Boards of Education

Local Boards of Education (BOEs), have authority over all public school matters in its district. The responsibilities of board members include, but are not limited to: employing the Superintendent, establishing policy, approving student assignment boundaries, and overseeing the management of the school district's major systems, including budget and finance, curriculum and instruction, personnel, and auxiliary services. Board members also set the mission and tone for the district, often focusing on preparing 'globally competitive students to be successful in the 21st century.'

Members

All BOEs are similar in makeup and authority. However, the size of the district's school-aged population may affect the number of at-large seats available, making rural Boards smaller than urban ones. Interested candidates are not required to possess any specific experience. Candidates must meet the following qualifications: be a registered voter, be a resident of the district they are interested in running for, have at least a high school diploma or equivalency, not have been convicted of a felony, and not be a current employee of the district.

Terms of Service

The terms of service for BOE members is four years. Members cannot serve two terms in succession. Newly elected members take their oath of office in December of the election year. BOE positions are paid and the salary is meant to support members in traveling to and attending meetings. Salaries vary widely by county, with Wake County's BOE compensation being on the higher end with Board members earning $17,000 per year plus expenses

Impact

With their ability to set the mission and tone of all of the schools within the district, BOEs are in a unique position to affect change at a very high level.

"Putting the right people in leadership roles is our most important achievement."
- Christine Kushner

Relevance to Food Councils

BOEs can set the directive for the focus of Child Nutrition Programs and for agricultural vocational training opportunities. BOEs can work to find additional funding to address student food and nutrition (including the purchase of local foods), farm to school activities, and waste recovery. For all of these reasons, food councils should build relationships with their BOE members, and get to know which programs and opportunities are being provided in your local school district to increase farm to school activities and to support child nutrition programs

Member Spotlight

Wake County Board of Education Member Christine Kushner highlighted her major accomplishments as her frequent school visits and her ability to hire exceptional leaders in two Superintendents and the new Director of the Child Nutrition Program.

Collaboration & Community

BOEs can participate in their communities in numerous ways, both as a governance board and as advocates for change in schools. Kushner noted that one of the top priorities of Wake's Board has been working with the local Interfaith Food Shuttle Backpack Buddies program to help provide students with meals on the weekends. In addition, the Board expanded the county's Free and Reduced Lunch Program to help the more than 1-in-3 food insecure students in Wake County.