



GUIDE FOR BOARD OF EDUCATION CANDIDATES



An overview of Roles and Responsibilities

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INTRODUCTION

We are pleased that you are interested in serving our community as a Trustee of the Bloomfield Hills Schools Board of Education! Our constituents entrust the Board of Education with the enormous responsibility of overseeing the education of their students. Trustees give back to our community, impact the quality of education in our district, and strengthen our democracy and our nation by ensuring a quality public education for all students.

Candidates have much to learn about the roles and responsibilities of a board member. With the increasing demand for educational excellence and fiscal accountability, the responsibilities of school boards are far more numerous and of greater impact than at any previous time in history. With the unprecedented changes to our world and the different ways in which we educate students caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, board member roles have become even more vital. Virtually overnight, the newly initiated are expected to become skilled interpreters of the international health crisis, school law, expert personnel managers, and vigilant overseers of taxpayer's money. What's more, they are expected to function as part of a united team, despite differences in backgrounds, political philosophies, and expertise.

This candidate guide is a first step to help you understand what the Board of Education does, the role and responsibilities of a Board Trustee, the concept of the Board–Superintendent team, rules regarding campaigning, the time commitment involved in board service, and our pledge to the students and residents of Bloomfield Hills Schools.

CONTACTS

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our Board President. Board Member email addresses can be found at this link: <https://www.bloomfield.org/about-us/board-of-education>
For time sensitive issues, please call the Board and Superintendent's office at (248) 341-5406 during regular business hours.

THE FUNCTION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The primary function of the Board of Education is to oversee the education of students in the community. Under Michigan law, the Board has the ultimate responsibility for school district operations. The Michigan Revised School Code gives each local district Board the general powers to educate students, to provide for the safety and welfare of students, to acquire and dispose of school property, to determine matters related to school employees and contractors, to control the expenditure and receipt of school funds, and to make joint agreements and cooperative arrangements. Specific provisions in the Michigan Revised School Code also assign responsibilities to Boards in areas such as setting the curricula and courses taught in the schools; employing a Superintendent, other administrators, teachers, and support personnel; levying local taxes to run the schools and adopting a budget; deciding whether to furnish transportation for pupils; and, negotiating with employee unions regarding salaries and other conditions of employment.

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND SUPERINTENDENT TEAM

While the Board and Superintendent each have distinct roles, we work together as a team of eight. The team’s primary priority is student achievement. The Board of Education-Superintendent working relationship requires trust, mutual respect, understanding and shared purpose.

A simple way of explaining the different responsibilities of a board and a superintendent is that the Board role is to say “what”, and the Superintendent (and his/her staff) role is to say “how”. The Board is responsible for setting the core values, vision, mission, and short/long term goals for the district. The Superintendent is responsible for implementing the means by which those goals are achieved. The Board will hold the superintendent accountable for achieving these goals.

It is also understood that the Board has one employee, the Superintendent. All of the other district employees, in turn, report either directly or indirectly to the Superintendent. The following table lists some of the specific roles for the Board of Education and the Superintendent:

BOARD ROLE	SUPERINTENDENT ROLE
GOAL SETTING The District vision is translated into long and short-term goals. The board establishes the structure to accomplish the vision, and periodically evaluates the results	GOAL SETTING Assists and advises Board in creating the long and short-term goals. Based on the goals, establishes strategies for implementation at each school.
POLICY Establishes policy for the district and shares in policy development	POLICY Advises Board on policy development, need and impact and is responsible for creating and implementing administrative procedures to carry out the requirements of each policy
DESIGNATING AND EVALUATING SUPERINTENDENT Recruits, hires and evaluates the performance of the superintendent.	SUPERINTENDENT’S RESPONSIBILITIES Manages Operations in central office and coordinates and oversees efforts of all schools within the district. Works toward meeting district and superintendent goals establishes by the Board
BUDGET Reviews the budget submitted by the superintendent and aligns the funding priorities with the district goals.	BUDGET Works with school administrators to develop a draft budget, recommends the budget to the Board, makes revisions as requested by the Board and administers the budget adopted by the Board
CURRICULUM Approves recommended curriculum and texts based on standards, goals and policies established by Board. Review and evaluate curriculum as it relates to student assessment results	CURRICULUM Recommends courses of study and texts aligned with district vision, goals and objectives. Provide student assessment data for Board analysis
STAFFING AND APPRAISAL Adopts policies governing salaries and salary schedules, terms and conditions of employment, fringe benefits, leave, professional development and employee evaluations	STAFFING AND APPRAISAL Recommends all personnel to be hired; is responsible either directly or indirectly for performance evaluations
FACILITIES Determines school facility needs and communicates proposed construction plans to the community	FACILITIES Analyzes, interprets and communicates the needs of the school system to the Board and supervises facility renovations and new construction projects

CAMPAIGNING

School Board elections are run by Oakland County. In order to run for the office of Board Trustee, prospective candidates must file paperwork with the county elections division (the deadline for filing is typically in July preceding the November election). After filing, financial and campaign organization forms must be submitted. A post-election financial report must be filed as well. More information can be found by visiting Oakland County's website.

