




West Chester Area School District

OUR MISSION IS TO EDUCATE AND INSPIRE OUR STUDENTS
TO ACHIEVE THEIR PERSONAL BEST



School Board 101

January 13, 2021

- 
- **Provide our community with information regarding the school board**
 - **Present how to run for school board**
 - **Provide insights into the role of a school board member**
 - **Answer any questions that may arise**



School Board 101 Agenda

- **Overview and Introduction** **Dr. Jim Scanlon**-Superintendent
West Chester Area School District
- **Role of a school board member** **Brianna Crowley**-Senior Director of
Education & Training, PA School Boards Assn.
- **What do I need to do to get my name on the ballot?** **Alexis Barsamian**-Assistant Director
Chester County Voter Services
- **Questions**



Quick facts About WCASD

- **WCASD educates nearly 12,000 public school students in 16 schools**
- **75 square miles in eight municipalities**
- **11th largest district in Pennsylvania out of 500 districts.**
- **Over 1,440 employees**
- **\$270 million budget in 2021**
- **Property tax millage rates remain one of the lowest in Chester County**
- **Provides service to over 3,300 non-public school students**
- **Transports to 143 different schools**



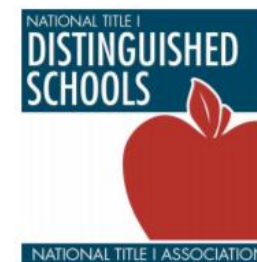
Points of Pride



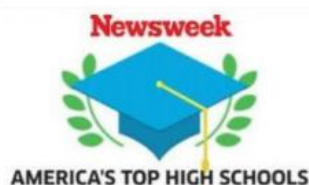
East, Henderson, & Rustin High Schools are consistently ranked among the top public schools in the nation according to U.S. News & World Report.



WCASD is considered a top-rated school district according to Niche.com and Schooldigger.com users.



Multiple WCASD elementary schools recognized for having superior, federally-funded school programs.



Newsweek ranks East, Henderson, & Rustin High Schools among the top high schools locally, regionally, and nationally.



Multiple recognitions as a Best Communities for Music Education by the National Association of Music Merchants Foundation.



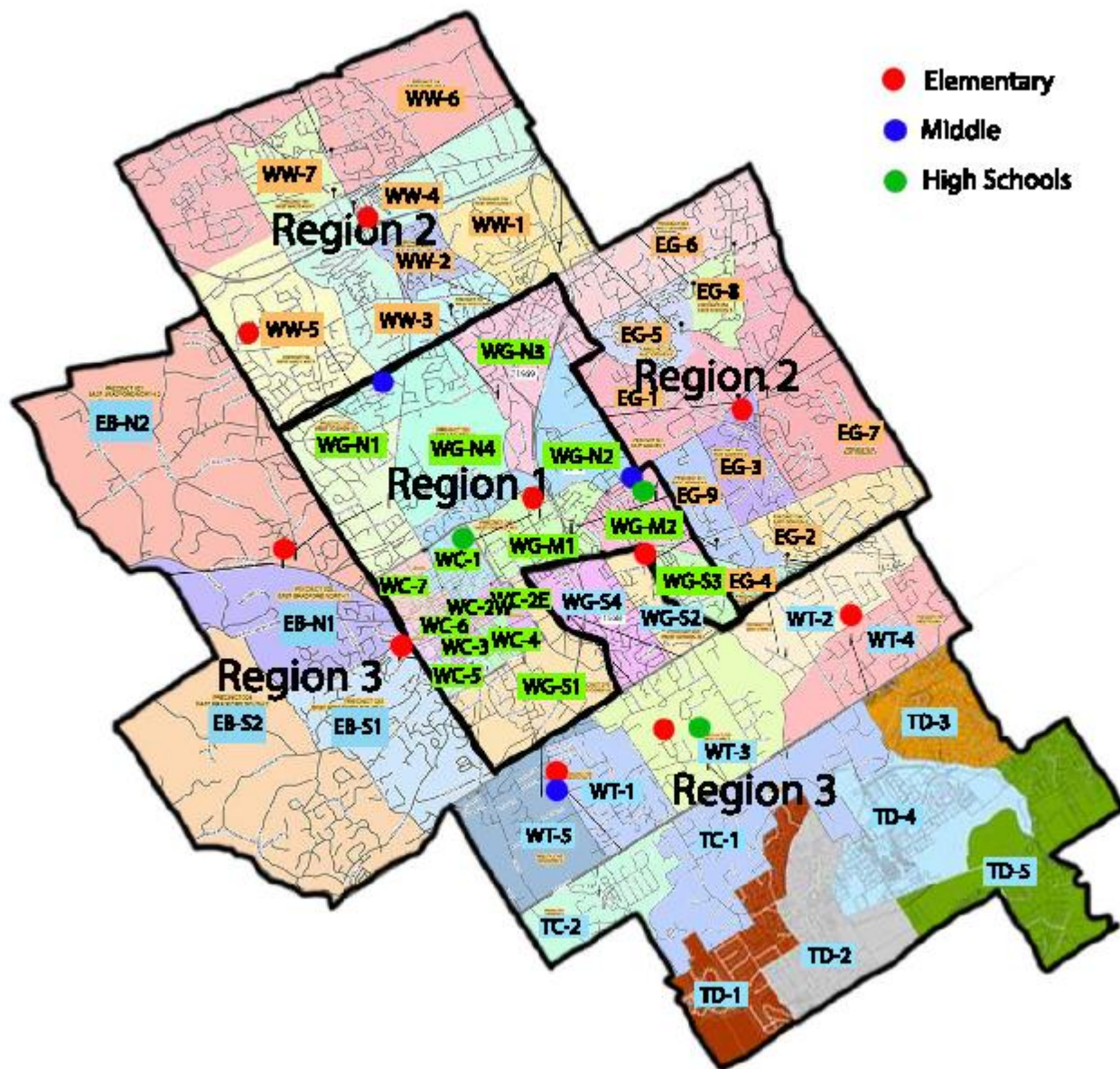
WCASD schools have been awarded the U.S. Department of Education's coveted National Blue Ribbon Award multiple times.



