



**N H S B A**  
NEW HAMPSHIRE  
SCHOOL BOARDS  
ASSOCIATION  
Incorporated 1946

April 2004

*“Only together can we really make a difference.”*

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Concord, NH 03301

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# focus

on New Hampshire School Boards

Volume I, Number

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.”*

- Margaret Mead

## Training Tips: Better Boardsmanship

Newly elected School Board members can be overwhelmed with documents to read, educational jargon, Board policy, Board roles and responsibilities, state statutes, and federal requirements.

### Resources

The New Hampshire School Boards Association, veteran School Board members, and your Superintendent can help you learn the ropes and provide the resources you need to be an effective School Board member.

Many districts have a policy (BIA - New Board Member Orientation) which should provide ample resources for new members, including an orientation workshop session and materials including:

- The previous year’s complete record of Board meeting minutes
- A copy of NH’s Revised Statutes Annotated Relating to Public Schools (RSAs)
- A copy of the book, *Becoming a Better Board Member*
- The School Board Policy Manual
- The current school budget
- Negotiated labor agreements

Other materials new Board members may find useful include the district’s mission statement and goals, school calendar, student/teacher/parent handbooks, Board and staff directory, long-range reports which guide Board decisions such as curriculum plans,

appropriations forecasts, and facilities plans.

### Rules of Thumb

Some fundamental rules, often misunderstood by board members, include:

- Board members have NO AUTHORITY beyond that exercised at the Board table.
- Only a majority of the Board has the ability to set policy, hire and fire staff, negotiate contracts, or make requests of the Superintendent.
- The only employee of the Board is the Superintendent.
- School Board meetings are meetings of the Board in public, NOT meetings of the public with the Board.
- Effective Boards require TRUST. This does not mean everyone agrees on the issues, but it means Board decisions will be supported by all Board members.
- Board action should be focused on Mission, Goals, Policies, Standards, Advocacy, and Communication.

NHSBA has numerous publications and training sessions intended to provide Board members with the essential knowledge of school governance necessary to assume an active role in school Board decision-making.

For information about NHSBA School Board Training opportunities, contact Betsy Miller-Jones at 228-2061, toll free 1-800-272-0653, or email [bmillerj@nhsba.org](mailto:bmillerj@nhsba.org).

### RECOMMENDED BOARDSMANSHIP PUBLICATIONS

All of these publications are available from the New Hampshire School Boards Association

- *Becoming a Better Board Member*..... \$35.00
- *Communities Count—A School Board Guide to Community Engagement*..... \$20.00
- *Effective School Boards* ..... \$30.00
- *Improving School Board Decision Making* ..... \$20.00
- *Raising the Bar—A School Board Primer on Student Achievement* ..... \$20.00
- *Reinventing School-Based Management*..... \$20.00
- *Robert’s Rules in Plain English*..... \$ 7.00
- *Team Leadership for Student Achievement*..... \$20.00

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CONCORD NH 03301

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## BOARDSMANSHIP TRAINING

***Start the year off right!***  
***Attend upcoming NHSBA School Board Member Training!***

### ***New School Board Member Orientation***

- Ethics/Roles and Responsibilities

### ***Board Chair Training***

- Not for Board Chairs only!
- How to run Effective Meetings

### ***The Basics of School Law***

- Board governance
- Education Law
- Right-To-Know Law
- Collective Bargaining Basics

***May 13 in Concord or  
May 27 in Whitefield  
4pm - 8pm***

***Call NHSBA now to register:  
228-2061 or 1-800-272-0653***

These NHSBA School Board Member Training Workshops, will help you become familiar with:

- Right-to-Know law
- Importance of well-written policy
- The difference between Leadership and Management
- ABCs of public education finance
- Your role in budget development
- The rules of collective bargaining and your role in labor relations
- Your role in the Special Education process
- How to influence state education policy

**Learn more about NHSBA Training Programs on our website:**

**[www.nhsba.org](http://www.nhsba.org)**

## Board Training in Action

