



THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES SELECTION PROCESS

“The boards of classical, Christian schools are not managers, executives or owners; they are stewards. The board of a classical, Christian school exists for one reason: to ensure the long-term success of the mission of the school.”¹

When most people think of a “school board,” a public-school board comes to mind. Public school boards, however, have purposes and process that are in opposition to those of classical, Christian school boards. First, a public-school board is necessarily representative because public schools are established by the state and funded by taxes. Taxpayers within a public school district have no choice about financially supporting the schools or what schools their children are eligible to attend. Therefore, public school boards exist to give their constituents a voice in shaping the education provided.

The relationship between classical, Christian schools and their families is quite different. Their families choose to associate with the school which offers a clear and fixed vision for the education of their children. The boards of classical, Christian schools are not managers, executives or owners; they are stewards. The board of a classical, Christian school exists solely to steward the mission or, in other words, to ensure that the school exists to provide the same virtue forming, classical, Christian education to the children and grandchildren of the current students.

The Geneva Board of Trustees consists of 10 to 14 members, each with four-year terms. Each term may be extended by two years for a total of six years of service. Board member terms are purposefully staggered to ensure that a wealth of experience is represented among the Board’s members at all times. The number of Board members may vary from year to year, but the Board always seeks to be sufficiently broad in representation in order to craft and accomplish strategic objectives with the various skills and perspectives needed to support Geneva’s mission.

The process for selecting Board members begins with the identification of candidates. Potential candidate names are submitted by the Administration, current Board members and people within the Geneva community.

The qualifications for serving on the Board are delineated in the Bylaws. All members of the Board shall be committed Christians in good standing at a local church. They must agree to the GSB Statement of Faith, Statement of Purpose and Identity, Statement on Identity, Sexuality and Gender and the Board Service Commitment. The Bylaws allow that the Board may from time to time establish such other qualifications, characteristics or guidelines as the Board deems necessary.

From a philosophical perspective, the Statement of Purpose and Identity speaks to leadership in the school in general by the following comment on leadership: “... positions of significant leadership,

such as Board membership or the Administration, should be reserved for those that have demonstrated an understanding of and whole-hearted commitment to classical education, the principles of this document and Geneva's Statement of Faith." The Board has developed further guidelines and provided examples of the characteristics of an "ideal" Board Member in the Portrait of a Geneva Board Member. The Statement of Purpose and Identity and the Portrait of a Geneva Board Member can both be found on the [Geneva website](#). Although no one person is expected to possess all these characteristics, they are a useful tool in both selecting new Board members and training them to serve most effectively.

From a practical perspective, the Board seeks candidates who have served at the school in various capacities and who are committed publicly and personally to the school's mission of classical and Christian education.

Although ultimate authority rests with the Board, it has delegated several tasks for selecting and onboarding candidates to the Committee on Trustees. One responsibility of the COT is to review the skills represented by the current Board members and identify areas where additional skills are needed to execute the GSB strategic plan effectively. Considering this information along with the current members' time remaining in their Board terms, the COT typically composes 2-4 Board Member Profiles which enumerate specific qualifications the Board is seeking in potential candidates. These specific qualifications are considered alongside all the other factors previously mentioned and used to compile a pool of potential candidates.

The COT solicits feedback about each person in the pool of candidates from the Head of School and other school administrators. A short list of potential nominees (usually 2-4) who best fit the Portrait of a Board Member are then selected by the COT, with Board approval, to be asked to complete an in-depth application and two rounds of preliminary interviews. The submitted application and the interview process are designed to ensure the nominee has not only met the requirements/qualifications but also to ensure the nominee's readiness and commitment to assume the role.

Once applications have been read, references have been contacted and both interviews have been conducted, the COT meets and makes a recommendation to the Board of the best candidates. Those candidates go through a third interview with the full Board of Trustees who vote whether to admit the candidates to the Board. The candidates voted in are extended an invitation to serve beginning at the Annual Board Retreat in June.

The process, qualifications and guidelines employed by the Board and the Committee on Trustees are designed to produce qualified, disciplined and committed leaders to Geneva's mission, "specifically the long-term existence of the vision for the benefit of future generations."

¹"Standards for Thriving Schools" the Society for Classical Learning accreditation documents