



2016 NEW BOARD MEMBER ORIENTATION GUIDE

TO DO LIST

1. District Documents to Review

- Agendas and minutes from the last year
- Recent district education reports and presentations
- District contracts and salary schedules (teachers, administrators, CSEA, superintendent)
- School board policy book
- Next Year's school district budget
- NYS School Report Card and related documents
- Annual Financial/Audit Report
- Strategic/ Long Range Plan
- Board of Education Goals: current school year
- School district curriculum guides (may be available online)
- Board code of conduct (may be available online)
- School District organization chart
- BOCES Annual Report
- Professional publications

2. Recommended Books

- School Law by New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA), revised every 2 years
- Becoming a Better Board Member, National School Boards Association (NSBA) publication
- Robert's Rules of Order in Plain English

3. Federal and State Regulations to become familiar with include

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and NYS Special Education regulations
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) – 504 accommodations
- 2015 Federal reauthorization of ESEA as Every Child Succeeds Act (ESSA)
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- NYS Graduation requirements and the Common Core Standards
- NYS Dignity for All Students Act (DASA or "Dignity Act") 7/1/2012
- NYS Open Meetings Law; Freedom of Information Act (FOIL)
- NYS Ed Law 3012-c & 3012-d; Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR), revised 2015
- NYS Taylor Laws, Triborough Amendment to the Taylor Laws
- NYS Tenure laws and 3020-a, revised 2015

4. Orientation Conversations

- “Get to know” meetings with Superintendent and with administrators (clear through superintendent/board president first)
 - Roles and responsibilities
 - District protocols, expectations
 - Historic perspective and horizon issues
 - Overview of budget, special education, staff hiring process and professional development, curriculum development initiatives, etc.
- Board officer discussion with new Board members: protocols, how we communicate, current issues, BOE agenda setting, chain of command, etc.
- Discussions with current and prior serving board members
 - Ask about most important issues he/she has dealt with and what’s upcoming
 - Adopt a board member as a mentor (seasoned board member)
- Discussions with board members from other districts (WPSBA)
 - WPSBA will provide you with a board mentor from another district

5. Administrative (Districts vary in how they transition in newly elected board members)

- Add new board member to distribution list for weekly board packet; paperless →tablet/laptop?
- Invite to executive session as observer (for some or most discussions)
- Have district email address assigned, to be effective 7/1 (if applicable)
 - Should you use a personal email addresses for board business, ensure it is private and not accessible by other individuals or family members
- Include in any retreat or similar sessions held prior to 7/1
- Include in scheduling of organizational meeting (must take place by 7/15)
- Invite to graduation ceremonies or other key district events

6. New Board Member Trainings and Workshops; Professional Development Is Ongoing!

- WPSBA Prospective School Board Member Workshop (pre-election)
- WPSBA Newly Elected School Board Member Workshop (6/23/2016)
- Governance Training (NYS 6 hr. Mandated Governance Training)
 - WPSBA offers regional Mandated Governance Training in September (Saturday TBA)
- Financial Training (NY Mandated 5 hour course provided through NYSSBA only)
- Ongoing WPSBA (and NYSSBA) workshops, speakers, and networking opportunities

TOPICS TO EXPLORE:

1. Core Elements of Board of Education Service

- Board as a corporate body
- Confidentiality and Code of Ethics
- Policy vs. Administrative Regulations
- Freedom of Information Law (FOIL)
- Open Meetings Law, aka Sunshine Laws (NYS Committee on Open Government)
- Labor issues: Negotiations, tenure process; timelines, 3020-a disciplinary hearings

2. YOUR District Documents and Contracts

- School district budget and other financial documents
- Historic & current enrollment, class size, assessment and graduation data, etc.
- Program and curricular initiatives
- Support staff contract (teacher assistants, teacher aides etc.)
- Civil Service Employees' Association (CSEA) contract
- Local school district Teachers Association contract (incl. APPR parameters)
- Administrators and supervisors (individual administrator contracts- if any)
- Non-bargaining employees group ("Confidential employees") agreements
- Superintendent's contract
- Other contracts (ex. food service, transportation, attorney, auditor)

3. Protocols for Board Meetings in YOUR District

- Organization of the Regular Session
- Organization of the Executive Session (attendees)
- Placing Items on the agenda
- Communicating with the superintendent regarding agenda Items
- Public comment parameters

4. Board/Superintendent and Board Communication Practices in YOUR District

- Role of board president/officers and flow of information
- Use of email, telephone, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, websites etc.
- Board of Education meeting packets/ electronic board paperwork flow
- Board member requests for information/reports/data

5. General Board Member Duties and Protocols in YOUR School District

- Governance vs micro-management
- Liaison positions
- Role of the board officers
- Visiting schools and classrooms
- Tenure review and role of board of education
- Beyond the board table; community interactions (verbal, electronic, print)
- Dealing with the press (print, online)

ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:**Board of Education/Superintendent**

- Mentor/ buddy system within school district and through WPSBA mentor assignment
- Board of Education/Superintendent/Administrator workshops and/or retreat
- Westchester-Putnam School Boards Association (WPSBA)
- New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA)
- National School Boards Association(NSBA)
- Education, governance and policy articles, newsletters, website, etc.