

## Completing the Local Orientation for New Board Members

New board members are required to receive a local orientation with 60 days of taking office. ([19 TAC §61.1.](#)) The purpose of this orientation is to familiarize the new members with local district policies, procedures, and goals. There are no specific guidelines dictating how the orientation should be conducted, who should conduct it, or how long it should be. If you are a new board member, ask your superintendent how and when the local orientation is usually conducted in your district and be sure to let him or her know if there are additional things you would like to have included as well.

The following is a list of topics that new board members often find helpful to learn about in the early weeks of their service. It can serve as a suggested outline for a local orientation that you may share with your superintendent and board president.

### Useful topics to include in a local orientation

- Overview of district statistics such as enrollment, demographics, performance summaries and recent trends
- Administrative structure and names of key personnel
- District vision, mission, goals, and plan summaries
- District planning and evaluation process and calendar
- District budget summary, and recent trends in revenue, appropriations, tax rates, property values,
- Budget development process and calendar
- Copy of district policy manual or access to an online policy manual
- Policy development and review process
- Overview of district curriculum objectives, standards, and instructional programs
- Superintendent evaluation process, calendar, instrument, and current performance goals
- Personnel hiring practices and salary schedule
- Preferred practices for common tasks such as:
  - Requesting information
  - Bringing business before the board
  - Preparing for and participating in board meetings
  - Communicating with team members
  - Communicating with the public and media
  - Visiting campuses or district offices
- Time demands and commitments expected from board members
- Likely changes in the way staff and community members perceive the board member and challenges that can present
- Other local resources the district may provide

In addition to the local orientation and a district policy manual, some districts provide additional resources for new members such as one or more of the following:

- A board handbook or briefing book that contains basic information about the district, the board members, and useful contact information
- Written team operating procedures
- A team transition workshop that allows veterans and new members to discuss their expectations for the district and each other
- Experienced board members as assigned mentors during the first year of service