



Suggestions for Local New Board Member Orientation

In addition to the state-mandated 18.5 hours of training completed within their first 12 months of school board service, MSBA recommends the school district provide new board members specific local district information as soon as possible when their term of service begins.

Consider the essential information and resources that will provide a smooth transition into effective board service for your district. The following suggestions are offered as guidance for board presidents and superintendents who want to get new board members off to a good start.

NEW BOARD MEMBER PRINT MATERIALS

Well-chosen materials will support a new board member in the first few months of service and serve as excellent resource tools throughout the board member's term. Materials might include:

- Schedule of board meetings and district calendar
- Current board member list of phone numbers and email addresses
- District or central office organizational chart
- A copy of each of the Board's Governing Documents
 - Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP), Strategic Plan or Accountability Plan
 - Board Policy Manual or information about how to access the policy manual and copies of policies related specifically to the board (i.e., Board powers and duties, code of conduct/ethics, board meeting attendance, conflict of interest, financial disclosure, professional development, travel reimbursement, etc.)
 - District Professional Development Plan and other district plans
 - Current Budget
 - Blank copy of Superintendent Evaluation with current goals
 - Sample Board Agenda
- District Annual Performance Report (APR) (at www.dese.mo.gov)
- District Report Card (at www.dese.mo.gov)
- Annual Secretary of the Board Report (ASBR)
- Board minutes from current school year

Additional materials can be found on MSBA's website at www.mosba.org.

- MSBA's CBM Essential Training Schedule and Registration Form
- Sunshine Law Resources
- Nepotism Chart
- Common Educational Abbreviations and Acronyms

Other local documents should be included as the district deems appropriate.

You may want to consider organizing the materials into a notebook or orientation manual.



New Board Member Learning Sessions

Printed materials are useful reference tools, but they cannot take the place of personal interaction. Board presidents and superintendents can conduct learning sessions for new board members.

BOARD PRESIDENTS

Effective board presidents provide new board members with information to help them understand their new responsibilities.

A discussion between the board president and new board members might include:

- State-mandated new board member training requirement
- Process for requesting items to be placed on the agenda
- How board meetings are conducted, including parliamentary procedures
- Open Meetings Act (Sunshine Law) requirements
- Importance of preparing for meetings, e.g., reading the Proposed Agenda and Board Packet
- Governing authority is with the board not any individual board member
- Referring stakeholders to appropriate channels of communication

SUPERINTENDENTS

The Superintendent is the board's chief employee; board members accomplish their work by delegating operational leadership to the superintendent.

The superintendent has an opportunity to build a relationship with new board members by highlighting district information that will provide a foundation for effective board service. The superintendent's discussion might include:

- CSIP or strategic plan goals and objectives
- School district performance: e.g., strengths, challenges and trends
- Budget overview and code explanation or guide
- Bond indebtedness information
- School visit procedures
- District website overview
- Introduction to central office staff and building administrators
- Department or program overview (may be conducted by central office staff and/or building administrators)
- Lastly, the superintendent might lead a tour of the district facilities.

MSBA is committed to helping school boards succeed.
If you have effective practices your district uses for new board member orientation, please share them with the Leadership Development Department.