

PROVIDENCE SCHOOL BOARD JOB DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY

The Providence School Board is the governing body responsible for ensuring that the Providence Public School District provides a high-quality education for all Providence students. The School Board is not an administrative or day-to-day operations body, but instead governs by establishing policy to guide the Superintendent in the administration and operation of the schools. This is achieved by monitoring progress toward achieving direct goals, and by engaging the community in planning for and supporting schools. The individual Board member works with the Board as a whole and collaboratively with the Superintendent to accomplish the district's mission.

PRINCIPLES FOR SCHOOL BOARDS

In the public education system, a School Board member is a person elected or appointed to serve on a school district board of education. Individual Board members bring unique skills, values, and beliefs to their Board. As the corporate entity charged by law with governing a school district, each School Board sits in trust for its entire community. The obligation to govern effectively imposes some fundamental duties on the Board. In order for the School Board and Superintendent to govern effectively, individual members must work and learn with each other and the Superintendent in a collaborative manner to ensure that high quality education is provided to each student. Each School Board member understands that the authority rests with the School Board as a whole and not with individual Board members. The School Board has the overarching responsibility for ensuring that every student reaches established learning standards. In order to this, the School Board must:

- Adopt policies to assess, monitor, and promote student performance in accordance with local and state standards.
- Direct and oversee long-range planning of the educational program and facilities, keeping the focus on high student achievement.

Engage the community in establishing the mission of the public schools, establish policies under which the school district will function, and adopt goals designed to achieve the mission of the school district.

- Hire an outstanding educational leader as the Superintendent of schools, hold that person accountable for high student achievement and for the efficient operation of the school system, provide appropriate support for the Superintendent, and periodically evaluate the Superintendent's leadership.

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- Approve a budget, and secure the financial support necessary to achieve the mission. Periodically review financial statements provided by the Superintendent and ascertain that the Board's spending plan is being properly implemented.
- Approve negotiated collective bargaining agreements and other contracts in accordance with School Board policy.
- Understand the distinction between Board and staff roles and, by policy, delegate **all** management and administrative functions, including personnel functions, to the Superintendent.
- Communicate district needs to local voters and local, state and federal elected officials.
- Select as Board president (chairperson) a Board member who demonstrates essential leadership qualities to preside at Board meetings, work closely with the Superintendent to establish meeting agendas, and be an articulate spokesperson for the Board. The person the Board elects as its president is key to what the Board accomplishes and to the nature of the relationship between the Superintendent and Board members.
- Evaluate its own performance and periodically take part in workshops with the Superintendent, aimed at strengthening their collaborative leadership for high student achievement.
- Come to meetings prepared with a thorough knowledge of all pending items before the Board.

In the process of meeting the above responsibilities, the School Board will focus its meetings and other activities on improving student achievement.

OTHER INFORMATION

School Boards govern within a complex environment shaped by the current national focus on improving student achievement and constrained by Federal and State laws and regulations, often limited resources, and sometimes competing demands from community members and various constituencies. The Providence School Board exercises its authority as a whole and does not advance individual or constituent agendas. The Board actively seeks to represent the entire community and is responsive to community expectations but resists pressure from groups seeking to advance a position inconsistent with the good of the school district as a whole. Individual School Board members debate issues, but once policy has been adopted, the Board speaks with one voice through policies adopted. Board members adhere to the highest ethical standards, including but not limited to those defined in state law, city codes of ethics, and adopted Board codes of ethics. Board members receive a modest annual stipend.

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TIME COMMITMENTS

Regular School Board meetings are held on the second and fourth Mondays of each month from 5:30 P.M. to approximately 9:30 P.M. Meetings consist of an “open session” (for public observation) and a closed “executive session”; meeting agendas are posted on the Providence School District website (<http://providenceschools.org>). In addition, special meetings are scheduled as necessary for personnel grievances and disciplinary matters of litigation. Board members also visit schools and attend various special events such as award ceremonies, graduations, conferences, seminars, etc. This averages approximately four meetings per month.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Must be a resident of the City of Providence and a qualified elector of the city. May not hold other paid office or employment in the city. May not have a direct or indirect financial interest in any contract concerning the public schools.
- Demonstrated ability to exercise a leadership and governance role, collaborate with the Superintendent as the district’s chief executive officer, and delegate responsibility for the administration of the schools to the Superintendent.
- Knowledgeable about current issues and best practices in education in an urban school system, including all current and proposed local, state and federal legislation, as well as current research and policy initiatives across the country.
- Knowledgeable about current challenges and plans for Providence schools.
- Demonstrated knowledge of and experience in strategic planning, policy development, principles of Board governance, and financial oversight. Demonstrated understanding of the Board’s role as a policy-making and governance body.
- Excellent analytical skills; demonstrated ability to base decisions on research and data; active learner.
- Experience working collaboratively within a group.
- Understanding of the importance of working with diverse constituents to develop a common vision.
- Commitment to public service and public education.

Note: Portions of the job description were adopted in part from the New England School Development Council.