

Privacy Concerns over the Casting of Absentee Ballots

It has come to our attention that some voters have concern regarding the privacy of their vote and others finding out how they voted. More specifically, there is the thought that because the absentee ballot envelopes contain the name of each voter, others could link the individual voter to the vote. The thought is that if the election inspector opens Jane Doe's ballot envelope and **removes** and **counts** the ballot, he or she will know how Jane Doe voted.

We would like to clarify how the absentee ballots are actually counted as per Education Law. The following procedure will occur:

1. The generic envelope with no personally identifiable information will be opened when it arrives in the district. The sealed envelope with voters' identifiable information and ballot will be examined to make sure that it is a viable ballot.
2. The District Clerk will make a determination that there is no reason for rejecting the ballot, which could happen if, for example, the voter fails to provide the signature required by law to appear on the envelope containing the ballot.
3. The official book will be marked off that the voter voted. Please note there will be no indication how the voter voted since the ballot will remain in the sealed envelope.
4. On June 9 at 5:00 pm, the envelope will be opened and the **ballot will be withdrawn without** unfolding and it will be deposited into a ballot box.
5. Ballots will be unfolded and counted. As a result, at the time of counting, the ballots will not be linked to the envelope in which they were returned.

Steps 4 and 5 of this process will also be recorded and streamed to the public.