2019 NEW BOARD MEMBER ORIENTATION GUIDE

TRANSITION CHECKLIST

1. 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, professional development, curriculum 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

2. Administrative (*Districts vary in how they include newly elected board members prior to 7/1*)
   - Include in scheduling of organizational meeting (must take place by 7/15)
   - Have district email address assigned, to be effective 7/1 (if applicable)
     - Using personal email address for board business is NOT recommended
   - Add to BOE distribution list for weekly board packet/file (selected items)*
   - Invite to executive session as observer (for some or most discussions)*
   - Include in any retreat or similar sessions held prior to 7/1*
   - Invite to graduation ceremonies or other key district events*

3. 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 (6/13/2019)
   - Governance Training (NYS 6 hr. Mandated Governance Training)
     - WPSBA offers regional Mandated 6 Hour Governance Training (Saturday, 9/14/2019)
   - Financial Training (NY Mandated 5 hour course provided through NYSSBA)
   - Annual WPSBA and NYSSBA workshops, programs with speakers, and networking opportunities
BACKGROUND INFORMATION – SCHOOL DISTRICT:

1. Core Elements of Board of Education Service
   - Board as a corporate body
   - Confidentiality and Code of Ethics
   - Policy and 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 (some may be available online)
   - School district budget and other financial documents
   - Historic/current enrollment, class size, assessment & graduation data, etc. (NYS Report Card)
   - School District Organization Chart
   - Program and curricular initiatives/presentations at BOE meetings
   - Board of Education meeting protocols
   - Board Code of Conduct/Ethics
   - Agendas and minutes from the last year
   - District contracts and salary schedules (teachers, administrators, CSEA, superintendent)
   - School board policy book (most districts post this online)
   - Annual financial/audit report
   - Strategic/long range plan
   - Board of Education goals: current school year
   - School district curriculum guides
   - School district organization chart
   - Current district committee reports/updates
   - Student Code of Conduct; VADIR report

3. Protocols for Board Meetings in YOUR District
   - Executive session protocols (Open Meetings Law)
   - Organization of the regular session
   - Placing items on the agenda
   - Communicating with the superintendent regarding agenda Items
   - Public comment parameters

4. Board/Superintendent and Intra-Board Communication Practices in YOUR District
   - Role of board president/officers and flow of information
   - Intra-board and board member-superintendent communications
   - 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
   • Communications beyond the BOE: faculty/staff, community (in-person, verbal, electronic)
   • Visiting schools and classrooms (BOE role vs. parent role)
   • Communicating with the press (print, online)
   • Tenure review and role of Board of Education

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES:

1. Recommended Publications and Media feeds
   • 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
   • Professional publications/journals (Education Week, American School Board Journal, etc.)
   • Education, governance, policy newsfeeds (NYSSBA e-clips, Politico, ASCD, Hechinger Report)

2. Federal and State Regulations including
   • NYS Graduation requirements and the NYS Learning Standards
   • Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and NYS Special Education regulations
   • Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) – 504 accommodations
   • Every Child Succeeds Act (ESSA) – NYS ESSA Plan
   • Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
   • Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and law enforcement officials at schools
   • NYS Dignity for All Students Act (DASA or “Dignity Act”) 7/1/2012; Code of Conduct; Red Flag Law 2019
   • NYS Open Meetings Law; Freedom of Information Act (FOIL)
   • NYS Ed Law 3012-c & 3012-d; Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR), revised 2019
   • NYS Taylor Laws, Triborough Amendment to the Taylor Laws
   • NYS Tenure laws and 3020-a, revised 2015
   • NYS Sexual Harassment Laws 2018; relevant NYS Labor Laws
   • NYS Charter School Laws
   • NYS Aid to Education- district aid print-out, Foundation Aid formula; NYS Tax Levy Limit formula
   • Universal Pre-K; ELL Education Plan (CR Part 154)

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)