

BOARD MEMBER AUTHORITY  
(And DUTIES)

A good Board member:

1. Is legally a board member only when the board of education is in session. No one person, unless authorized, should speak on behalf of the board.
2. Avoids administrative decisions or attempts to second-guess the administration. The superintendent is the chief administrator and the Board has no administrative function.
3. Is well acquainted with school policies.
4. Should vote at all times in the best interest of the children of the school district.
5. Is flexible and realizes there are times when changes must be made, when changes must be made, when tradition cannot be honored, and when pressure must be ignored.
6. Remembers that board business at times requires confidentiality, especially in processes involving personnel, land acquisition, negotiations, and the need for security.
7. Is interested in obtaining facts, but remembers also that the administration has the responsibility for operating the schools rather than spending full time making reports to the board or an individual board member.
8. Is a good listener at board meetings, on the street corner, in the church, but never commits himself/herself, the Board, or the administration.
9. Knows that the reputation of the entire school district is reflected in his/her behavior and attitude.
10. Has a sense of humor and the ability to laugh at him/her when things look bleak.
11. Is able to sift fact from fiction, to sort out rumors from realism and to know the difference. A gullible board member is ineffective.
12. Is able to support a decision when it is made.

SOURCE: Boardmanship: A Handbook for School Board Members  
Published by Ohio Department of Education and Ohio School  
Boards Association, 1984 edition