

What Does the School Board Do?

School boards and school board members deal with local educational conditions and decide local educational issues. Their power and authority are established in the Nevada Revised Statutes, Nevada Constitution, Nevada Administrative Code, and federal constitution/regulations. School boards have the general responsibility for the management and supervision of the school district.

Major Responsibilities:

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: The school board adopts academic standards for pupils and establishes expectations for education in the district. The school board monitors student achievement and exercises general supervision over the schools.

POLICYMAKING: Policymaking covers the broad range of rules and regulations that school boards enact, alter or repeal. Board policies are the basis of school district operations. To have a well-organized school system, the board needs a sound philosophy of education as a basis for policymaking.

EVALUATION: Evaluation is a continuous function that applies to policies, people, and programs. All facets of school operations should be evaluated regularly because evaluation points out strong and weak points in the school system and establishes a basis for future action. Although the school board should welcome information and advice from all sources, the final responsibility for evaluation rests with the board.

BOARD-ADMINISTRATOR RELATIONS: Board members should be aware of the difference between their role and that of school administrators. In essence, it is this: boards set policy, administrators carry it out. The school board should set its goals and operational policies and expect the district administrator to carry them out. Although the board should refrain from becoming involved in the day-to-day operation of the school, it should follow up on the administration and operation of the schools and require periodic reports for purposes of evaluation.

BUDGET RESPONSIBILITY: An important responsibility is the development of a district budget. The board, after a hearing, approves and adopts an annual budget for the district based on the educational plan of the district and the recommendations of the administrator. The

board supervises the execution of the budget, reviews school district accounts, and business procedures and provides for an annual audit of the accounts as required by law.

PUBLIC RELATIONS: Another important part of the board's work is its public relations role. A board member should be concerned with building public understanding and support of public education. A board member should lead the public in demanding better education. This means communications; it means serving as a link between the school system and the public; and it means interpreting the schools to the public and the public to the schools. It also means helping to establish a climate for change when change is necessary.

POLITICAL RELATIONS: In addition to public relations, the school board must be aware of political relations. While election to the school board is conducted on a nonpartisan basis, education is deeply involved in politics. For a school board to be effective, its members must be willing to keep abreast of the actions of other governmental bodies and agencies and be willing to participate in the system, where appropriate.

More detailed information on the role, responsibilities, and duties of a school board can be found in *BECOMING A BETTER BOARD MEMBER*, a publication of the National School Boards Association available from the Nevada Association of School Boards.