

FILLING VACANCIES

I. Events Causing a Vacancy

A vacancy on the Governing Board may occur for any of the following events:

- A. The death of an incumbent; (Government Code 1770)
- B. The adjudication pursuant to a *quo warranto* proceeding declaring that the incumbent is physically or mentally incapacitated due to disease, illness or accident, and that there is reasonable cause to believe that the incumbent will not be able to perform the duties of his/her office for the remainder of the term; (Government Code 1770)
- C. A Board member's resignation; in accordance with Board Bylaw 9222 - Resignation (Government Code 1770)
- D. A Board member's removal from office, including by recall; (Elections Code 11000-11386; Government Code 1770)
- E. A Board member's ceasing to be a resident of the district; (Government Code 1770)
- F. A Board member's ceasing to inhabit the trustee area represented by the Board member (Government Code 1770)
- G. A Board member's absence from the state for more than 60 days, except in the following situations: (Government Code 1064, 1770)
 1. Upon district business with the approval of the Board;
 2. With the consent of the Board for an additional period not to exceed a total absence of 90 days; or, in the case of illness or other urgent necessity and upon a proper showing thereof, for more than 90 days
 3. For federal military deployment, not to exceed an absence of a total of six months, as a member of the armed forces of the United States or the California National Guard;

If the absence of the Board member for this purpose exceeds six months, the Board may approve an additional six-month absence upon a showing that there is a reasonable expectation that the member will return within the second six-month period, and the Board may appoint an interim member to serve during the absence. If two or more members of the Board are absent by reason of these circumstances, and those absences result in the inability to establish a quorum at a regular meeting, the Board may immediately appoint one or more interim members as necessary to enable the Board to conduct business and discharge its responsibilities. The term of an interim member appointed in these circumstances shall not extend beyond the return of the absent Board member or beyond the next regularly scheduled election for that office, whichever occurs first.

- H. A Board member's ceasing to discharge the duties of the office for the period of three consecutive months, except when prevented by illness or when absent from the state with the permission required by law; (Government Code 1770)
- I. A Board member's conviction of a felony or any offense involving a violation of official duties or conviction of a designated crime resulting in a forfeiture of office; (Government Code 1770, 3000-3003)
- J. A Board member's refusal or neglect to file the required oath within the time prescribed; (Government Code 1770)

- K. The decision of a competent tribunal declaring void a Board member's election or appointment; (Government Code 1770)
- L. A Board member's commitment to a hospital or sanitarium as a drug addict, dipsomaniac, inebriate, or stimulant addict by a court of competent jurisdiction, in which case the office shall not be deemed vacant until the order of commitment has become final; (Government Code 1770)
- M. A "failure to elect" in which no candidate or an insufficient number of candidates have filed to run for a Board seat(s). (Education Code 5090, 5326, 5328)

II. Timelines for Filling a Vacancy

When a vacancy occurs, the Board shall take the following action, as appropriate:

- A. When a vacancy occurs less than four months before the end of a Board member's term, the Board shall not fill the vacancy. (Education Code 5093)
- B. When a vacancy occurs from six months to 130 days before a regularly scheduled Board election at which the position is not scheduled to be filled, a special election to fill the position shall be consolidated with the regular election. The person so elected shall take office at the first regularly scheduled Board meeting following the certification of the election and shall serve only until the end of the term of the position which the person was elected to fill. (Education Code 5093)
- C. When a vacancy occurs any time outside of the statutory time windows identified in Items A and B above, the Board shall either order an election or make a provisional appointment within 60 days of the date of the vacancy or the filing of the member's deferred resignation, whichever is sooner. (Education Code 5091, 5093)

III. Eligibility for Appointment

In order to be appointed or elected to fill a vacancy on the Board, a person must meet the eligibility requirements specified in law and Board Bylaw 9220 – Governing Board Elections.