<https://www.oakgov.com/clerkrod/elections/Pages/candidate-filing-information.aspx>

https://www.oakgov.com/clerkrod/elections/Documents/2020_filing_req_schools_nov.pdf

Oakland County Elections Division: (248) 858-0564

Board policy prohibits using school facilities to advertise or promote a political party, political cause, or candidacy of an individual for public office.

The use of all school properties is governed by Board Policies 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Board Policies apply to everyone on school property including, but not limited to, Board Trustees, staff, PTOs, clubs, boosters, athletics, as well as individuals and non-school organizations using or renting school property. An individual in violation of Board policy will be asked to leave school property. Campaigning on school property is strictly prohibited. This applies to any candidate for elected office and anyone attempting to promote a ballot initiative.

What is permitted:

- An organized voter forum on school property only when all candidates for the specified public office are invited to participate. Board policies shall be followed regarding disseminating and displaying campaign materials on school property during such forums.
- Individuals are permitted to disseminate factual literature for a ballot initiative (which may include the ballot language); however, the literature may not promote a yes or no vote.
- Candidates may distribute voter registration forms.
- Subject to BHS school dress codes, candidates may wear personal campaign apparel (e.g. shirts, buttons, hats) on school property.
- Employees may endorse, support, and contribute personal funds to candidates and issues when they are not on district property and not during their work day.

What is prohibited:

- Use of the district or school logo, mission, vision, or core values statements for any political purpose.
- Candidates, their committee members, and supporters may not campaign or otherwise display or distribute campaign material on school property. Examples of items that advertise a political party, cause, or candidate and therefore are not permitted on school property include, but are not limited to: literature/flyers, flags, banners, "wrapped" vehicles, and any campaign material that is affixed, whether permanently or temporarily, to the inside or outside of any school property. Per above, apparel may be worn, provided it is school dress code compliant.

What is prohibited (*continued*):

- Board policy prohibits use of school facilities, school equipment, staff (during working hours), or the school mail/email system as a means of producing or disseminating to the community any materials that advertise or promote a political party, a political cause, or the candidacy of an individual for public office.
- Students and employees of the Board shall not be used to distribute campaign literature, or other campaign material within the schools or on school grounds.
- All BHS property is prohibited from use in photographs, videos, and other images that appear in campaign material, however photographs taken for purposes other than campaigning that occur on school property are permitted provided that the district logo, mission, vision, or core values are not depicted in the image.

Questions or concerns should be directed to the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, Kelly Bohl (kbohl@bloomfield.org).

THE TIME COMMITMENT: STUDY SESSIONS, BOARD MEETINGS, COMMITTEES, AND DISTRICT EVENTS

Trustees are expected to attend Board meetings that occur once or twice each month. To become familiar with the organization's governance process and to become known to the community, it is advisable that candidates for the Board of Education also attend these meetings. The meeting schedule is adopted in

January at the annual Organizational Board Meeting and is posted on the District website. If there are typically two meetings in a given calendar month, a study session and a regular board meeting. Board meetings/study sessions are usually on Thursdays at 6 or 7pm. Closed session meetings may be added for purposes permitted under the Open Meetings Act. Local board retreats may also be scheduled.

Board members are expected to attend all Board meetings and Study Sessions. If you are unable to attend a meeting, please contact the Board President and the Superintendent's Office. All meetings are open to the public. Parliamentary procedure is followed at meetings and Robert's Rules of Order governs the structure of Board meetings. Typically, meetings last 1-3 hours. In addition, all Trustees are expected to read materials provided in advance to prepare for each meeting.

