

The Hardest Lessons For New School Board Members:

Adapted from the Wyoming School Board Association

1. Learning to acknowledge publicly that you have no power and authority as an individual board member, that only the board as a whole can make policies and decisions for the school district.
2. Determining what your role and responsibility is on the board and how to accomplish it effectively.
3. Understanding, that no matter what you initially think you know about board service, you still have a lot to learn.
4. Realizing that the focus of all board decisions should be based on kids, and all of the kids, not just ones you may have a special interest in.
5. Recognizing the difference between setting policy (the board's job) and administering the schools (the superintendent's job).
6. Understanding that you must represent all students: your decisions must be made in the interest of the total school system, and not made solely for special groups or interests.
7. Learning how to respond to the complaints and concerns of citizens, school administrators, and other staff.
8. Recognizing that change comes slowly.
9. Knowing that you can't solve everyone's problems by yourself.
10. Realizing that sometimes you must accept a reality that is contrary to your own beliefs.
11. Agreeing that even when you hold the minority viewpoint on a given issue, you will publicly support the majority vote of the board.
12. Learning the correlation between board decisions and district finances.

Final Thoughts...

√ Relationships matter

√ Team building yields dividends

√ Developing governance skills takes time

√ Not on your own