A. Provisional Appointments

- 1. When, as authorized by law, the Board has opted to make a provisional appointment to fill a vacancy the Board, by resolution, may approve the procedures for selecting the person to be provisionally appointed to fill the vacancy. The procedures may, but are not required to, include the following:
 - a. Advertise in the local media to solicit candidate applications.
 - b. Establishing a committee consisting of less than a quorum of the Board to ensure that applicants are eligible for Board membership and announce the names of the eligible candidates.
 - c. Interviewing the candidates at a public meeting.
- 2. Within 10 days after the Board makes a provisional appointment to fill a Board vacancy, the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent, on behalf of the Board, shall post notices of the actual vacancy, or the filing of a deferred resignation, and the provisional appointment. The Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent shall post the notice as follows: (Education Code 5092)
 - a. In three public places in the district or, if applicable, trustee area.
 - b. On the district's website.
 - c. In a newspaper of general circulation published in the district, if such a newspaper exists.

3. The notice shall contain: (Education Code 5092)
 - a. The fact of the vacancy or resignation.
 - b. The date of the occurrence of the vacancy or the date of the filing of, and the effective date of, the resignation
 - c. The full name of the provisional appointee to the Board and the date of the provisional appointee's appointment
 - d. A statement notifying the voters that unless a petition calling for a special election pursuant to Education Code 5091 is filed in the office of the County Superintendent of Schools within 30 days of the provisional appointment, it shall become an effective appointment

The person appointed shall only hold office until the next regularly scheduled election for district Board members (Education Code 5091)

If within 30 days of the Board's appointment, registered voters of the district or, where elections are by trustee areas, of the trustee area, submit a petition for special election that the County Superintendent determines to be legally sufficient, the provisional appointment is terminated, and a special election shall be held in accordance with Education Code 5091 to fill the vacancy.

B. Appointment Due to Failure to Elect

1. When a vacancy occurs because no candidate or an insufficient number of candidates have been nominated (i.e., a failure to elect) and a district election will not be held, the Board shall appoint a qualified person to the office. This appointment shall be made at a meeting prior to the day fixed for the election and the appointee shall be seated at the organizational meeting as if elected at the district election. (Education Code 5328)
2. When an appointment is being made because of a failure to elect, the district shall publish a notice once in a newspaper of general circulation published in the district, or if no such newspaper exists, in a newspaper having general circulation within the district. This notice shall state that the Board intends to make an appointment and shall inform persons of the procedure available for applying for the appointment. (Education Code 5328.5)
3. When, as authorized by law, the Board seeks to make an appointment because of a failure to elect, the Board, by resolution, may approve any additional the procedures for selecting the person to be appointed to fill the vacancy.

Legal Reference: EDUCATION

CODE

5000-5033	Elections
5090-5095	Vacancies
5200-5208	Districts governed by boards of education
5300-5304	Elections
5320-5329	Order and call of election
5340-5345	Consolidation of elections
5360-5363	Election notice
5420-5426	Cost of elections
5440-5442	Miscellaneous provisions, elections
35107	Eligibility of board members
35178	Resignation with deferred effective date

ELECTIONS CODE

10600-10604	School district elections
11381-11386	Candidates for recall

GOVERNMENT CODE

- 1064 Absence from state 1770
- Vacancies: definition 3000-
- 3003 Forfeiture of office
- 3060-3075 Removal of other than by impeachment 6061
- One time notice
- 54950-54963 The Ralph M. Brown Act,

PENAL CODE

- 88 Bribery, forfeiture from office

UNITED STATES CODE, TITLE 18

- 704 Military medals or decorations

ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINIONS

- 58 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 888 (1975)
- 105 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 182 (2022)

Management Resources:

CSBA PUBLICATIONS CSBA District and County Office of Education Legal Services
Filling a Board Vacancy, rev. 2022

WEB SITES

CSBA: <http://www.csba.org>

California State Attorney General's Office, Quo Warranto Applications:
<http://ag.ca.gov/opinions/quo warranto.php>

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