



TIPS FOR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

These tips, culled from the advice of experienced school board members, can help you make the most of your board service.



Students come first.

It's easy to get sidetracked in the details of hiring personnel, bus routes, paying the bills and dealing with community complaints. Students are your reason for serving on your school board. They are the "Promise of Iowa" and our future leaders. Join IASB's Promise of Iowa campaign, a statewide effort to tell their story and rally support for public schools. Learn more at promiseiowa.org.



Be willing to speak up.

If you have questions, ask. If you have an opinion on an issue before the board, express it. The purpose of the board, made up of five or seven different people, is to get a variety of ideas, to share expertise and to make the best possible decisions for all students.



Know your role.

As a school board member, you have a unique role to play that is different from that of administrators or teachers. Begin now to discuss with your superintendent and other board members their understanding of the roles and relationships in your district.



Have high expectations.

Providing the best education possible for your students requires setting a vision with high expectations and standards; working to ensure that board, staff, parent and community commitment to that vision remains strong and ongoing; and monitoring progress toward the vision and standards.



Do your homework.

Your monthly board packet, other information from the superintendent, IASB communications and other reading will help you be "in-the-know" and make wise decisions. Take the time to read and prepare yourself before meetings.



Be a team player.

The board has authority acting only as a body; individual board members have no authority to make policy or decisions for the board. Your board's effectiveness depends on how well members work together as a team.



Commit to your own learning.

The information you receive from IASB, along with materials from your own district, will give you an idea of the broad range of knowledge you need to be an effective board member. Commit to building your skills through conferences, workshops and training. Be a model of lifelong learning for students.



Strive for balance.

You'll enjoy many hours as a board member. Balance them with fulfilling hours with your family, career, hobbies or other activities.



Remember, you are not alone!

You are part of a network of more than 2,000 Iowa school, AEA and community college board members with experience to share. Members of your board and people you meet through IASB can answer questions and share their perspectives.