School Board Directors are now elected by Region



- **In January 2014, the school board formed a task force to study the feasibility of changing elections from at-large to a 3-region basis.**
- **The committee recommended the change and the board approved a resolution in April 2014.**
- **The board was tasked with establishing three fixed regional boundaries based on population as well as being compatible with election districts.**
- **The boundaries were established and approved by the board of elections.**
- **The first election by region took place in May 2015.**





Board and Superintendent Communication



- **serve on the following committees: Education, Pupil Services, Personnel and Property & Finance.**
- **attend at least one committee meeting and a board meeting monthly.**
- **meetings take place on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Monday of the month.**
- **provided with weekly packets to review and prepare for each meeting.**
- **School Board Directors have authority as a unit. Individual board members have no authority to speak for the board unless the school board gives permission to do so.**

WC

Thank you for your interest!



PSBA supports, educates, and advocates on behalf of school boards.



Our Vision

Informed, engaged,
and passionate
school board
directors leading and
advocating effectively
for great public
education across
Pennsylvania.



Our Mission

To provide school board
directors with services,
support, and counsel as
they navigate
relationships, lead their
districts, and promote
public education across
Pennsylvania.



Our Approach

To meet the ever-changing
needs of our members and
react in a timely manner to
legislative, policy and
educational issues, we must
expect our organization,
staff and leadership to
constantly evaluate and re-
align our focus and efforts.



PSBA

Pennsylvania School Boards Association

The Role and Responsibilities of the School Board

An Introduction



Key concepts of board service

1

The school board governs the district while the superintendent and administration manage it.

2

A successful school board is more than a group, it is a team.

3

The superintendent is part of the team as the 10th non-voting member.

4

Power and authority is granted to the full board acting as the district's governing body.

5

Most board work and all decision making is performed at meetings open to the public.

6

The ***Principles for Governance and Leadership*** model is the framework for successful school boards across PA

What does a school board do exactly?



Common Misconceptions

~~Individual directors can make decisions for the district.~~

The board operates as a collective authority making specific influential decisions determined by a majority vote at a public board meeting.



