

Observer Corps LWVOA School Boards In Action

Deb Macon – Joined LWV in 1982

- Former: President, LWV West Bloomfield-Farmington Area
- Former: VP Membership, LWV Michigan – twice
- Former: National Board Member, LWV United States
- Bloomfield Hills Schools Board Member 1991-1996
- Current: Consultant, Michigan Association of School Boards



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School Boards In Action

- What are they and what do they do?
- How do they operate?
- What are the laws and guidelines that influence their behavior?

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“The role of the Board of Education is not to run the schools, but to see that they are well run.”

**Michigan Association of School Boards
masb.org**

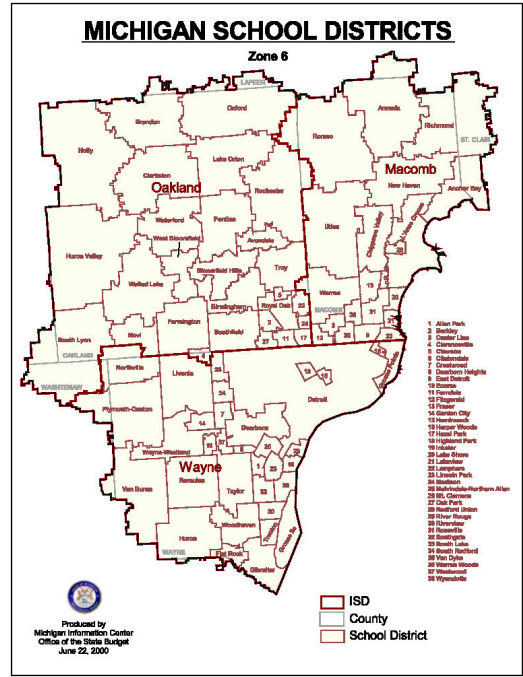
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29 School Boards in Oakland County

- There are 7 members on each local Board in Oakland County.
- There are 5 members on the Board at Oakland Schools, the Intermediate School District.

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Oath of Office

"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the constitution of the United States and the constitution of this state, and that I will faithfully discharge the duties of office of member of the board of education of _____ (School District) _____ according to *the best of my ability.*"

What are the most prominent Michigan laws that direct School Board actions and accountability?

 **The Revised School Code**

Act 451 of 1976

 **The State School Aid Act of 1979**

 **Open Meetings Act**

Act 267 of 1976

Role of the Superintendent & Role of the Board

RESPONSIBLE FOR DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS

- **Goal Setting:** Advises & assists
- **Policy:** Advise
- **Superintendent Responsibilities:**
Manages day to day operations
- **Budget:** Develops draft
- **Curriculum:** Recommends
- **Staffing & Appraisal:** Recommends
- **Facilities:** Analyzes, interprets needs
- **Board Self Assessment:** Facilitates

RESPONSIBLE FOR LEADING AT THE 50,000-FOOT LEVEL

- **Goal Setting:** Adopts
- **Policy:** Adopts
- **Superintendent Responsibilities:**
Hires & evaluates 1 employee, the Superintendent
- **Budget:** Approves
- **Curriculum:** Approves
- **Staffing & Appraisal:** Adopts
- **Facilities:** Determines needs
- **Board Self Assessment:** Assesses own performance

Role of the Superintendent & Role of the Board

The School Superintendent is responsible for leading the District's Day-To-Day Operations.

The seven-member Board of Education is responsible for leading at the 50,000-foot level.

Together, the seven members of the Board of Education and the Superintendent are the Governance Team. Sometimes this Team of 8 may be referred to as the Board Leadership Team.

What do effective Boards do*?



Effective school boards commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and define clear goals toward that vision.



Effective school boards are accountability driven, spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement.



Effective school boards have strong shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students and their ability to learn, and of the system and its ability to teach all children at high levels.



Effective school boards have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community and establish a strong communications structure to inform and engage both internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals.

* **What does the research say?**
See last slide.

