



FIVE FAST FACTS

Helping new board members transition to your leadership team

New board members have so much to learn. In fact, veteran board members often say that it takes two or three years of service before they feel truly comfortable in the position. Here are five things continuing board members and administrators can do to orient new members.

1. Don't assume they know — or don't know — the basics.

Some new board members will have already memorized the district's website and may have attended some board meetings, while others will not have this background. Start with a personal meeting with the new board member, superintendent and board president to establish the baseline. Address basics such as their comfort with board meeting protocol (setting agendas, parliamentary procedure, public participation); their knowledge of the policy process; or their familiarity with the district's organizational chart.



2. Offer to set up introductory meetings.

Does the new board member know the curriculum director, principals, the athletic director, the superintendent's administrative assistant or other directors? These are the people who really get the work done, and much conversation will take place that will include their names and work agendas. New board members might appreciate a brief meeting with each of these key staff members.

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RESOURCES

OSBA New Board Member
Web page
[www.ohioschoolboards.org/
for-new-board-members](http://www.ohioschoolboards.org/for-new-board-members)

3. Provide resources that matter.

Make sure new board members understand the support available to them. Do they know about OSBA and the many resources available on its website? Do they know how they will receive their mail, email or other information? Do they know how and when to expect board meeting materials? Have they received copies of the policy manual or new board member materials?

4. Set up a grand tour.

Take the new board member (and perhaps his or her partner or spouse) on a grand tour of your district. Many new board members will appreciate the “back-stage” tour as it provides the context for future discussions. The bus parking area and garage, transportation dispatch area, kitchens and cafeterias, supply areas and football field press box are interesting visits for new board members now that they are “insiders.”

5. Be open and welcoming at board meetings.

Your board member may be new, but he or she was elected or appointed because you and others regarded their skills and abilities as important for your district. Don’t make the mistake of shutting them out. They may not understand where and when they should offer opinions, so prompt them when appropriate. Ask if they have thoughts or questions about the discussion topic. New board members will appreciate being included, and this inclusion will help bring them quickly up to speed.

New board members bring new ideas and energy to a district. Helping them have a positive impact from the start will benefit everyone. A good orientation program will mitigate much of the frustration new board members feel because they are new, uninformed or worried about doing a good job.



Ohio School Boards Association

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OSBA leads the way to educational excellence by serving Ohio's public school board members and the diverse districts they represent through superior service, unwavering advocacy and creative solutions.