

BATH COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

AGENDA ITEM: INFORMATION { X } ACTION { } CLOSED MEETING { }

SUBJECT: ITEMS FOR BOARD MEMBERS

Bath County
ARTS
Association

The Bath County Arts Association awards scholarships to local students, sponsors fine and performing arts programs and supplements arts education in the Bath County Public Schools. This

community engagement would not be possible without generous donations from our patrons, funds from the Bath County Board of Supervisors and the Virginia Commission for the Arts and proceeds from the Bath County Art Show.



Keeley Massie Photography

2017 Event Sponsorships

15th Annual Bath Bluegrass Jamboree
Bath County High School, April 8

Allegheny Mountain String Project
Season Finale Concert

Garth Newel Music Center, May 21

Winter Ensemble Concert

Garth Newel Music Center, December 10

52nd Annual Bath County Art Show

Valley Elementary School, July 22-30



Sunday Social Concerts

Garth Newel Music Center
October 15, 22 & 29

Pub Series Concerts

Garth Newel Music Center,
January 27 & March 3, 2018

www.BathCountyArts.org

Bath County
ARTS
Association



Arts Education Sponsorships

Children's Art Network

Studio programs for K-5 students
Millboro and Valley Elementary Schools

Museum and Performance Field Trips

Bath County High School students

Percussion Clinic

Bath County High School Band

Science Songs Music Residency

Millboro and Valley Elementary Schools

Emerging Artist Fellowship

Garth Newel Music Center

Scholarships

Summer Band Camp

Awarded to as many as five students
Bath County High School

Arts Majors

Awarded to as many as two graduates
Bath County High School

Community Summer Arts Study

Summer arts camp financial support
Awarded to as many as three Bath County students

Allegheny Mountain String Project

Needs-based tuition support
Bath County students

All contributions to BCAA are tax deductible.

Bath County Arts Association

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Gina G. Patterson
VSBA Executive Director

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

10 Tips for New School Board Members

The VSBA would like to take this time to welcome all new school board members, and welcome back those incumbents who won their elections. The following 10 tips for New School Board Members is based on the advice of seasoned board members who've learned through experience the pitfalls of being new on the board. Don't forget, your association, VSBA, is here for you, so please don't hesitate to call us at 1-800-446-8722. We look forward to meeting you at the New Board Member Orientation on July 17th at the Richmond Marriott.

- 1) Go slow in the beginning, especially if you have some to the board to "reform" it. Chances are you will feel differently about a lot of things in six months.
- 2) Remember that the only authority you have lies in the corporate action of the school board. You have no legal authority to act alone unless the board as a whole specifically delegates a task to you.
- 3) Do not let your differences of opinion degenerate into personality conflicts. Nothing is more devastating to good board procedures than to have one member vote for an action just because another member voted against it.
- 4) Give the superintendent and staff your public support. Use one on one meetings with the superintendent to iron out differences of opinion or to ask clarifying questions ahead of the school board vote.
- 5) Keep out of teacher/personnel problems. The board hired a superintendent to take that responsibility.
- 6) Make an effort to be informed. School business is always important business, and big business. To be informed requires time and effort. Ask questions of your superintendent as you feel the need.
- 7) Welcome people who come to see you about problems. Listen carefully, then refer them to the appropriate person according to board norms and protocols. Remember that you may be hearing only one side of the story. Do not make any promises or say you will "fix" anything.
- 8) Accept your job on the board as one of responsible leadership in the community. You will be expected to attend and participate intelligently in many public meetings on school issues. This is more than an opportunity, it is an obligation to interpret school affairs to an interested public. Use your position on the board to help form public opinion and create active, intelligent support for education in your community.
- 9) Commit to your own learning. Take time to listen, learn, and build your understanding as you begin to share your own ideas. Attend trainings, VSBA meetings, read books and periodicals to learn about the complex legal and educational issues facing your school division.
- 10) Stay focused on students and their achievement. Ensure that every decision you make as a member of the board is made through the filter "What's best for all students in the division."

CALL FOR PRESENTATION PROPOSALS

The VSBA is accepting proposals to present at the VSBA Annual Convention November 15-17, 2017 at the Williamsburg Lodge.

