

## Orientation of New School Board Members

### **Background:**

The work of school board members may be unique in our U.S. system of representative governance. Ninety percent of adults in this nation attended a public school, so many school board candidates feel somewhat familiar with how school boards may operate. However, reality is quite different as board members have a very defined role, particularly under Iowa law

New school board members need to learn about their roles and responsibilities in providing effective leadership for the community in fulfilling its vision and mission for quality education for all students.

### **IASB Training:**

The Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB) is an excellent source of support for new school board members. This year, their annual convention on Thursday, November 14, will contain an extensive array of training and orientation opportunities for new school board members.

During January and February, IASB will also be offering a series of regional workshops at locations across the state. The title of the workshops is "Leadership Essentials for School Boards." Their description of the workshop appears below:

"Being effective as a board member requires a strong understanding of board roles and responsibilities. It's impossible to do a job well if you don't know what the job is. This workshop will address fundamental duties of each board member in four core areas—all of which are front and center in the first months of the calendar year. It's a must for every new board member and a team builder for the entire board."

### **Local Orientation:**

Local school boards and their school administration should also take an active role in orienting newly elected school board members to the district and their role as members of the school board.

Accompanying this page are several documents offered and recommended by IASB as sources of conversation for new school board member orientation. Among those are the following:

- The Legal Authority of Iowa School Boards,
- Learning About the State of the District: A Guide to Help Orient New Board Members,
- Building Trust within the Board,
- Eight Traits of Effective School Boards, and
- School Board Code of Ethics.

### **Recommended Action:**

I recommend the board discuss ideas for orienting our new school board members in November.