

# Candidate FAQ

## 2026 Public School Board Election



### Key Dates for 2026 School District Elections

Candidate Filing Period	July 14 - July 28, 2026
Withdrawal Deadline	July 30, 2026
Absentee Voting Begins	September 18, 2026
General Election	November 3, 2026
Canvassing of Election	November 6 - 20, 2026
Certificate of Election Issued	7 days after your board canvases (if no recount is requested, once the Campaign Finance Report has been filed)
Term Begins	January 2, 2027

### Understanding the Role

#### Q. What does a school board member actually do?

As the entity legally charged with governing a school district, each school board is responsible to its community for governing efficiently and leading effectively to provide for a fair education, resulting in student success for all. This involves making high-level decisions with their board team that influence the future of education within their jurisdiction.

#### Q. How much time does it take to serve on a school board?

Time commitments vary, but expect 10–20 hours per month. This includes preparing for and participating in board meetings (usually 1–2 per month), committee work, community events, and professional development.

#### Q. What authority does a school board member have?

Authority is collective, not individual. The board acts as a body at public meetings. Individual members cannot make decisions alone. Each board member's vote is equal.

#### Q. What is the difference between governance and management?

Board members govern by setting policy, approving budgets, establishing expectations and strategic goals, and hiring and evaluating the superintendent. The superintendent manages day-to-day operations.

#### Q. How does the board work with the superintendent?

The board hires and evaluates the superintendent and works collaboratively on district goals. The superintendent implements board policies, develops plans and procedures, oversees operations, and has ultimate responsibility for all district staff.

#### Q. Will I receive any training if I'm elected?

Yes. A member shall receive training in school finance and management (Minn. Stat. Ch. § 123B.09, subd. 2). MSBA provides this training for all new board members, as well as many other resources to help support new board members during their transition time.

#### Q. How are school board decisions made?

Decisions are made through voting at public meetings. A majority vote is needed to take action.

#### Q. Can I still run if I work in the district or have kids in school?

Yes. However, if you are employed by the district, you cannot make more than \$20,000 in a fiscal year. Having children in the district does not exclude an individual from running for the school board; in fact, it can be helpful in understanding school issues.

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### **Q. Is school board service a paid position?**

Board members may receive a small stipend from the district for their service, as established by the school board.

### **Q. What is the typical length of a term?**

Terms are generally four years unless an individual is appointed or elected to serve the remainder of a term. Elections are held in both odd- and even-numbered years, depending on the district.

## School Board Election Basics

### **Q. Who is responsible for school board elections?**

The school district clerk (or designee) administers school district elections. If a school election coincides with state or municipal elections, counties and municipalities may handle precinct operations, while the school district clerk (or designee) handles candidate filings, notices, financial reports, and canvassing.

### **Q. What are the qualifications to become a school board candidate?**

Candidates must:

- Be 21 years of age or older.
- Be an eligible voter.
- Have resided in the school district for at least 30 days prior to the election.
- Not be a sex offender.
- Have no affidavit on file for another elected office during the same election.

### **Q: When is the candidate filing period for the 2026 school board election?**

The filing period is from July 14 to July 28, 2026, closing at 5:00 p.m. on July 28.

### **Q: Where do I file my candidacy for a school board position?**

Candidates must file with the school district clerk in the district office, unless a school has contracted with the county to run elections.

### **Q: What documents are required to file for candidacy?**

You need to submit an Affidavit of Candidacy and pay the required filing fee. The affidavit must be signed in the presence of a notary or an individual authorized to administer oaths. You must also bring proof of residency (a Driver's License or document that shows your residence).

### **Q: What information must be included in the Affidavit of Candidacy?**

The affidavit must include your name, the office sought, a statement that you meet the qualifications for the office, and a request to have your name placed on the ballot. It must also include your address, a NON-GOVERNMENT email address, and a phone number.

### **Q: What is the filing fee for school board candidates?**

The filing fee is \$2.00.

### **Q: Can I submit a petition instead of paying the filing fee?**

Yes, candidates may submit a petition in place of the filing fee, provided it meets all legal requirements.

### **Q: How do I withdraw my candidacy after filing?**

Submit an Affidavit of Withdrawal in the same location where you filed your candidacy. This must be done by 5:00 p.m. on July 30, 2026.

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### **Q: Will my filing fee be refunded if I withdraw?**

No, the filing fee is non-refundable, even if you withdraw your candidacy.

### **Q: Can I file my Affidavit of Candidacy by mail?**

Yes, candidates may file by mail, but the affidavit must be notarized and received by the filing officer within the filing period.

## Campaign Finance and Reporting

### **Q: Are there campaign finance reporting requirements?**

Yes, candidates who receive contributions or make campaign expenditures of more than \$750 in a calendar year must submit an initial report within 14 days after reaching that threshold and additional reports according to statutory timelines. All candidates must file a Campaign Financial Report Certification of Filing form within seven days after the election, regardless of the amount spent.

## Post-Election Questions

### **Q. How are election results certified?**

A school district canvassing board meets to canvass the results within 3-10 days after the election. A Certificate of Election is issued only after verifying that the candidate's Campaign Financial Report Certification of Filing form has been turned in, and there is no pending contest or recount during the 7 days after the canvass.

### **Q: What is the process for requesting a recount?**

A losing candidate may request a recount within seven days after results are canvassed, following state procedures. Recounts are public and involve the hand counting of ballots.

### **Q. When is the first board meeting?**

Your first meeting will be the organizational meeting in January, where the board sets meeting dates, committee assignments, and elects officers.

### **Q. Will I be sworn in?**

Every candidate has to turn in an oath and acceptance of office form witnessed by a notary. This is your legal oath. Boards may also have a ceremonial swearing-in at one of their first meetings in January.

### **Q. Will I receive onboarding or training?**

Yes. MSBA's onboarding includes training on governance, finance, and legal responsibilities. Districts may also offer orientation sessions.

### **Q. Where can I find additional election resources?**

- Minnesota Secretary of State Election Guides: [sos.state.mn.us/election-guides](https://sos.state.mn.us/election-guides)
- Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA): [www.mnmsba.org](http://www.mnmsba.org)
- Minnesota Campaign Finance Manual: <https://www.sos.mn.gov/media/4908/minnesota-campaign-manual.pdf>