

Hunterdon County Clerk's Office

71 MAIN STREET, HALL OF RECORDS BLDG.
PO BOX 2900
FLEMINGTON, N.J. 08822-2900



LISA MENA
DEPUTY COUNTY CLERK
908-788-1378

CLERK'S OFFICE GENERAL
908-788-1221

LINDA MARTORANO
ASSISTANT DEPUTY
COUNTY CLERK
908-788-1217

FAX
908-782-4068

MARY H. MELFI
COUNTY CLERK / REGISTER OF DEEDS
908-788-1214
countyclerk@co.hunterdon.nj.us
www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/countyclerk.htm

January 2026

Dear School Board Member Candidate:

Please find all information necessary to file your petition as a candidate for School Board Member in the Annual School Election which will be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2026. The Petition is due in my office no later than 4 p m, Monday, July 27, 2026. Petitions may be filed during normal business hours Monday-Friday from 8:00am-4:30pm until the filing deadline of 4pm on Monday, July 27th.

Please check our website to see if there is a change in hours for the summer months. Notary is available on-site at no charge to notarize your petition if needed.

Included in packet:

The Nominating Petition
NJSA 19:60-9 Bracketing of Candidates
Key School Board Dates
New Jersey School Board Associate Information

There is a signature requirement of 25 Registered Voters in the District. You have the option to associate with other candidates providing one petition (you must all be seeking the same office & term) and include a three (3) word slogan designation on the ballot.

Please feel free to contact me at (908)788-1214 or via email at countyclerk@co.hunterdon.nj.us if you have any questions. You may also contact your local Business Administrator. The Public School Directory is available for viewing at:

<https://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/224/School-Directory>

Thank you for your interest in serving your community.

Sincerely,

Mary

Mary H. Melfi
County Clerk

NOVEMBER SCHOOL ELECTION NOMINATING PETITION

All candidates are required by law to comply with the provisions of "The New Jersey Campaign Contributions and Expenditures Reporting Act," N.J.S.A. 19:44A-1 *et seq.* For further information, please call the Election Law Enforcement Commission, (609) 292-8700.

To: Mary H. Melfi, Hunterdon County Clerk

NOMINATING STATEMENT:

We, the undersigned, are qualified voters of _____ School District of _____ (Municipality) in Hunterdon County, New Jersey.

We hereby endorse the person(s) hereinafter named as candidate(s) for membership on the Board of Education representing (Name of Municipality) _____ for the (Full or Unexpired) _____ term of (Number of Years) _____ years, and we hereby request that the name of said candidate(s) be printed on the official ballot to be used at the ensuing election for the Board of Education to be held during the General Election on November _____, 20_____.

NAME OF CANDIDATE(S)	RESIDENCE AND POST OFFICE ADDRESS	EMAIL

A. SIGNATORIES:

(At least twenty-five signatures, one of which may be the candidate's, are required to nominate a candidate.) We, the undersigned petitioners, hereby certify that the said candidate(s) listed above is/are legally qualified under the laws of the State to be elected a member of the _____ Board of Education.

<i>PRINTED NAME</i>	<i>ADDRESS</i>	<i>SIGNATURE</i>
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____
6. _____	_____	_____
7. _____	_____	_____
8. _____	_____	_____
9. _____	_____	_____
10. _____	_____	_____
11. _____	_____	_____
12. _____	_____	_____
13. _____	_____	_____
14. _____	_____	_____
15. _____	_____	_____
16. _____	_____	_____
17. _____	_____	_____
18. _____	_____	_____
19. _____	_____	_____
20. _____	_____	_____
21. _____	_____	_____
22. _____	_____	_____
23. _____	_____	_____
24. _____	_____	_____
25. _____	_____	_____

IMPORTANT NOTE: NOMINATING PETITION CONTINUED ON REVERSE SIDE

C. VERIFICATION:

_____ being duly sworn upon his/her oath, deposes and says that he/she satisfies the age, citizenship and in-state residency requirements and that the above petition is signed by each of the signers thereof in his/her own handwriting; that the said signers are, to deponent's best knowledge and belief, legally qualified to vote at the school district election at which the candidate shall be voted for, and that the said petition is prepared and filed in absolute good faith for the sole purpose of endorsing the candidate therein named and placing the candidate's name on the official ballot in order to secure his/her election as a member of the Board of Education.

SWORN OR AFFIRMED AND SUBSCRIBED BEFORE ME THIS

(Signature of person circulating petition)

_____ DAY OF _____, 20_____

NOTARY'S SIGNATURE

D. CANDIDATE'S ACCEPTANCE/OATH OF ALLEGIANCE: (Please attach additional copies of this page only for EACH candidate.)

I, _____, the candidate for membership on the Board of Education named in the foregoing petition, do hereby certify that I am qualified to be a member of the _____ Board of Education; that I consent to stand as a candidate for election and, if elected, agree to accept and qualify into that office. I further affirm and declare that I am not disqualified as a voter pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 19:4-1*.

I further do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of New Jersey and that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same and to the Governments established in the United States and in this State, under the authority of the people. "So help me God*."

SWORN OR AFFIRMED AND SUBSCRIBED BEFORE ME THIS

SIGNATURE OF CANDIDATE

_____ DAY OF _____, 20_____

PRINTED OR TYPREWRITTEN NAME OF CANDIDATE

NOTARY'S SIGNATURE

* No individual is required to swear that part of an oath which states "So help me God" and may instead state "I do solemnly, sincerely and truly declare and affirm."