All Trustees are expected to serve on at least one standing committee, and regular attendance at assigned committee meetings is critical. Committee assignments are made annually at the January organizational meeting. Committee meetings may be scheduled during the work/school day or in the evening. Some committees meet a few times per year, and others have monthly meetings. Trustees may request appointment to a committee that aligns with their interests and schedule. The current standing board committees are: (1) Board Instructional Committee (BIC); (2) Finance, Facilities, and Legal Affairs (FFLA); and, (3) Policy. Other temporary committees or task forces can be established on an ad-hoc basis.

Trustees should attend District-wide events and performances as their schedule allows. Trustees are expected to attend annual graduation events.

NEW TRUSTEE ORIENTATION, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND MENTORING

Prior to beginning Board service on January 1st, a newly elected Trustee will receive an orientation with the Board President, Superintendent, and members of the Superintendent's cabinet to discuss Board functions, policies, and procedures. Newly elected Trustees will be provided with a copy of our Board Operating Procedures manual ("BOP"); all Board policies are online at <https://www.bloomfield.org/about-us/board-of-education/district-policy-manual>. To develop governance skills and to stay up-to-date on educational issues, new Trustees are encouraged to attend continuing education classes. One good source for classes is the Michigan Association of School Boards (<https://www.masb.org/training-events.aspx>).

Upon a new board member's request to the Board President, a newly elected board member may be assigned a veteran board member as a mentor for their first year of board service. The mentor will be the person to coordinate the onboarding of the new trustee.

TRUSTEE COMPENSATION

Candidates should be aware that our Trustees serve without compensation. Travel expenses for continuing education as outlined above, or for representation of the district on official business, may be reimbursed.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST, FAVORITISM, AND BEST PRACTICES FOR TRUSTEE INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Candidates must understand that, if elected, a Board Trustee represents all residents of the district. The trustee has a responsibility to act in the best interest of all students attending Bloomfield Hills Schools. The Trustee cannot use his/her position as a Trustee to benefit either him/herself, a family member, or any other individual or agency apart from the total interest of the School District.

Candidates should understand that the position of Board Trustee may supersede the role of parent and private citizen in certain situations. Board members represent all students equally and should not either favor or discriminate against any particular student or group of students. While Trustees are encouraged to participate in community organizations and district activities, we must avoid the perception that a Trustee is affiliated with one student, group, or school building(s) over others.

Certain organizations benefit only a specific school building, group or activity. To avoid any appearance of favoritism or special interest, if you are elected you cannot serve on the Board or in another leadership role in these organizations. Examples include school PTOs and athletic, music, or theater boosters. In contrast, some community organizations benefit the entire District. Trustees may serve on such organizations' Boards and may be appointed as a Board of Education liaison. Examples include the Bloomfield Hills School District Foundation, Bloomfield Youth Assistance, the Birmingham-Bloomfield Community Coalition, or Rotary.

SOCIAL MEDIA

A Board member's personal or private use of social media may have unintended, negative consequences to the Board member and/or the District, including possible violations of the Open Meetings Act and issues relating to creation of a public record. Postings to social media should be done in a manner sensitive to the Board member's responsibilities, applicable District policies, and legal obligations, including, but not limited to, the following rules:

- Community electronic communications with the Board, including Twitter, Facebook, and text messages, need to comply with applicable Board policies and be consistent with the Open Meetings Act.
- If a Board member develops a website or a blog that will mention District employees, students, etc., the Board member must identify who they are and that the views expressed on the blog or website belong to that individual Board member and are not meant to reflect the opinion of the entire Board.
- Board members may not share confidential information.
- Board members must be careful not to repeat information learned in closed session or in private conversations with fellow Board members, District staff, or administration.
- Board members are prohibited from using District logos and trademarks on their blogs or websites.

RESPONSE TO COMPLAINTS OR CONCERNS

As a candidate or elected Trustee, it is likely that you will be approached with a request, concern, or complaint from a friend, community member, or possibly even a student or staff member who may want you to “fix it”. You may not make any commitment to personally resolve any problem or complaint - that is not the job of a Board Trustee. When approached, it is best practice to refer the person to the appropriate staff member within the chain of command, whether that is the classroom teacher, building principal, administrative team, or the Superintendent, depending on the context of the situation. For more information: <https://www.bloomfield.org/about-us/addressing-concerns>

VALUES, ACCOUNTABILITY, ETHICS, EXPECTATIONS, AND CONDUCT STATEMENTS

Every Trustee of the Bloomfield Hills Board of Education commits to conducting him/herself in a manner consistent with our adopted [Board Policies](#), Board Operating Procedures, and Bylaw 1001: Code of Ethics [Bylaw 1001: Code of Ethics](#)