



MEMORANDUM

TO: ELECTED CITY BOARD PRESIDENTS, SUPERINTENDENTS AND BOARD SECRETARIES

**FROM: SALLY SMITH, J.D.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sally".

RE: GOVERNANCE AND OTHER REMINDERS

DATE: AUGUST 10, 2020

If you are preparing for an upcoming board election, there are a handful of reminders we want to bring to your attention:

Oath of Office

- Alabama does not require elected city school board members to take an oath of office. However, they may do so if they choose. For more information, see Attorney General's Opinion [95-246](#). A sample oath can be found in the Resources section of AlabamaSchoolBoards.org/GetOnBoard.

School Board Governance Improvement Act

- School board members must sign the state's Affirmations of the Principles of Governance at the time they are sworn in for their first or succeeding terms. The affirmation should be made part of the minutes of the meeting at which the oath is taken. The state Department of Education checks for placement in the minutes as part of compliance monitoring.
- Each board member must earn 6 training hours, including 2 hours of whole board training, annually between July 1 and June 30.
- Newly elected board members will have until June 30, 2022, to complete the required orientation. This requirement is waived for current members who have already completed both segments. The orientation must cover: the roles and responsibilities of the board; finance; ethics; board meetings; legal and personnel issues; advocacy; the Governance Act; student and school performance; working with the board attorney and superintendent; and public/media relations. AASB offers both segments of the orientation twice annually and online through the School Board U platform.

Ethics Law

- All new members must receive ethics training within 120 days of being sworn in. Members will receive credit for this if they participate in AASB's Roles & Responsibilities orientation or take it online through School Board U within the 120-day time limit. AASB will next offer Roles and Responsibilities Jan. 8, 2020. In the alternative, board members may complete the training on it online on the [Ethics Commission's website](#).



Annual Meeting

- [Ala. Code §16-11-5](#) requires city school boards to hold one special annual meeting each year. This meeting should be the first regular meeting in May, unless a different time frame is set by a local legislative act. The board must elect a president and vice-president at this meeting, again, unless your local act has other specifications. You must provide seven days' notice of the annual meeting pursuant to the requirements in the *Open Meetings Act*.

Board Compensation

- The Board is not required to receive compensation. However, [Ala. Code §16-1-26](#) authorizes members to receive up to \$600 per month in compensation, unless a higher figure is set by local act. If your board is not at the cap and wishes to raise its compensation, that may only be done at the annual meeting (*see above*) and requires approval by the majority of the board. The superintendent's recommendation is not required.
- This compensation is in addition to traveling and other expenses members incur when attending meetings or trainings and transacting board business.
- Any increase in compensation approved at this year's annual meeting would become effective at the time the next board member begins a new term of office. For further information on that, see Attorney General's Opinion [2005-142](#).
- If the board does not wish to raise compensation, no action is necessary.

Thank you for all you do for your school board. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me.