Common Misconceptions

~~School board service is mostly attending 2 meetings a month.~~

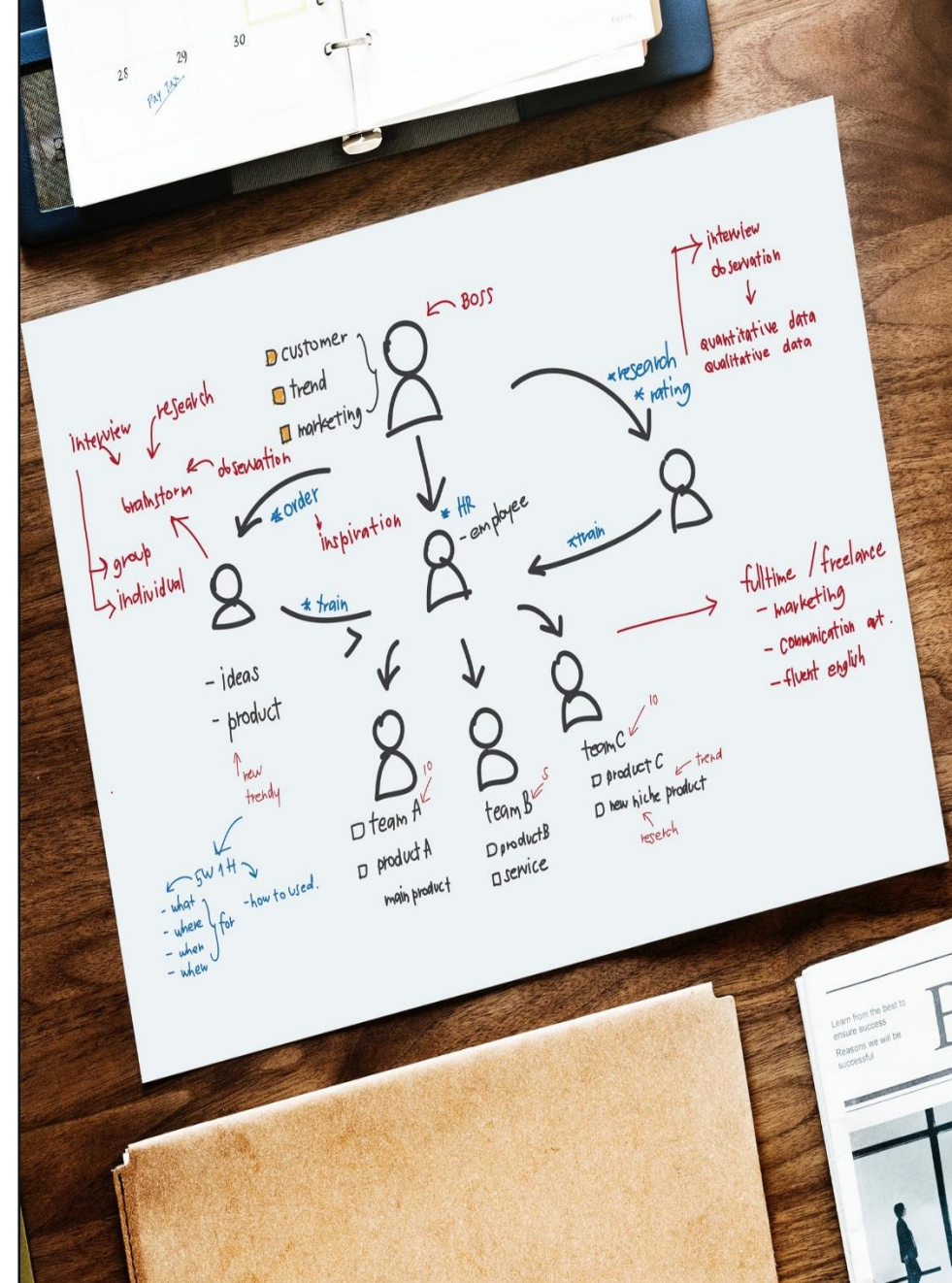
PSBA's last board operations survey indicated the average time invested in school board service was 20 hours per month.



Common Misconceptions

~~The school board evaluates
& directs district personnel.~~

The board evaluates the superintendent annually and the superintendent is responsible for directing all district staff and implementing board policy.



Do I need training to run for or serve on a school board?

No training or experience is required to run for the school board.

PA General Assembly requires training for both newly and re-elected school directors.

5 hours for newly elected

3 hours for re-elected

Includes an hour on trauma-informed education

Completed within the first year of term



I deeply care about _____. How do I impact that issue while on the school board?

Running on a single issue can be effective in a campaign; however, it is not representative of your impact in the role of school director.

Have a set of priorities, experiences, or values that guide your candidacy and align with the impact and role of school board governance.