What do effective Boards do*?



Effective boards are **data savvy**; they embrace and monitor data, even when the information is negative, and use it to drive continuous improvement.



Effective school boards **align and sustain resources**, such as professional development, to meet district goals.



Effective school boards **lead as a united team** with the superintendent, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust.



Effective school boards **take part in team development and training**, sometimes with their superintendents, to build shared knowledge, values and commitments for their improvement efforts.

* **What does the research say?**
See last slide.

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How do School Boards Meet? The Open Meetings Act – OMA *



All meetings of a public body (i.e., school board) must be **open** to the public.



A “**meeting**” is defined as the convening of a public body at which a quorum is present for the purpose of deliberating toward or rendering a decision on a public policy.


- Each School Board must hold at least one Business Meeting each month.
- Other meetings may be called a Committee of the Whole, Workshop, Study Session, Work Session or Retreat.
- The Open Meetings Act is applicable to all meetings of the School Board.


* Also known as the Sunshine Law


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How do School Boards Meet?

 The Act does **not apply to a social or chance gathering or conference** where a quorum is present as long as the board members in attendance do not collectively discuss matters of public policy.

 An **advisory committee** composed of less than a quorum of the full board can also be a “public body” subject to the Act’s requirements.

 All decisions of a public body must be made at a meeting **open** to the public.

 All deliberations of a public body constituting a quorum of its members must take place at a meeting **open** to the public unless a closed meeting exception applies.

Unique to School Boards...

How many votes does it take to prevail?



ANSWER:

A minimum of 4 **ALWAYS!**

5 for certain votes to go into closed session.

Does the quorum ever change?



ANSWER:

On occasion, if a conflict of interest were to arise.

Are School Boards holding virtual meetings?



ANSWER:

While all Boards must meet in person by the Governor's order, some Boards live-stream meetings. Check the District's website for details.

What Board documents are available and where are they?



ANSWER:

Check the District website for minutes, agendas, bylaws, Board calendar and possibly the Board's Operations Manual or Handbook and Strategic Plan.

How do School Boards Meet?

Closed meeting exceptions to the open **DELIBERATIONS** requirement:

1. • Considering the dismissal, suspension, or disciplining of an employee or student if a closed meeting is requested by the employee or student;
2. • Hearing complaints or charges brought against an employee or school board member per his or her request for a closed meeting;
3. • Considering a periodic personnel evaluation of an employee if he or she requests a closed session;

How do School Boards Meet?

4. Conducting strategy and negotiation sessions connected with a collective bargaining agreement (does not cover individual contracts);
5. • Considering the purchase or lease of property;
6. • Consulting with legal counsel regarding pending litigation;
7. • Reviewing applications for employment or appointment when the applicant requests confidentiality; and
8. • Considering material exempt from discussion or disclosure by law.

How do School Boards Meet?

A public body cannot hold a meeting without first giving public notice of the meeting at its principal office.

Minutes must be kept of all meetings, whether open or closed, and regardless of whether the meeting is identified as a regular or special meeting, study session, committee of the whole, or by some other name.

Members of the public have the right to attend all open meetings and to address the board during the meeting's Public Comment, according to rules adopted by the board. **Public Comment is a monologue! Speakers are to address only the Board President.**

School Boards In Action - Additional Resources

- ✓ **OMA Guide – Secretary of State**
 - GOOGLE: Michigan Open Meetings Act Handbook
- ✓ **What makes School Boards effective? *What does the research say?***
 - GOOGLE: NSBA Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards
- ✓ **Michigan Association of School Boards**
 - <https://www.masb.org/getonboardmi>
- ✓ **Oakland Schools - the Intermediate School District**
 - <https://www.oakland.k12.mi.us/>
- ✓ **LWVOA List of Oakland County Local School Board Links**
 - <https://my.lwv.org/michigan/oakland-area/about/areas-we-serve#school-districts>
 - <https://www.troy.k12.mi.us/>