

GOVERNING BOARD ELECTIONS

Board Member Qualifications

Any person is eligible to be a member of the Governing Board without further qualifications, if the person is 18 years of age or older, a citizen of California, a resident of the school district or, if applicable, the trustee area; a registered voter, and not legally disqualified from holding civil office. (Education Code 35107)

A person is not eligible to be a member of the Board if they have been convicted of an offense(s) as specified in law and the accompanying Exhibit, except when the person has been granted a pardon in accordance with law. A district employee duly elected to the Board shall resign from district employment, or shall otherwise cease being a district employee, before being sworn in. If a district employee duly elected to the Board is sworn in and remains a district employee, then the employment shall automatically terminate upon being sworn into office. (Education Code 35107)

The Board encourages all candidates to become knowledgeable about the role of Board members. The Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent shall provide a Board candidate, upon request by the candidate, with information that will enable them to understand the responsibilities and expectations of being a Board member, including information regarding available workshops, seminars, and/or training. Additionally, the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent shall provide a Board candidates, upon request by the candidate, the county election official's contact information and general information about school programs, district operations, and Board responsibilities.

Recalling a Board Member

A Board member may be recalled as permitted by Elections Code 11000-11386. To commence a recall of a Board member, proponents shall serve, file, and publish or post a notice of intention to circulate the recall petition as specified by law and any applicable county elections official directives. Additionally, the recall petition shall be in the format provided by the Secretary of State and include, among other things, an estimate of the cost of conducting the special election, as determined by the county elections official, in consultation with the district.

Within 14 days after the regular meeting at which the Board receives a certificate of sufficiency of signatures on a recall petition from a county elections official, the Board shall order an election to be held to determine whether the Board member named in the petition shall be recalled. The election shall be held not less than 88, nor more than 125, days after the date that the Board orders the election. However, the election may be conducted within 180 days after the issuance of the Board's order to consolidate the election with a regularly scheduled election. (Elections Code 11240-11242)

A recall election of a Board member shall be conducted in accordance with Elections Code 11381-11386.

If a recall of a Board member is successful, that Board member's seat becomes vacant and shall be filled in accordance with Education Code 5090-95 and Board Bylaw 9223 - Filling Vacancies.

Consolidation of Elections

The Board may consolidate Board elections with the local municipal or statewide primary or general election in accordance with Elections Code 1302. Additionally, if a regularly scheduled Board election held other than on a statewide election date results in a decrease in local voter turnout of 25 percent or more compared to the average local turnout for the previous four statewide general elections, the Board shall take action to consolidate Board elections with statewide elections in accordance with Elections Code 14051-14052.

In order to consolidate elections, the Board shall adopt a resolution and submit it to the County Board of Supervisors for approval not later than 240 days prior to the date of the currently scheduled district election. (Elections Code 10404.5)

Whenever a regularly scheduled Board election is changed due to consolidation of elections, the terms of office of incumbent Board members shall be extended to align with the next applicable election. (Elections Code 10404.5)

For each election, upon certification by the County Board of Supervisors, the Board shall declare who has been elected to the Board in accordance with law. (Election Code 15400)

A Board member whose term has expired shall continue to discharge the duties of the office until a successor has qualified by taking the oath of office. (Government Code 1302, 1360)

Each Board member shall reside in the trustee area they represent and shall be elected by voters residing within that trustee area. Trustee areas shall be balanced by population as required by state and federal law.

Following each decennial federal census, the Board shall adjust the boundaries of the district's trustee areas in accordance with Elections Code 21100-21180. (Education Code 5019.5)

The Board may review the district's Board election method to determine whether any modification is necessary.

If the district seeks to change its election method, the Board shall follow procedural requirements and hold public hearings in accordance with Elections Code 10010 and 21100-21150 before adopting a resolution at an open meeting specifying the change and obtain approval from the county committee on school district organization having jurisdiction over the district in accordance with Education Code 5019.

The election method or trustee-area boundaries in effect at the beginning of a Board member's term shall be used when any vacancy that occurs during that term is to be filled, even if, during the term, the district has adopted "by-trustee area" election method or trustee area boundaries have been adjusted.

Campaign Conduct

All candidates, including current Board members running as incumbents, shall abide by local, county, state, and federal requirements regarding campaign contributions, funding, and expenditures.