Essentials

OF SCHOOL BOARD SERVICE

A Guide to Surviving Your First Year



**“School boards do not run the district;
they ensure the district is run well.”**

PSBA's *Essentials for School Board Service*, 2019





The law conveys authority through the board acting as a governing body making **collective decisions.**



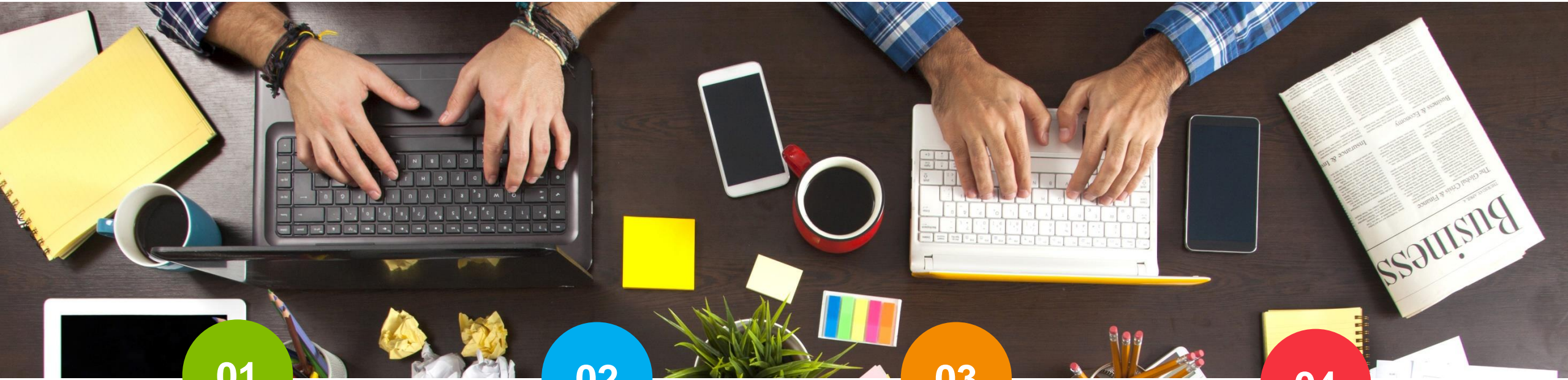
”

While meetings are open to the public and the public is invited to provide comment, a board meeting is a meeting of the board **in public**, not a meeting of the board **with the public**.

*Essentials of School Board
Service
PSBA*

Effective School Board Service





01

Commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction. Define clear goals toward that vision

02

Strong shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students and of the system's ability to teach all children to high levels

03

Accountability driven, spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement

04

Collaborative relationship with district administration and the community, establishing a strong communications structure to inform and engage stakeholders

Eight Characteristics of an Effective School Board

Center for Public Education, National School Boards Association



05

Data savvy, embracing and monitoring data even when the information is negative, using it to drive continuous improvement

06

Align and sustain resources, such as professional development, to meet district goals.

07

Lead as a united team with the superintendent, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust.