To submit a proposal, please click here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Z8HT8DT>

The deadline to submit a proposal is July 14, 2017.

We look forward to reviewing the great programs going on in your school divisions!

CALL FOR MODERATORS

There are openings for breakout session moderators at the 2017 VSBA Annual Convention, November 15-17, at the Williamsburg Lodge.

Moderators introduce workshop presenters and serve as liaisons between the audience and speakers. Board members serving as moderators will earn VSBA Academy points. For more information or to volunteer, contact Amanda Leonard at (800) 446-8722 or aleonard@vsba.org.



Elizabeth Ewing
VSBA Director of Legal & Policy Services

All in the Family: Nepotism in Virginia

By Elizabeth Ewing, VSBA director of legal and policy services

Hiring can be a tricky business. Weeding through resumes, trying to judge unknown candidates from brief interviews and background checks and selecting the right person can be daunting even when there are many attractive applicants for a job. Wouldn't it be easier for a decision-maker to pick a known quantity? Like, for example, a relative?

When watching movies and TV shows, we've all laughed when public officials appoint family members, usually incompetent, to official positions. The mayor's wife is his secretary. A city council member's son is the dogcatcher. The county commissioner appoints his bumbling brother-in-law to serve as sheriff.

In the real world, however, nepotism isn't funny. In Virginia, a school board member who knowingly violates the anti-nepotism law can be personally responsible for refunding any amounts paid in violation of the law to the local treasury.

Why is nepotism such a persistent problem and why does it give rise to such stringent penalties? More importantly, what can school board members do to make sure allegations of nepotism don't arise in their division?

It's a family affair

Nepotism is the practice of showing special favor or preference to a relative when awarding a position, job or privilege. Although the word "nepotism" doesn't appear in the Virginia State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act, the Act prohibits exactly this kind of favor or preference. One section of the Act specifically addresses hiring relatives of school board members or the superintendent. Va. Code § 2.2-3119 establishes the general rule that it is illegal for a school board to employ a family member of a school board member or superintendent. For these purposes, "family member" includes a father, mother, brother, sister, spouse, son, daughter, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law or brother-in-law.

The ties that bind

There are some exceptions to this general rule. One set of exceptions applies to certain employees based on their prior school employment. Another set of exceptions applies in Planning Districts 3, 11, 12 and 13 (and will also apply in divisions in Planning Districts 4 and 17 effective July 1, 2017) If you don't know which Planning District your division is in, you can look it up [here](#). The exceptions are spelled out in detail in Va. Code § 2.2-3119.

Any school board member or superintendent who believes that one of the exceptions applies to a particular situation should consult the division's attorney or obtain an advisory opinion from the local attorney for the Commonwealth, the Virginia Conflict of Interest and Ethics Advisory Council or the local county, city or town attorney.

Let it be

The problem that nepotism laws try to address is a lack of objectivity. It's human nature to want to help a relative who is seeking a job. Even the most well-intentioned public servant will find it difficult to be clear-eyed and impartial when a matter affecting a family member's employment is before the school board. And even if the school board member can be objective, very few members of the public will believe that the board member can be objective. In other words, it is virtually impossible to avoid the appearance of impropriety, even if no actual impropriety exists. School boards have enough problems without having to address public perceptions that nepotism is present in school board hiring decisions. And, if the family member is hired, he or she will probably have to work extra hard to convince coworkers, supervisors, parents, students and community members that the job was awarded based on merit rather than family connections. Those perceptions can have serious consequences not just for the employee, but for the entire school division.

Rather than assess any individual school board member's intentions, the solution in the law is to prevent the problem from arising. The practical effect of nepotism restrictions is that the school board member doesn't have to attempt objectivity. When the general rule applies, the option of hiring the family member is simply not available. When one of the exceptions applies, safeguards are present which establish that the hiring decision is made without the influence of the related school board member, thus ensuring the best and most qualified candidates are hired. This outcome benefits everyone—the school board member, the school division, applicants, students and citizens.

This article is based on one of the same title which first appeared in the April 2017 issue of the Ohio School Boards Association Journal. Copyright 2017 Ohio School Boards Association. All rights reserved. Used with permission.