

School board members are responsible for broad, futuristic thinking, minute 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 allowed (§15-342) by Arizona law. School board members have no individual authority—the power of a school board exists only as a group. Everything board members do is focused, through the lens of equity, on providing the best education possible for the children in their community.

### **Set the Direction**

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

### **Establish the Structure**

Board policies and goals establish the structure and create the environment for ensuring that the needs of all students are met. The superintendent uses the structure established by the board to manage operations on a day-to-day basis. Although the superintendent may suggest changes to policies, only the board as a whole has the legal authority to adopt policy.

### **Provide Support**

The board provides support to its organization by ensuring that resources available are aligned to meet established goals and provide for the needs of all students. Support also is provided by recognizing and encouraging excellence throughout the organization.

### **Ensure Accountability**

As the community's representative in the local schools, the board is responsible for ensuring that the schools are well run – that resources are used wisely and that high standards for academic performance are set. The board, as a whole, needs to monitor performance to meet established goals – academic, financial and operational.

## **Advocate for Your Students**

One of the board's most important roles is to be the ambassador for public education in the community. As individuals, each board member can help communicate the ways in which their local schools are supporting student educational needs, parent and community aspirations, and state and federal standards. Together, the board also can demonstrate that an atmosphere of collaboration and respect is the most conducive environment for providing the best education for children in the community.

## **Abide by a Code of Ethics**

A code of ethics for board members is included in the policies adopted by most school boards for their districts, and it is incumbent on individual board members to follow it.

## **Specific Duties**

Specific duties of school boards may relate to employment, purchasing, budget preparation, students and policies. They may include:

- Hiring and evaluating the district superintendent.
- Providing guidance in the development of the budget to ensure funding needed to meet board established goals.
- Approving the budget.
- Monitoring the budget.
- Setting salaries for employees.
- Approving purchases.
- Establishing and approving policies.
- Approving curriculum materials.
- Adopting the school calendar.
- Reviewing regulations for compliance with policy.

- Approving personnel actions based on the superintendent's recommendation.
- Closing or constructing schools.
- Assessing board effectiveness.
- Monitoring 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 Boards DON'T Do**

School board members do not:

- Implement policy; school boards make policy and superintendents carry it out.
- Manage the day-to-day operations of the school district; school boards see to it that the district is managed by professionals.
- Evaluate staff, other than the superintendent, nor do they become involved in employment interviews, other than those for superintendent.

*Note: This is an excerpt from Arizona School Boards Association's School Board Service Booklet. The entire document can be found by visiting [http://azsba.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/2016-ASBA-School-Board-Service-Booklet\\_LowRes.pdf](http://azsba.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/2016-ASBA-School-Board-Service-Booklet_LowRes.pdf).*