08

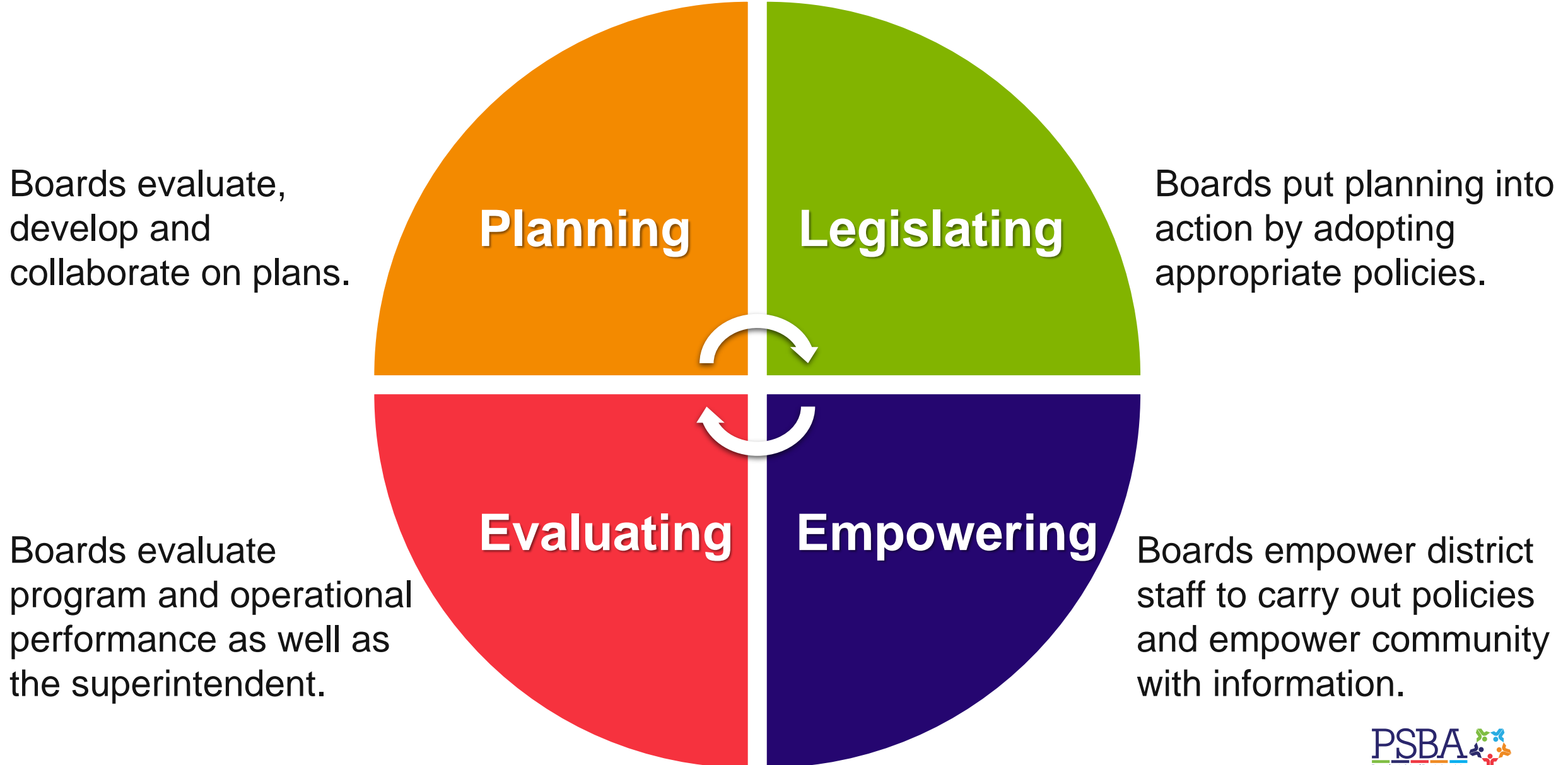
Take part in team development and training to build shared knowledge values and commitments for their improvement efforts.

Eight Characteristics of an Effective School Board

| | |
|---|--|
|  Advocate Earnestly <small>ADVOCACY</small> | <p>Promote public education as a keystone of democracy</p> <p>Engage the community by seeking input, building support networks, and generating action</p> <p>Champion public education by engaging members of local, state and federal legislative bodies</p> |
|  Lead Responsibly <small>LEADERSHIP</small> | <p>Prepare for, attend and actively participate in board meetings</p> <p>Work together in a spirit of harmony, respect and cooperation</p> <p>Participate in professional development, training and board retreats</p> <p>Collaborate with the Superintendent as the Team of 10</p> |
|  Govern Effectively <small>GOVERNANCE</small> | <p>Adhere to an established set of rules and procedures for board operations</p> <p>Develop, adopt, revise and review policy</p> <p>Align decisions to policy</p> <p>Differentiate between governance and management, delegating management tasks to administration</p> <p>Allocate finances and resources</p> <p>Ensure compliance with local, state and federal laws</p> |
|  Plan Thoughtfully <small>PLANNING</small> | <p>Adopt and implement a collaborative comprehensive planning process, including regular reviews</p> <p>Set annual goals that are aligned with the comprehensive plan</p> <p>Develop a financial plan that anticipates both short and long-term needs</p> <p>Formulate a master facilities plan conducive to teaching and learning</p> |
|  Evaluate Continuously <small>EVALUATION</small> | <p>Utilize appropriate data to make informed decisions</p> <p>Use effective practices for the evaluation of the superintendent</p> <p>Assess student growth and achievement</p> <p>Review effectiveness of the comprehensive plan</p> |
|  Communicate Clearly <small>COMMUNICATION</small> | <p>Promote open, honest and respectful dialogue among the board, staff and community</p> <p>Encourage input and support for the district from the school community</p> <p>Protect confidentiality</p> <p>Honor the sanctity of executive session</p> |
|  Act Ethically <small>ETHICS</small> | <p>Never use the position for improper benefit to self or others</p> <p>Act to avoid actual or perceived conflicts of interest</p> <p>Recognize the absence of authority outside of the collective board</p> <p>Respect the role, authority and input of the superintendent</p> <p>Balance the responsibility to provide educational programs with being stewards of community resources</p> <p>Abide by the majority decision</p> |