A Board member shall not expend, and a candidate shall not accept, any public money for the purpose of seeking elective office. However, the district may establish a dedicated fund for those seeking election to the Board, provided that the funds are available to all candidates who are qualified pursuant to Education Code 35107 without regard to incumbency or political preference. (Government Code 85300)

In order to help protect the public's trust in the electoral process as well as the public's confidence in the Board and district, the Board encourages all candidates to sign and adhere to the principles in the Code of Fair Campaign Practices pursuant to Elections Code 20440.

Statement of Qualifications

On the 125th day prior to the day fixed for the general district election, the Board secretary or Executive Assistant shall deliver a notice, bearing the secretary's signature and district seal, to the county elections official describing both of the following: (Elections Code 10509)

1. The elective offices of the district to be filled at the general election and which offices, if any, are for the balance of an unexpired term
2. Whether the district or the candidate is to pay for the publication of a statement of qualifications pursuant to Elections Code 13307.

Candidates for the Board may submit a candidate statement to the elections official for inclusion in the voter's pamphlet. Candidate statements shall be limited to no more than 200 words. (Elections Code 13307)

When the elections official allows for the electronic distribution of candidate statements, a candidate for the Board may, in addition to or instead of submitting a candidate statement for inclusion in the mailed voter's pamphlet, prepare and submit a candidate statement for electronic distribution.

The district shall assume no part of the cost of printing, handling, translating, ~~or~~ mailing, or electronically distributing candidate statements filed pursuant to Education Code 13307. As a condition of having candidate statements included in the voter's pamphlet, the district may require candidates to pay their estimated pro rata share of these costs to the district in advance pursuant to Elections Code 13307.

Tie Votes in Board Member Elections

Whenever the County Superintendent of Schools certifies to the Board that there is a tie vote such that it is impossible to determine which of two or more candidates has been elected to the Board, the Board shall immediately notify the candidates who received the tie votes of the time and place where the candidates or their representatives should appear before the Board. The Board at that time and place shall determine the winner by lot. (Education Code 5016)

Legal Reference

EDUCATION CODE

1006 Prohibition against school district employees serving on county board of education
35107 School district employees
35177 Campaign expenditures or contributions
35239 Compensation of governing board member of districts with less than 70 ADA
5000-5033 Elections of school district board members
5091 Vacancies; petition for special election
5220-5231 Elections
5300-5304 General provisions; conduct of elections
5320-5329 Order and call of elections
5340-5345 Consolidation of elections
5360-5363 Election notice
5380 Compensation; election officer
5390 Qualifications of voters
5420-5426 Cost of elections
5440-5442 Miscellaneous provisions
7054 Use of district property; campaign purposes

ELECTIONS CODE

20 Public office eligibility
1302 Local elections, school district election
2201 Grounds for cancellation
4000-4008 Elections conducted wholly by mail
10010 District Boundaries
10400-10418 Consolidation of elections
10509 Notice of election by secretary
10600-10604 School district elections
11000 Recall of officers
13307 Candidate's statement
13308 Candidate's statement contents
13309 Candidate's statement, indigence
14025-14032 California Voting Rights Act
14050-14057 California Voter Participation Rights Act
15400 Announcement of election results
18501 Election fraud
20440 Code of Fair Campaign Practices
21100-21180 FAIR MAPS Act

GOVERNMENT CODE

1021 Conviction of crime
1097 Illegal participation in public contract
12940 Unlawful discriminatory employment practices
1770 Vacancy of office
81000-91014 Political Reform Act
9055 Committing crimes against legislative power
9412 Refusing to appear

PENAL CODE

67	Giving bribes
68	Receiving Bribes
74	Acceptance of gratuity
88	Crimes against legislative power
98	Crimes against public justice
165	Bribes to members of city council
424	Embezzlement and falsification of accounts by public officers
661	Removal for neglect or violation of official duty
2772	Interfering with the work of prisoners
2790	Interrupting the work of prisoners

CALIFORNIA CONSTITUTION

Article 2, Section 2	Voters qualifications
Article 7, Section 7	Conflicting offices
Article 7, Section 8	Disqualification from office

