superintendent's Corner, ASAP Corner and Partner Link, ensuring members stay informed, engaged and connected to ASBA programs, services and advocacy efforts.

ASBA: Here to Serve You

Communications and Public Relations Cont.

- **Marketing, Branding & Creative Services:** Develop integrated marketing campaigns that promote ASBA programs, conferences, advocacy initiatives and member services while overseeing branding, graphic design, photography, videography, publications and multimedia content.
- **Media Relations & Public Affairs:** Serves as the association's official communications representative, managing media relations, responding to education issues, promoting public understanding of public education and advocating for the interests of Arizona's locally elected governing boards.
- **District Communication & Consulting Services:** Provide customized communications and marketing support to school districts, including strategic communications planning, branding, enrollment and community engagement campaigns, crisis communications, customer service training, website recommendations and communication toolkits.
- **Transparency, Advocacy & Organizational Support:** Support ASBA's mission by providing expert communications guidance, advancing advocacy efforts, strengthening stakeholder relationships and fostering transparency, trust and engagement through professional, strategic communications.

CONTACT US

Arizona School Boards Association
2100 N. Central, Ave., Ste. 200 | Phoenix, Arizona 85004
602.254.1100 | 800.238.4701 | Fax 602.254.1177
azsba.org

Code of Ethics for Arizona School Board Members

The ASBA Board endorses the following code for local school board members. Board members will strive to improve public education, and to that end will:

- Prioritize policies and decisions that support successful student outcomes.
- Act honestly, ethically, and in the best interests of students, staff and the community.
- Take responsibility for board decisions and actions, ensuring transparency and adherence to policies.
- Treat fellow Board members, students, staff, parents and community members with respect and professionalism, listen to all with an open mind and ensure differences of opinion are honored.
- Protect sensitive student and personnel information and comply with privacy laws.
- Avoid and disclose any legal, personal or financial conflicts of interest that may impact decision-making.
- Ensure responsible, transparent and efficient use of public funds, facilities and resources.
- Uphold federal and state laws and follow Board policies and procedures.
- Maintain high standards of behavior and professionalism.
- Work cooperatively with other Board members, district leaders and the community to advance the district's mission.
- Stay informed about educational issues, governance best practices and ongoing professional development opportunities.

Adopted: Wednesday, May 20, 2026

Contact Information for County School Superintendents

To begin the process of running for election as a school board member, contact your county superintendent of schools:

Apache County

P.O. Box 548
75 N. 1st West
St. Johns, AZ 85936
(928) 337-7539
apachecountyaz.gov/school-Superintendent

Cochise County

4001 E. Foothills Drive, Suite A
Sierra Vista, AZ 85635
(520) 803-3380
cochise.az.gov/484/School-Superintendent

Coconino County

2384 N. Steves Blvd.
Flagstaff, AZ 86004
(928) 679-8070
coconino.az.gov/359/Superintendent-of-Schools

Gila County

1400 E. Ash St.
Globe, AZ 85501
(928) 402-8783
gilacountyaz.gov/government/school_superintendent/index.php

Graham County

921 Thatcher Blvd., 2nd Floor
Safford, AZ 85546
(928) 428-2880
graham.az.gov/201/School-Superintendent

Greenlee County

P.O. Box 1595
235 Fifth St. Clifton, AZ 85533
(928) 865-2072
greenlee.az.gov/cat_doc/superintendent-of-schools

La Paz County

1112 Joshua Ave., Ste. 205
Parker, AZ 85344
(928) 669-6183
co.la-paz.az.us/447/Education-Service-Agency

Maricopa County

4041 N. Central Ave., Ste. 1100
Phoenix, AZ 85012
(602) 506-3866
<http://schoolsup.org>

Contact Information for County School Superintendents

To begin the process of running for election as a school board member, contact your county superintendent of schools:

Mohave County

700 W. Beale St.
Kingman, AZ 86401
(928) 753-0747
mohave.gov/departments/school-superintendent

Navajo County

P.O. Box 668
100 E. Code Talkers Dr.
Holbrook, AZ 86025
(928) 524-4204
navajocountyaz.gov/366/Superintendent-of-Schools

Pima County

200 N. Stone Ave.
Tucson, AZ 85701
(520) 724-8451
schools.pima.gov

Pinal County

75 N. Bailey St.
Florence, AZ 85132
(502) 866-6565
pinal.gov/578/School-Superintendent

Santa Cruz County

2150 N. Congress Dr., Suite 107
Nogales, AZ 85621
(520) 375-7940
santacruzcounty.gov/294/Superintendent-of-Schools

Yavapai County

2970 Centerpointe East Dr.
Prescott, AZ 86301
(928) 771-3326
yavapaicoesa.com

Yuma County

210 S. 1st Ave.
Yuma, AZ 85364
(928) 373-1006





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