Principles for Governance & Leadership

The Governance Loop





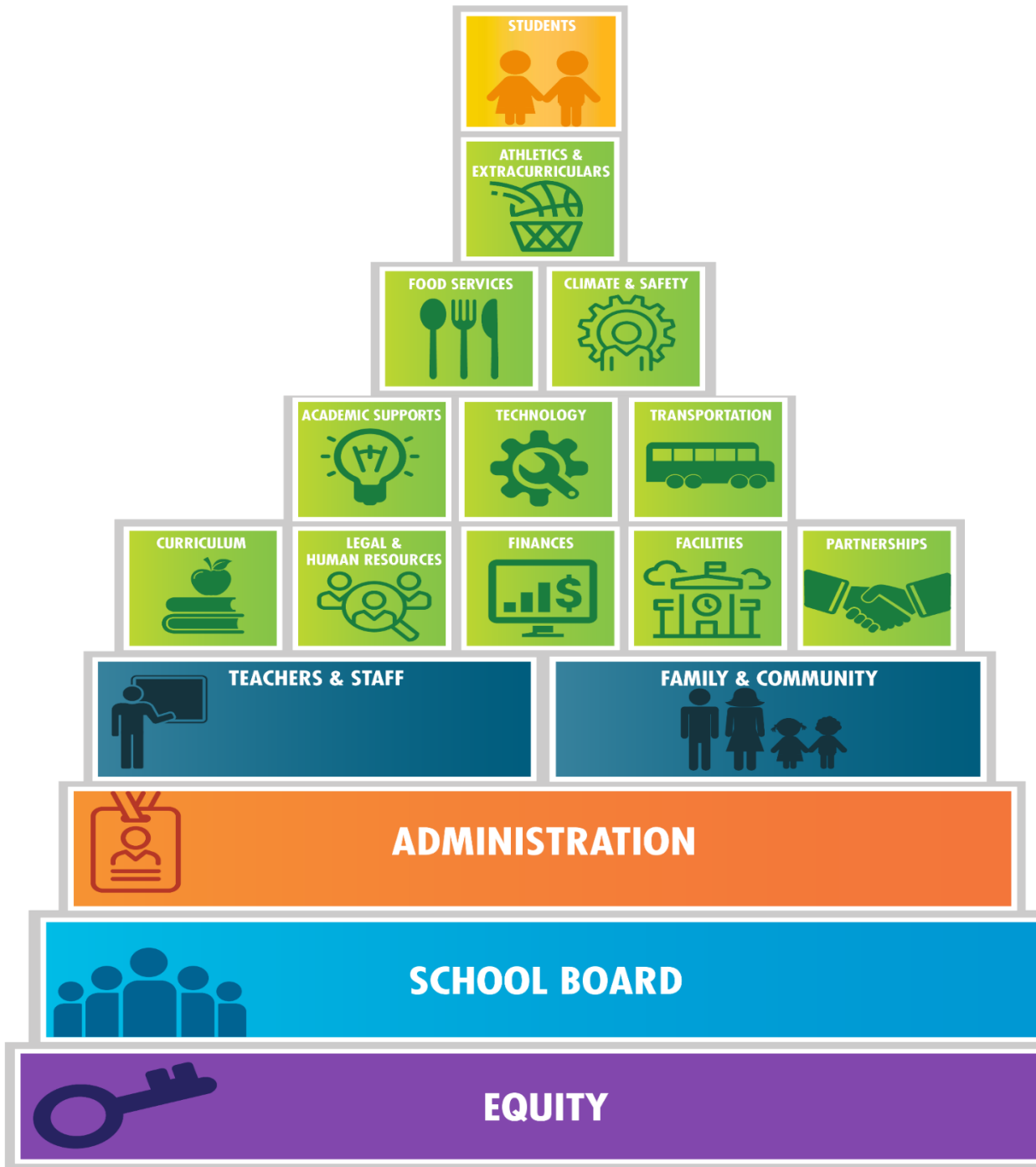
To understand the role of the school board, focus on the verbs...

- Approves
- Adopts
- Communicates
- Evaluates (data/progress)
- Establishes



Equity is...

The just and fair distribution of resources based on each student's needs. Equitable resources include funding, programs, policies, initiatives, and supports that target each student's unique background and school context to guarantee that all students have equal access to a high-quality education.



PSBA's Equity Toolkit

Supporting districts toward equity as the foundation.

