

2012 School Board Elections

CANDIDATES GUIDE

A guide to the 2012 school board elections
Prepared by the Nova Scotia School Boards Association



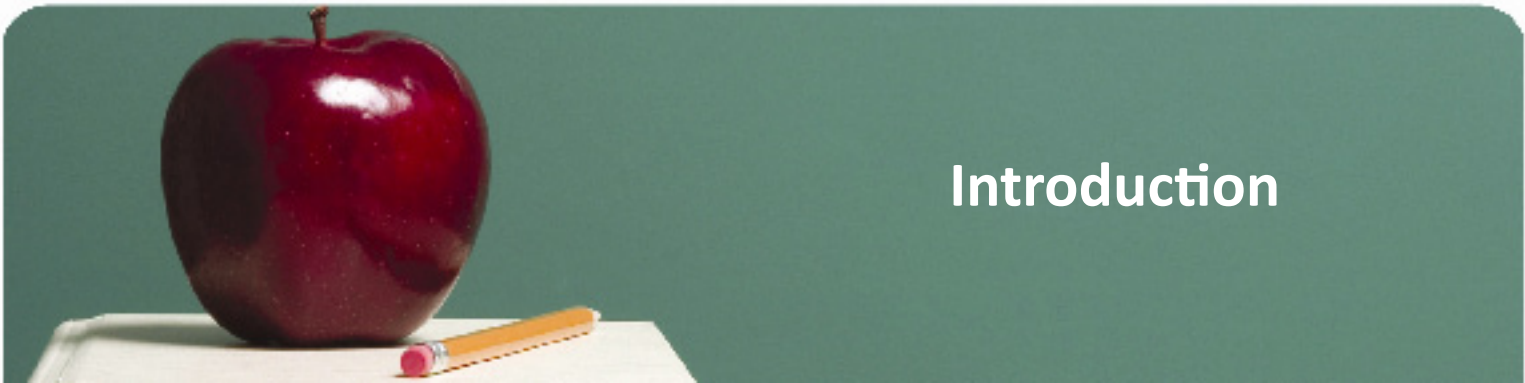
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Introduction

Are you thinking of becoming a school board member? It's one of the most rewarding ways to contribute to your community.

School boards in Canada have helped build a universally accessible, publicly-funded education system. They are the body through which parents and community can most directly influence decisions about schools and the education of children and youth.

The Nova Scotia School Boards Association (NSSBA) has compiled this school board elections information kit to assist individuals thinking about running for this year's school board election. Inside the kit you will find material prepared to help you during your campaign including qualifications, campaign tips, FAQs, role of boards and members, and important dates. The following information is also available at www.nssschoolboardelections.com.

You'll note some information in this document is hyperlinked, however if you choose to print it, here are the links you'll need to know:

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations elections information

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/election/>

Candidate's Guide to Municipal and School Board Elections

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/muns/manuals/pdf/msd-candidate-guide-to-municipal-elections.pdf>

Municipal Elections Act

<http://nslegislature.ca/legc/statutes/muncpel.htm>

School Board Website Addresses:

Annapolis Valley Regional School Board - www.avrsb.ca

Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board - www.cbv.ns.ca

Chignecto-Central Regional School Board - www.ccrsb.ednet.ns.ca

Conseil scolaire acadien provincial - www.csap.ednet.ns.ca

Halifax Regional School Board - www.hrsb.ns.ca

South Shore Regional School Board - www.srsb.ca

Strait Regional School Board - <http://srsb.ca>

Tri-County Regional School Board - <http://sharepoint.tcrsb.ca/default.aspx>



Becoming a board member

Things to consider:

Individuals who run for school board office have the potential to contribute a unique set of skills, values and experience to the school board. Critical questions for potential board members to ask themselves include:

- Do I have a sincere interest in public education?
- Do I want to make a difference in the lives of children and young people?
- Do I respect concerns of constituents?
- Do I appreciate the need for effective communication?
- Am I prepared to commit the significant time required to research issues and prepare for and attend meetings?
- Am I a team player?
- Do I demonstrate an interest in providing leadership?

