

After the Election: School Board Reorganization

Every April, voters across the state elect members of their local boards of education. Following the election, school boards must act to install newly elected members and reorganize the board. Below are some common questions and answers regarding this process.

When do the successful candidates officially become board members? Candidates do not become board members until they take an oath or affirmation to support the Constitution of the United States and the state of Missouri, and to demean themselves faithfully in office.

How long does the board have to swear in new members? Pursuant to state law, the board must meet within 14 days after the election to swear in newly elected members.

What if the district does not hold an election because its school board candidates are unopposed? The board still must meet and swear in its new members within 14 days of Missouri's General Municipal Election Day, whether a school board election occurs that day or not.

When and how should the board elect new officers? Following the administration of the oath of office, the board secretary (or in his/her absence, the superintendent) serving as temporary chairperson, shall conduct the election of the president and vice president. Once the president and vice president have been elected, the president will preside over the remainder of the meeting. Pursuant to state law, the board has until July 15 to elect a Secretary and Treasurer. As a practical matter, however, most boards elect these positions at the annual reorganization meeting.

Do all board officers have to be board members? No. The secretary and treasurer may or may not be members of the board.

Can officers be elected by secret ballot? No. All votes must be taken by voice vote, show of hands or another method of voting that clearly reveals each member's vote. Secret ballots are prohibited by law.

Can the "old board" meet on the same night the "new board" meets and reorganizes? If so, how does that process work? Yes. It is common for boards to meet just prior to installing new members and reorganizing. Sometimes the "old board" wishes to finalize business matters that were the product of that group's efforts. Or, there may be run-of-the-mill business to conduct, such as approving payroll or other consent agenda items. The "old board" should meet first, calling the meeting to order as usual, then discussing all agenda items and taking any necessary votes. At the conclusion of the agenda, the "old board" should adjourn *sine die*, which means without assigning a day for a further meeting. This effectively ends the term of the "old board." After adjournment sine die, the board secretary will swear in new members and conduct the election for president and vice president.

Can the “new board” meet immediately after installing new members and electing officers?

The newly organized board must adjourn following the election of officers. If the board wishes to hold another meeting at that time it may do so, provided notice and an agenda have been posted in advance, in accordance with state law.

Is training required for new board members? Yes. Following initial election or appointment, all board members must successfully complete a minimum of 16 hours of school board and training, within one year of the date of their election or appointment. The district pays the cost of this training. Additional training is not required, but is permitted and encouraged.

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