State & Local Advocacy

Influence legislation and shape the public debate on key education issues

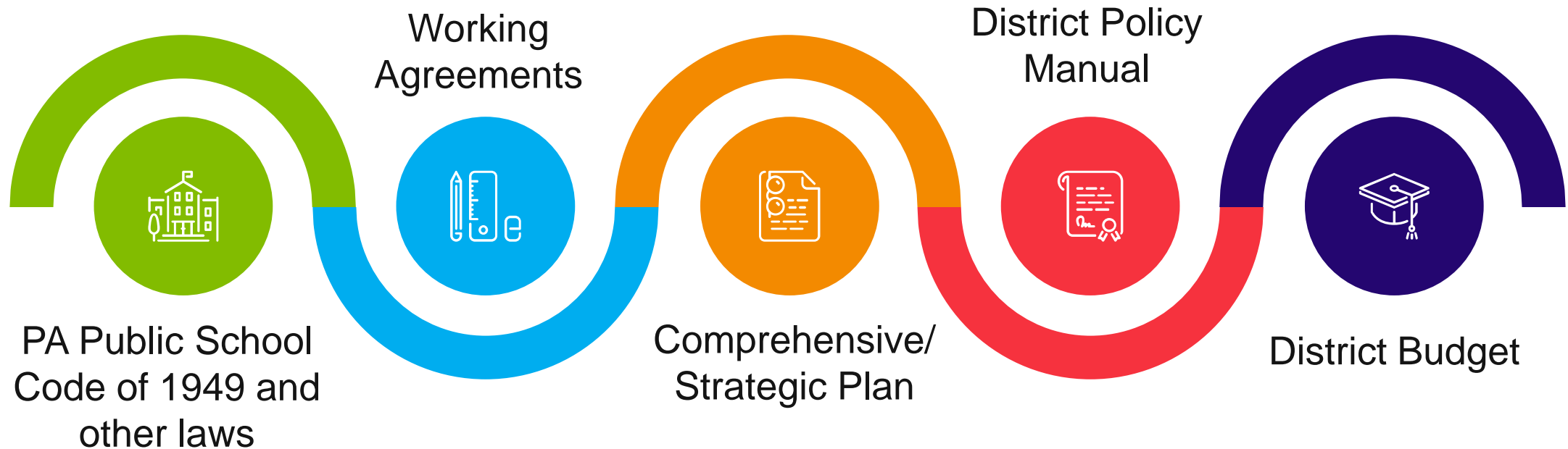
Be effective advocates by developing relationships with legislators and keeping important issues at the forefront throughout the year



How can I prepare to serve on the school board?



Governance Documents, Foundational Guides



****Board Meeting recordings and/or posted minutes****
Posted/Adopted Board Goals

How to be an Effective School Director

01

Be a team player

Approach school board service with a team mentality.

02

Be prepared

Understand the time commitment you have made and do the work.

03

Follow the procedures

Your board has processes and procedures for how it operates. Know them. Follow them.

04

Be fair and objective

Focus on what is best for ALL students in the district.

05

Connect decisions

Use the district's foundational statements and goals to guide your work.

06

No surprises

Provide each other the opportunity to arrive prepared for the conversation.

07

Support the board

You may not always vote in the majority, but you must forward in order to govern.

08

Be professional

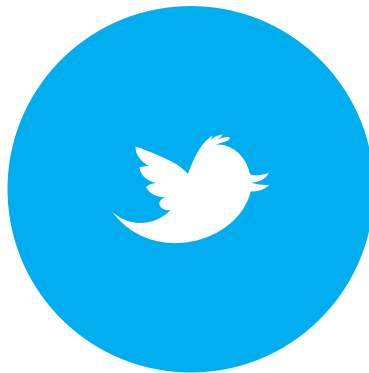
This may not be your place of employment, but it is for many.

How can you stay in touch with PSBA resources and information?