Qualifications:

In order to run for school board (including African Nova Scotian members of the regional school board, and Conseil scolaire acadien provincial, or CSAP, you must:

- Be 18 years of age at the time of nomination
 - Be a Canadian citizen
 - Be a resident in the school region in which you are seeking office for six months prior to the nomination day (by March 11, 2012), and continue to so reside
 - Not have been disqualified under the [Municipal Elections Act](#).
- ⇒ The “school region” is the area over which a regional school board exercises jurisdiction. The jurisdiction (school region) of CSAP is the entire province.
- ⇒ You do not need to reside in the electoral district of the school board in which you wish to seek election, as long as you meet the residency requirement of six months in the school region.



Responsibility and Roles of Board Members

Key Responsibility:

Understand and reflect local community values and priorities for public schools in decision-making.

Key Roles:

Communicator: School board members maintain consistent communication with members of the community to address public education issues of local importance.

Planner: School board members develop plans to address student needs and to actively participate in the economic and social strength of local communities.

Policy maker: School board members help to create policies that outline expectations of board administration, teachers and students.

Supporter: School board members support parents, students and the community on education issues that affect our system.

Educator: School board members make important decisions that determine the direction and quality of public education.

Politician: School board members are elected democratically every four years to govern the local education system on behalf of the community.



Nominations

In order to run for school board elections, you will need nominations:

- The nomination deadline is September 11, 2012.
- A candidate is nominated for one office only, in writing, by at least five qualified voters.
- A nomination fee of \$200 maximum is required (unless reduced or eliminated by the local municipality).
- Nomination papers must be filed with the returning officer for the district in which you are running.
- Your deposit will be refunded if you a) remove all campaign signs within seven days of election, return all copies of voters list in your possession and sign an affidavit to that effect, and b) are elected or acclaimed, or receive half as many votes as the successful candidate.

African-Nova Scotian Representation

Nova Scotia school boards are required to have African-Nova Scotian representation on as stated in the Education Act, section on 42A (3). African-Nova Scotian school board members are to be elected by African-Nova Scotian electors in the candidate's district. The Act, section 42A (4b), also stipulates that an African-Nova Scotian can only be nominated for the school board elections by another African-Nova Scotian.

Mi'kmaq Representation

After consultations with the Mi'kmaq community and school boards, the Minister of Education may appoint a Mi'kmaq representative to each regional school board that has an agreement with a Mi'kmaq band council.

Francophone Representation

Candidates of the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) must be an entitled person, which is one whose first language learned and still understood is French; or one who received Canadian primary school instruction in a French first-language program; or who is the parent of a child who is receiving/received Canadian primary or secondary school instruction in a French first language program.

For detailed information on nominations, contributions and obtaining an agent, visit the [Candidate's Guide to Municipal and School Board Elections](#).



Tips for Successful Campaigns

Here are some tips for running your campaign:

- Organize a “team of friends” or supporters who will help you spread the word.
- Speak informally whenever possible to members of your community about why you wish to run for school board elections and why they should vote for you.
- Book speaking engagements at the local Chamber of Commerce or other business meetings in your area.
- Use social media. Share information on Twitter and start a Facebook group or event specifically for your campaign. Encourage friends and colleagues to share.
- Reach out to the local media and encourage them to interview you. There are many local reporters using social media as well, you can send them a tweet!
- Conduct a telephone campaign – members of your “team of friends” could call with a standard script.
- Place a paid advertisement in your local or community newspaper.
- Develop a brochure or information card that speaks to your strengths and why you are interested in representing your local school district. Go door to door.
- Place signs around your community.


NOTE: When printing election brochures, signage or other print materials, be sure you’re adhering to the guidelines laid out through [Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations](#).

Campaign Costs:

Through the use of social media, it is possible to conduct a cost-effective campaign, but it is important to remember not everyone is “online”. The most significant costs will be for creating campaign materials and for paid advertisements. You should wait until it’s confirmed that another candidate is running in your school board district before determining what and how much material you will print.

