



School Board Candidate Frequently Asked Questions

1. How much time does school board work require?

- a. The time commitment is not easily quantifiable, but it is safe to say that school board service is a serious commitment. Most if not all school corporations hold a business meeting every month. Many have a second meeting or a work session during the month to further discuss needs and priorities. Quite a bit of time is spent in between meetings reading meeting packet materials, learning about policy and budget needs, learning about ongoing actions in the legislature both at the state and federal levels, and hearing from community members.

2. What is appropriate to talk about during my campaign?

- a. What you say during your campaign is important. Voters should know what is important to you and your aspirations for the students and employees of the corporation. Sharing your background and the skills you have that make you a good school board member is also advisable. Remember that Indiana statute does not grant decision-making authority to any individual board member so be careful not to make promises about future board decisions. Also, refrain from making any personal attacks on current school board members. If you are elected, these are the people you will be working with in the future.

3. Can I pass out campaign materials on school property or at school events?

- a. Most school corporations have a policy that prohibits political campaigning or distributing political campaign materials on school property or at school sponsored events. It is important to check with the superintendent or school board members concerning any such policy before you begin your campaign.

4. Should I talk to the superintendent during my campaign?

- a. It is a good idea to schedule a time to meet with the superintendent. Use the time to introduce yourself and allow the superintendent to share important initiatives in the schools, priorities for the future, financial details, and answer any questions you may have.

5. Should I go to school board meetings as a candidate?

- a. Attending school board meetings is encouraged. While attending the meeting, focus on the structure of the meeting, board interactions and dynamics, and the important topics the board is discussing. Be careful to respect the board's need to conduct its business and avoid using the meeting as a platform for your campaign. If you are elected, you will appreciate the same level of respect from others campaigning in the future.

6. What if people ask me specifically how I would vote on something that will come before the board?

- a. Handle this situation with great care. You may already have an idea or conviction about a given subject and how you think you would vote, but always remember that there may be more information on a subject than you may have access to. If you are elected, you will have access to a great deal of information regarding a decision the board must make, and it is likely that you will hear and see important information that you did not have prior to becoming a member of the board. An effective board member will always have an open mind to the data, information, and legal boundaries that are presented before forming a final opinion and casting a vote. Sharing your opinion and intent for your vote prematurely may put you in a difficult situation with members of the community should you choose to vote differently based upon the additional information you receive once elected to the board.

7. Is it illegal for me to talk to current board members?

- a. No, it is not illegal. Talking to veteran board members can help you gain insight into the job and prepare you for the work should you be elected.

8. Should I attend board meetings after I am elected but before taking office as member of the board?

- a. Yes. While you are not an official board member yet, it is important for you to be familiar with the business that comes before the board prior to the start of your term, which for most school board members is January 1.

9. What are the orientation opportunities for me as a new board member after I am elected?

- a. There are several opportunities to become better acquainted with your new role once you are elected. Many school corporations have an orientation process in place to help new board members become acclimated to the schools, leadership, and the board's work. ISBA also offers many opportunities, most notably the New Board Member Academy Series. These sequenced learning opportunities are designed to immerse you in school board work during your first year. Other opportunities include the ISBA/IAPSS Fall Conference, Statehouse Day, and many other conferences and webinars. There is plenty of reading material also available to help you become a more effective member of your school corporation's leadership team.