



Every child enrolled in your school district is a reason for you to vote in school board elections. Local school boards can impact the overall quality of your local schools, both now and in the future. You want the most qualified people in charge.

## How Does a Person Become a School Board Candidate?

If the election is held at a school district meeting that does not use an Australian ballot to elect officers, a candidate may be nominated from the floor at the meeting. If the election is by Australian ballot, a candidate may secure a place on the ballot by submitting a petition with the signatures of thirty qualified voters (or one percent of the total number of legal voters if that number is less than thirty) to the municipal clerk by 5:00 p.m. on the sixth Monday preceding the day of the election. \*Of course, a candidate may launch a write-in campaign if the date for submitting petitions has passed.

\* School districts with charters may have different petition requirements.

## You have Everything to Gain!

Everyone - not just parents - has a stake in the success of public schools. When schools are strong and students are successful, everyone in the community benefits.

- ❖ Good schools are good business. They attract employers, strengthen the local economy, and enhance property values.
- ❖ Good schools ensure our students will be prepared to keep our nation competitive in a global economy.
- ❖ Good schools keep the American Dream alive with an opportunity for every child to receive a world-class education.
- ❖ Good schools keep the quality of life in a community high by producing citizens who pay taxes and obey the law.
- ❖ Good schools teach students from all backgrounds how to live and participate in our democracy.

Voting in a school board election is an investment in the future of all children, of your community, and of the nation.



### Vermont School Boards Association

2 Prospect Street, Suite 4, Montpelier VT 05602  
802-223-3580 phone 802-223-0098 fax  
800-244-8722 toll-free [www.vtvsba.org](http://www.vtvsba.org)

Information and assistance provided by  
**The Center for Public Education**  
[www.centerforpubliceducation.org](http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org)



# Thinking About Serving on Your School Board?

- For your children
- For your taxpayers
- For the future of Vermont

## The Power of Local Ownership of Education

Vermont prides itself on local ownership of education. The voters in each local district elect a school board to serve as trustees on their behalf—both to assure high quality education and to assure that voters receive an excellent return on investment.

School boards create the vision for education, establish policy parameters for the district, hire a superintendent, create the budget for presentation to voters, and monitor key performance indicators regarding student performance, district operations, and finances. Board members engage the community around education issues. Put simply—the board sets the direction, hires competent administrators to manage the education system, and then provides consistent oversight to assure high performance and accountability.

These are exciting and challenging times for the approximately 1,500 public school board members in Vermont. Schools are being asked to provide solutions to increasingly difficult problems, many of them driven by the difficult national economy, social problems, and by the trends in reduced student enrollment. At the same time, we have unprecedented opportunity for improvement, particularly with the emergence of technology. The need for creative, focused, results-oriented board members has never been more critical.

The members and staff of the Vermont School Boards Association encourage you to consider serving on your local school board during this important time.



## The Right Person Makes a Difference

What qualities, skills, and experience should you look for in a school board candidate? Here are some questions to consider:

- ◆ What are the candidate's vision and goals for high academic achievement for all students?
- ◆ Does the candidate understand that the school board's role is about the big picture - setting the direction for the district and providing oversight and accountability -- rather than day-to-day management?
- ◆ Does the candidate focus on one issue or discuss a broad range of school district concerns?
- ◆ Does the candidate's approach make it likely that he or she will be able to work effectively with the rest of the board to get things done?
- ◆ Will the candidate enhance the mix of skills and backgrounds on the board and help represent the diversity of the community?
- ◆ Does the candidate have the commitment to do what is right for citizens and taxpayers, even in the face of opposition?

## Qualifications for School Board Membership

In Vermont, there are very few qualifications for school board membership. A board member should be willing to serve and must be a legal voter in the school district.

Vermont law actually provides more criteria for ineligibility for the office of local school board members than it does for eligibility. A person is ineligible to hold the office of school board member if the individual is:

- ✘ Under the age of 18.
- ✘ Not a resident in the school district in which the individual is seeking office.
- ✘ A resident of an unorganized town, grant or gore.
- ✘ Regularly employed by the school district he or she serves or by a school district within the supervisory union.
- ✘ The holder of a simultaneous position as an auditor, first constable, collector of taxes, town treasurer, town agent or town manager..
- ✘ The spouse of school board member may not be the town auditor.

Potential candidates should also consider the ethical and legal limitations placed on school board members who might do business with the local schools through contracts for goods or services. Board members are not prohibited from contracting with their own school districts, provided a legal bidding process is followed, but they may not be involved in the decision-making process related to any contract in which they have personal interests.