




## Top 10 Skill Sets for a School Board Member

WHILE TALKING WITH 2020 BADC Citizen of the Year Brian Battle about his life and Barrington 220 School Board experience (in our Interview on page 48), we asked him to share his top 10 desired skill sets for board members with the April 2021 election on the horizon. Here is what he shared.

10. Education. A good Board will have some members that are familiar with educational policies and practices or at least willing to learn.
9. Legal/Collective Bargaining. It is a bonus for Board members to have a colleague with legal experience, especially in collective bargaining processes.
8. Facilities Management Experience. With 13 buildings to manage, the Board always values the insight of a member with experience in budgeting and planning of facility projects.
7. Policy Management. The Board exercises its voice through policy decisions. A member with previous policy experience can assist Board deliberations of key policy decisions.
6. Accounting/Finance/Budgeting Skills. The Board is responsible for the budget and the financial accountability to taxpayers and stakeholders. A good Board will have at least 2-3 members who can get into the meaningful details of school finance and budgeting.
5. Do Your Homework. Most Board Agenda items include significant background reading. It is important for Board members to do their homework so the Board discussion can be focused on the critical issues necessary to reach a decision.
4. Community Involvement. Good Boards reflect the thoughts and values of the Barrington community. It is important for Board members to have regular communications with diverse stakeholder groups to gather opinions on the schools and reflect those points of view during Board deliberations.
3. Active Listening Skills. Many issues requiring a Board decision have several different possible paths forward. Boards need to listen to experts and each other to reach a consensus.
2. Tolerance of Opposing Viewpoints. Board members must be tolerant of all views expressed by administrators, teachers, students, parents, and most important, each other. The expression of opposing views helps forge the best decisions for the entire community.
1. Mutual Respect. School Board make decisions regarding our children and our money. Sometimes these discussions can get emotional. From experience, sometimes it is hard to get to sleep after a rousing discussion, particularly if you were on the losing end of the Board vote. Good Board members must prioritize the mutual respect of each other. 

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