@PaSchoolBoards

Live Events



@PSBA

Advocacy
Updates



@paschoolboards

Member
Engagement



@PSBAvideo

Video Edition



**Pennsylvania
School Boards
Association**



2021

**RUNNING FOR SCHOOL
DIRECTOR**

What we'll cover:

- The election cycle calendar
- Petitions, Filing Fees, Cross-filing
- Statement of Financial Interest
- Campaign Finance Reports

2021 Election calendar



Pay attention to dates for:

- ▶ filing petitions and reports
 - ▶ <https://www.dos.pa.gov/VotingElections/CandidatesCommittees/CampaignFinance/Pages/default.aspx>
 - ▶ <https://www.votespa.com/About-Elections/Pages/Election-Calendar.aspx>
- ▶ Voter registration Deadline: 5/03/2021
- ▶ Absentee and mail-in ballots:
 - ▶ Last Day to Apply 5/11/2021
 - ▶ Voted Ballots must be received to Voter Services by: 5/18/2021 8pm

How to file nomination petitions

- In late January 2021 we expect to have online petitions available on the Chester County Voter Services website <http://www.chesco.org/elections> or you may pick them up in our office
- Voter Services does not mail petitions
- Complete the top section of each petition in full prior to circulating
- Collect signatures ONLY between Feb 16, 2021 to March 09, 2021

Who can sign your petition?

Every signer must be:

- registered voter
- resident of the candidate's political district
- same political party as the candidate (or the same as the petition if cross-filing)

Each signer may sign petitions only for as many candidates for each office as they are permitted to vote for

Example: If 4 Republicans are running for 2 School Director seats, a registered Republican voter can sign 2 petitions.

Tips for petitions

- ▶ Avoid nicknames.
- ▶ Do not allow signers to use ditto marks or white out – get a complete address for EACH signer.
- ▶ Ensure correct date of signing notated
- ▶ Ensure back of petition is completed correctly and in full

How to avoid petition pitfalls

- ▶ Obtain more than the required number of signatures
- ▶ Make sure each signers name is legible
- ▶ Make sure all signers are registered voters in your party (or on the correct petition if cross-filing)
- ▶ File ALL required forms timely and make sure they are notarized.
- ▶ If printing petition from website it **MUST** be double sided & printed in the proper sizing format

Signature and filing fee requirements:

Minimum 10 valid signatures for School Director

- ***Protect your candidacy: get more signatures than required!***

No filing fee required

Cross-filing

Who can cross-file?

Magisterial District Judges and School Directors

How do I cross-file?

Circulate and file two separate petitions - one for each political party.

Can I circulate both petitions?

Magisterial District Judges: YES

School Directors: NO, only the petition for your political party. **Someone from the other party must collect signatures on the other party's petition.**

Cross-filing (continued)

How many signatures do I need?

You need the minimum required signatures on each party's petition.

Example: School Director requires a minimum of 10 signatures on Republican petition and 10 signatures on Democratic petition = 20 signatures.

Independents and 3rd party candidates

- ▶ Cannot run in the primary
- ▶ File nomination papers instead of petition (forms available after March 10, 2021)
- ▶ Signatures valid from March 10 – August 2
- ▶ Number of signatures needed
 - ▶ 2% of the largest entire vote count in the last municipal election for any officer in that election district
 - ▶ Check with Voter Services
- ▶ All other requirements apply

Statement Of Financial Interest – what is it?

- Administered by the State Ethics Commission
- Used to disclose any potential conflicts of interest
- Filed annually by all candidates, elected officials and appointed officials
- Statements of Financial Interest are public information
- Personal financial information is usually not required

How to file a Statement of Financial Interest

- ▶ File the form where you are seeking office (e.g. township office, borough hall, school administration office) on or before the last day for filing a petition.
- ▶ A copy of the form must also be appended to the nomination petition, or your name will not be put on the ballot.
- ▶ Be sure to complete all blocks and sign the form.
 - ▶ The completed form must be printed and submitted, no online submissions will be accepted.
- ▶ Questions regarding the Financial statement please refer to the State Ethics Commission **1-800-932-0936**

Campaign finance reporting

Are you required to file?

- ▶ If you intend to raise funds or have a political committee to raise funds
- ▶ **And** you plan to raise over \$250 in a reporting period

4 reporting periods for candidates/committees

- ▶ May, June, October and December

Penalties for overdue reports

- ▶ Range from \$20 for first day to maximum \$250

Filing a waiver from reporting

You may file a waiver if:

- ▶ you do not intend to form a political committee
- ▶ you do not plan to receive contributions over \$250 during a reporting period
- ▶ you do not plan to spend over \$250 during a reporting period

Complete the "Waiver of Expense Account Reporting Affidavit" on the petition and have it notarized

A tip about waivers

If you sign the "Waiver of Expense" and find that you have spent or received more than \$250 for any of the reporting periods, then you are responsible for filing a Campaign Expense Report for that period.

If you don't sign the waiver, you must file a report for each period.

TIP: sign the waiver and only report if necessary.