



*Guidance for those
considering running for the
Brittonkill School Board*

What to expect as a Board of Education member.

February 2012

Special thanks to the Niskayuna Central School District Board of Education for use of its similar document as a basis for this document.

Interest in Being a Board of Education Member

Thank you for your interest in serving as a board member on the Brunswick (Brittonkill) Central School District Board of Education. Although the legal requirements for becoming a board member in New York State are not difficult, possessing the characteristics that make someone a productive member of a legislative body is very important. According to the New York State School Boards Association, the following attributes are helpful:

- **Effective Communicator:** You can describe what you want and describe what others want; you are a good listener.
- **Consensus Builder:** You are capable of working toward decisions that all can support and are willing to compromise to achieve that goal.
- **Community Participant:** You enjoy meeting a variety of people; you can identify the community's key communicators and reach out to fellow citizens.
- **Decision Maker:** You know your own as well as others' decision-making styles and can support group decision making, including supporting the will of the board when you personally disagree with the outcome.
- **Information Processor:** You can organize priorities and schedules to handle large quantities of verbal and written information.
- **Leader:** You are willing to take risks and be supportive of board colleagues, district staff, and the community.
- **Team Player:** You help promote the board's vision and goals.

About our School District

Brunswick (Brittonkill) Central School District comprises two school buildings on one campus in Clums Corners as well as one bus garage on Tamarac Road and a former brick schoolhouse on Route 278 that was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2008. The student population is approximately 1,200 and has been steadily declining since the early 2000s. The district employs about 200 full- and part-time people, including about 110 teachers.

Running for the Board

Requirements to Run

School board members receive no pay for their service. Candidates must be at least 18 years old, qualified voters in the district, and be able to read and write. They must be residents of their district continuously for one year before the election. They cannot be employed by the board on which they serve nor live in the same household with a family member who is also a member of the same school board. State law requires school board and budget elections to be held on the third Tuesday in May. In order to declare candidacy, a nomination petition provided by the district clerk of the school district must be submitted. A write-in campaign is also permissible, but the candidate will not be on the ballot.

Procedures for Filing Nominating Petitions

Candidates must submit a nominating petition to the school district clerk. The petition must be signed by at least 25 qualified district voters or 2 percent of the number of those who voted in the previous annual election, whichever number is greater. The district clerk calculates this number. The petition must include the candidate's name and residence. For more information, please contact the district clerk at (518) 279-4600, extension 2604. The nominating petition can be found on the Board of Education website at <http://www.brunswickcsd.org/boe/>.

Campaign Expenses

Per Education Law, board candidates must file a statement with both the District Clerk and the Commission of Education if their campaign expenditures exceed \$500. If less than \$500, the statement must be submitted only to the Clerk. Regardless of campaign expenditure amount, a preliminary statement must be filed with the clerk at least 30 days before the election; a second statement must be filed 5 days before the election; and a final statement must be filed no more than 20 days after the date of election.

Serving on the Board

For a complete overview of serving on the BOE, see the Board Member Handbook on the Board of Education website at <http://www.brunswickcsd.org/boe/>.

Term of Office

The term of office is three years, beginning July 1 and ending June 30. Board members run at-large. That is, there is no specific geographical representation; board members represent the entire district population. There are normally three seats open annually, however in the event of a special election to fill a vacancy, there could be more. In the event of a special election to fill a fourth seat, the candidate gaining the fourth-most votes immediately becomes a member of the board and is sworn in at the next meeting. Those receiving first, second, and third-most votes are sworn in at the organizational meeting in the beginning of July. Any sitting board member temporarily filling the vacant seat loses the seat on election day. In the unlikely event of there being five open seats (two vacant), or more, similar rules apply.

Required Training

All newly elected board members are required to participate in the state-mandated fiscal oversight training. Board members usually have the option of attending a full-day, two part-days, or participating online. Brittonkill has had success with the New York State School Boards Association training program.

Board Meetings

The Board of Education meets at 7:00 pm in the Secondary Library. During late February and most of March, board meetings may become more frequent due to the budget development for the next school year. Consistent attendance is strongly encouraged for board members.

Preparation for Board Meetings

On the Friday prior to each board meeting, board members receive access to the agenda and back-up materials. Once known as the 'board packet' (since it was delivered in packet form) the term is outdated since the board went paperless in September 2011. Agenda and backup information is hosted on BoardDocs, a service the district uses to host files both for board viewing and for public access. You can access BoardDocs through the Board of Education website at <http://www.brunswickcsd.org/boe/>.

Typical Board Meeting Agenda

Board meeting agendas are collaboratively developed in advance between the Superintendent of Schools and the President and Vice President of the board. Meeting agenda items typically include:

1. Approval of minutes from previous meeting(s)
2. Special presentations and/or recognitions
3. Superintendent's report
4. Public comment
5. Board discussion and reports
6. Policy review
7. Special education recommendations
8. Personnel actions
9. Business and finance review
10. Public comment
11. Executive session (if necessary)
12. Adjourn

District Organization

Superintendent of Schools

The Superintendent of Schools is appointed by the Board of Education and serves a specific contractual term of between three and five years. This position serves as the chief executive officer of the district and manages its day-to-day activities. The Superintendent works closely with the board in implementing and supporting board policy and long-term goals.

Assistant Superintendent for Business

The Assistant Superintendent for Business is appointed by the board. Historically, the Assistant Superintendent for Business (and its previous title, the Director of Business Operations) has also acted as the District Clerk, a position appointed annually by the board. The Assistant Superintendent is the main developer of the annual budget, but also oversees personnel and union-relation issues.

Board of Education Policy

The district is guided by a comprehensive set of policies (essentially local laws) known as Board of Education policy. These policies range from providing guidance on student residency to prevention of harassment in schools. Many policies are required by state or federal law. Newly developed policies require two readings prior to final approval (with the

second reading counting as approval). The policy handbook can be found on the Board of Education website at <http://www.brunswickcsd.org/boe/>.

The Superintendent, where appropriate, develops administrative regulations to implement board policies. These regulations are specific steps or procedures to enforce and support board policy.

For More Information

Anyone interested in running for the Board of Education is encouraged to contact board members or the Superintendent for more information. The Superintendent can be reached at (518) 279-4600, extension 2602.

More information can be found on the Brittonkill website (www.brunswickcsd.org), the Capital Region School Boards Association website (www.capsba.net), or the New York State School Boards Association website (www.nyssba.org).