You should estimate \$1,000-\$1,500 as a bare minimum for your campaign. You can gather donations for your campaign, however candidates must disclose the name of donors who exceed a \$50 donation. There are no income tax credits or deductions available to donors contributing to school board elections

NOTE: Please see the [Candidate’s Guide to Municipal and School Board Elections](#) for extensive information on financing your campaign.



School Boards of Nova Scotia

For more information on individual school boards, check their websites:

[Annapolis Valley School Board](#)

[Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board](#)

[Chignecto-Central Regional School Board](#)

[Conseil scolaire acadien provincial](#)

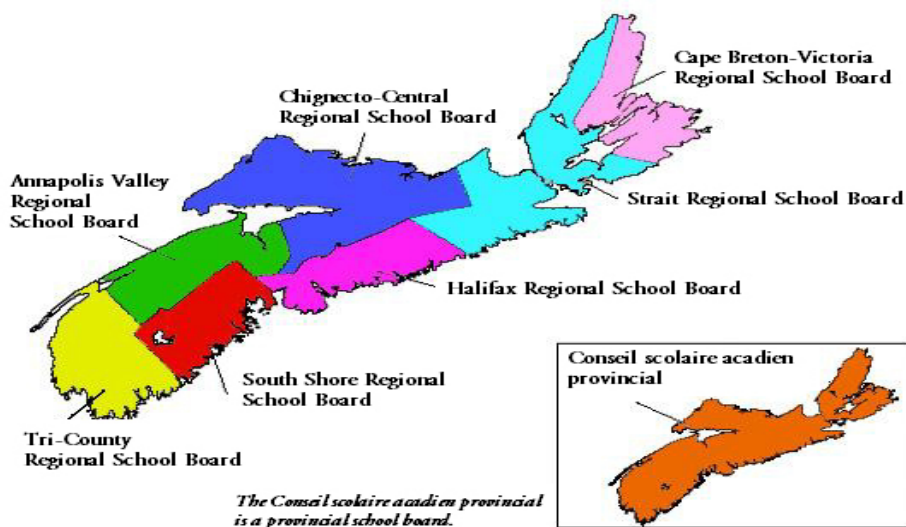
[Halifax Regional School Board](#)

[South Shore Regional School Board](#)

[Strait Regional School Board](#)

[Tri-County Regional School Board](#)

The following map outlines the eight school board zones in Nova Scotia and represents the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial which is a provincewide board.





School Board Roles and Responsibilities

Key Role: **Student Achievement**

Key Responsibilities:

- Improve student achievement
- Lead educational reform
- Serve as advocate for students
- Respond to local educational concerns
- Ensure equity in distribution of resources

Key Role: **Leadership**

Key Responsibilities:

- Create a vision or mission for education in their area consistent with provincial objectives
- Empower the administrators, educators and the community to carry out the vision
- Provide a crucial link between the public values and the professional expertise
- Represent the community's interest in the governance of local schools
- Promote cooperative initiatives with local agencies
- Act as a communication link between the public and board administration

Key Role: **Policy-Making and Oversight**

Key Responsibilities:

- Establish short-term and long-term goals
- Set school and performance indicators
- Select and appoint superintendent and provide direction and support
- Focus on policy versus daily administration
- Develop policies and procedures, including a media policy
- Comply with legislation

A photograph of a shiny red apple and a yellow pencil with a pink eraser, resting on a white notepad. The background is a solid teal color.

School Board Roles and Responsibilities

Key Role: **Financial Oversight**

Key Responsibilities:

- Plan and approve budget
- Ensure budget is balanced
- Demonstrate financial accountability
- Allocate funds efficiently
- Provide oversight of service contracts
- Work with the Province to ensure education is properly funded
- Develop partners to maximize resources

Key Role: **Evaluation**

Key Responsibilities:

- Conduct self-evaluation activities to check for effectiveness
- Gauge public satisfaction with school board accountability through informal and formal methods
- Evaluate the superintendent performance annually



Sample Code of Ethics

The following is a sample code of ethics. To view other codes of ethics, see individual board websites:

CODE OF ETHICS FOR BOARD MEMBERS

The board, desiring to operate under the highest ethical standards, adopts the following CODE OF ETHICS for board members. Board members will:

- Accept and promote the board's mission statement, beliefs, programs, services and successes in the community they serve and in the larger educational community.
- Observe the bylaws and policies of the school board and the laws, rules and regulations governing education in the Province of Nova Scotia and the provisions of other provincial and federal statutes.
- Attend all regularly scheduled board meetings insofar as possible, and become informed concerning the issues to be considered at those meetings.
- Recognize that the board is responsible for policy-making, planning and system evaluation, and that the superintendent of schools is responsible for day-to-day operation of the system.
- Recognize that individual board members have no authority to act on behalf of the region or the board, and that the board functions only as a board through duly adopted policies and actions approved at public sessions.
- Provide leadership in developing systematic communications between the board and all of its educational partners, and convey to the superintendent or other appropriate administrative persons expressions of public support and/or criticism of board policies, programs and services.
- Recognize that the expenditure of school funds is a public trust, and promote and support policies and actions that will ensure that funds are expended efficiently, economically and in the best interest of the students and the region.
- Respect the strict confidentiality of all privileged information and take no action after receiving confidential information, which might compromise in any way the board, the region, or any of its employees or students. To assist in meeting this objective, board members at the annual organizational meeting, shall annually report in writing to the chair any conflicts of interest or, if there are none, then that shall be reported in writing as well.
- At all times, show respect for others in board member's verbal and non-verbal language and work with fellow board and staff members in a spirit of co-operation, regardless of personal differences of opinion, treating all with mutual courteous respect and encouraging the free exchange of diverse views.
- Not pursue any procedure calculated to embarrass another board or staff member.
- Make a personal commitment to conduct board affairs ethically and responsibly.



Important Dates

March 11, 2012	RESIDENCY REQUIRED TO QUALIFY in municipality or school region
September 11, 2012	NOMINATION DAY (nominations can be filed by appointment with the returning officer in the five business days prior to nomination day)
September 12, 2012	LAST DAY FOR CANDIDATE TO WITHDRAW
October 11, 2012 or October 13, 2012	FIRST ADVANCED POLL (depending on municipality)
October 16, 2012	SECOND ADVANCED POLL
October 20, 2012	ELECTION DAY
October 23, 2012	OFFICIAL ADDITION
October 29, 2012	LAST DAY TO FILE AFFIDAVIT (re: removal of posters and return of voters list for return of full or part of deposit)
October 30, 2012	LAST DAY TO APPLY FOR A RECOUNT
December 19, 2012	LAST DAY TO FILE CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS DISCLOSURE FORM



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What do school boards do?

A. School boards play a crucial role in shaping our youth through the education system. In partnership with the community, parents and schools, school boards are responsible for ensuring that children receive the best education possible.

Q. Who is eligible to vote in school board elections?

A. All members of the community are eligible and encouraged to vote as long as they are at least 18 years of age, are voting in the school board district in which they reside and meet the criteria as outlined in the [Candidate's Guide to Municipal and School Board Elections](#).

Q. When are school board elections?

A. School board elections are held every four years. This year they are on October 20, 2012.

Q. Who serves as school board members?

A. School board members are people from various backgrounds. They are retirees, homemakers, professionals, trades people, university students – the list goes on. The one thing these people all have in common is an interest in children's education and the desire to serve their communities.

Q. Who are school board members accountable to?

A. School board members are accountable to the voters and all members of the community. It is their responsibility to ensure that people are aware of the school board's role, its accomplishments and why good public education is crucial to the economic and social health of a community.

Q. If elected is there training for school board members?

A. Individual school boards offer training sessions for new board members to familiarize them with policies and procedures. The Nova Scotia School Boards Association will also be hosting an orientation seminar for all board members in the fall of 2012. Check nssba.ca for more information.

Q. When will I know the official results of the election?

A. The election results that are obtained on election night are the unofficial results. The official addition of the votes is conducted by the returning officer, who records the results entered on the written statements of poll from each polling station. The municipal returning officer conducts the official addition for all of the elections in the municipality. The school board returning officer conducts the official addition for the school board election(s) that the returning officer was responsible for. You or your agents are entitled to be present for the official addition of the votes, which takes place starting at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, October 23, 2012.