



2020 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 (6/22/2020)
- Governance Training (NYS 6 hr. Mandated Governance Training)
 - WPSBA offers regional Mandated 6 Hour Governance Training (Saturday, 9/12/2020)
- 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 reopening plan
- 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

- NYSED & DOH School Reopening Guidance
- 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)