COURT DECISIONS

Rey v. Madera Unified School District, (2012) 203 Cal. App. 4 th 1223
Randall v. Sorrell, (2006) 126 S.Ct. 2479
Sanchez v. City of Modesto, (2006) 145 Cal. App. 4 th 660
Dusch v. Davis, (1967) 387 U.S. 112

FEDERAL

52 USC 10301-10508	Voting Rights Act
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ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINIONS

105	Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 182 (2022)
85	Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 49 (2002)
83	Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 181 (2000)
81	Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 98 (1998)
69	Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 290 (1986)

MANAGEMENT RESOURCES:

California School Boards Association Publication: Legal Alert on the Impact of Senate Bill No. 415 on School Board Elections, January 2017

WEB SITES

CSBA District and County Office of Education Legal Services: <https://legalservices.csba.org/>
CSBA: <http://www.csba.org>
California Secretary of State's Office: <http://www.ss.ca.gov>
Fair Political Practices Commission: <http://www.fppc.ca.gov>
Institute for Local Government: <http://www.ca-ilg.org>

This exhibit is a non-exhaustive list of offenses the conviction of which disqualifies a person from holding public office, including as a Governing Board member of a school district, in the State of California.

1. California Constitution, Article VII, Section 8: Giving or offering a bribe to procure personal election or appointment
2. California Constitution, Article VII, Section 8: Committing bribery, perjury, forgery, malfeasance in office, or other high crimes
3. Penal Code section 67: Giving or offering a bribe to any executive officer in the state to influence any decision made by that officer in their official capacity
4. Penal Code section 68: While an executive or ministerial officer, employee, or appointee of the state, a county, a city, or another political subdivision of the state, asking for, receiving, or agreeing to receive any bribe to influence any decision made by that person in their official capacity
5. Penal Code section 74: As a public officer, for gratuity or reward, appointing another person to public office, or permitting another person to exercise or discharge the duties of their office
6. Penal Code section 88: While a member of the Legislature or of a legislative body of a city, county, city and county, school district, or other special district, committing any of various crimes against the Legislative power, including bribery and logrolling
7. Penal Code section 98: While an officer, committing any of various bribery and corruption crimes against the public justice as specified in Penal Code 92-100, including bribing or threatening judges or jurors
8. Penal Code section 165: Giving or offering a bribe to a member of a city council or a board of supervisors to influence any decision made by that member in their official capacity
9. Penal Code section 424: While an officer of the state or of any county, city, town, or district of the state, or while otherwise charged with the receipt, safekeeping, transfer, or disbursement of public moneys, appropriating such moneys for personal use, or refusing to pay any public moneys as required by law
10. Penal Code section 2772: Interfering with the work of prisoners employed at a road camp, or giving or attempting to give such prisoners any controlled substances, intoxicating liquors, firearms, weapons, or explosives of any kind
11. Penal Code section 2790: Interrupting the work of prisoners employed at a public park or camp, or giving or attempting to give such prisoners any controlled substances, intoxicating liquors, firearms, weapons, or explosives of any kind
12. Government Code section 1021: Committing designated crimes as specified in the California Constitution or state law
13. Government Code section 1097: While a public official, being financially interested in a contract made in their official capacity, or by any body or board of which he or she is a member, or aiding or abetting a public official in committing such a violation
14. Government Code section 9055: While a member of the Legislature or of a legislative body of a city, county, city and county, school district, or other special district, committing any of various crimes against the Legislative power, including bribery and logrolling

15. Government Code section 9412: While a member of the Legislature, refusing to appear before the Senate, Assembly, or any committee of the Legislature after being summoned to testify, or while appearing before the Senate, Assembly, or any committee, refusing to be sworn or to answer any material and proper question, or refusing to produce, upon reasonable notice, any material and proper books, papers, or documents in their possession and under their control
16. Elections Code section 20: Committing a felony involving accepting or giving, or offering to give, any bribe, the embezzlement of public money, extortion or theft of public money, perjury, or conspiracy to commit any of those crimes
17. Elections Code section 18501: While a public official, aiding the illegal casting of a vote at an election or otherwise facilitating the perpetration of election fraud

ADOPTED: 8/24/79

REVISION: 7/12/95; 2/25/04, 9/10/2014, 5/1//2019 2/26/2025