QUALIFICATIONS:

Candidates filing a nominating petition for board membership must meet the following qualifications:

- He/She is a citizen of the United States of America.
- He/She must be at least 18 (eighteen) years of age to qualify for office.
- He/She must be able to read and write.
- He/She has been a resident of the municipality from which he/she is to be elected for at least one year preceding the date of the election.
- He/She is not disqualified as a voter pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 19:4-1*.
- He/She is not disqualified from membership for the conviction of crimes pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 18A:12-1**
- He/She is a registered voter in the district.

Within 30 days of election or appointment to the board, a member must undergo a criminal history background investigation through the New Jersey Department of Education.

No board of education member shall be directly or indirectly involved in any contract with, or claim against, the board.

E. DESIGNATION: (optional)

The above candidate(s), having been endorsed for the office mentioned in this petition, does/do hereby request that there be printed opposite his/her/their name(s) on the General Election ballot the following designation. This designation may contain no more than **three words** that convey the principles which the candidate(s) represent(s). The designation must not contain the name, or a derivative or any part thereof used as a noun or an adjective, of any political party that is entitled to participate in a primary election.

.....
Must not exceed three words

Completed nominating petitions **shall be filed with the County Clerk on or before 4:00 p.m. on the last Monday in July.** The County Clerk's office is located at Hall of Records, 71 Main Street, Flemington, NJ 08822 and the days, dates and business hours during which the office is open to receive petitions are: Monday – Friday 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. Notary services are available.

Received by: _____

HUNTERDON COUNTY CLERK/DESIGNEE

At: _____

TIME

DATE

KeyCite Yellow Flag - Negative Treatment
Proposed Legislation

New Jersey Statutes Annotated Title 19. Elections Subtitle 17. Absentee Voting Chapter 60. **School** Elections, Generally

N.J.S.A. 19:60-9

19:60-9. **School** election ballots; form and contents

Effective: May 30, 2018

Currentness

The ballot for a **school** election shall be a single or blanket form of ballot, upon which shall be printed in bold-faced type the words "OFFICIAL **SCHOOL** ELECTION BALLOT" or "OFFICIAL SPECIAL **SCHOOL** ELECTION BALLOT," as appropriate.

Any public question which is to be submitted to the voters at a **school** election shall be printed in a separate space below or to the right of, as the county clerk shall determine, the listing of **candidates** in the election.

In the columns in which are listed the titles of the offices to be filled at a **school** election and the names of **candidates** for those offices, the title of and the names of **candidates** for the office of member of the regional **board** of education shall appear above the title of and the names of **candidates** for the office of member of the local **board** of education. With respect to either office, in the event that one or more persons are to be elected to membership thereon for a full term and one or more persons are to be elected to membership thereon to fill an unexpired term, the ballots shall designate which of the **candidates** to be voted for is to be elected for a full term and which for an unexpired term. In all cases in which one or more persons are to be elected for an unexpired term, the ballots shall indicate the duration of that unexpired term.

The names of two or more **candidates** for any given term who have notified the secretary of the **board**, or the county clerk if the annual **school** election is to be held in November, in writing that they wish to be bracketed together with their chosen designation, if any, shall appear as a group in the appropriate location on the ballot, depending on whether the **candidates** are to be elected to fill an expired or an unexpired term.

All public questions to be voted upon at a **school** election by the voters of more than one municipality shall be placed first before any question to be voted upon at that election by the voters of a single municipality. When the public question to be voted upon by the voters of a regional **school** district is the amount of money to be raised for the use of the regional **schools** of the district, the amount of money determined to be the constituent municipality's share thereof may be identified on the ballot pursuant to N.J.S.18A:13-17.

Every county clerk shall have ready for the printer a copy of the contents of official ballots required by law to be printed for use at a **school** election, as follows: in the case of the annual April **school** election, not later than the 17th day preceding that election; in the case of any special **school** election, not later than two business days following receipt by the clerk of official notice of the complete content of the ballot to be voted upon at that election; and in the case of the annual November **school** election, in accordance with the provisions of R.S.19:14-1.

The ballots for an annual **school** election to be held simultaneously with the general election shall be in accordance with the provisions of chapter 14 of Title 19 of the Revised Statutes.

At an annual **school** election held simultaneously with the general election, the names of the **candidates** for the office of member of the **board** of education shall appear on the ballot separately from the names of **candidates** for other offices whenever possible. Any proposals for additional funds pursuant to paragraph (9) of subsection d. of section 5 of P.L.1996, c. 138 (C.18A:7F-5) shall appear on the ballot near the names of the **candidates** for the office of member of the **board** of education whenever possible.

Credits

L.1995, c. 278, § 9, eff. March 14, 1996. Amended by L.2001, c. 26, § 2, eff. March 8, 2001; L.2011, c. 202, § 37, eff. Jan. 17, 2012; L.2018, c. 20, § 4, eff. May 30, 2018.

N. J. S. A. 19:60-9, NJ ST 19:60-9

Current with laws through L.2019, c. 270 and J.R. No. 22

End of Document

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HUNTERDON COUNTY

KEY SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION DATES

2026

***On or Before Monday, July 27th by 4pm** – Deadline to file petition with County Clerk

***On or Before Thursday, August 6th** – Deadline for County Clerk to file determination of objection to a petition

***Monday, August 10th** – Ballot draw for position –County Clerk’s office

***Friday, August 14^h** - Deadline for a candidate to withdraw from Ballot

***Friday, August 21st** - Deadline to new candidate to file petition for vacancy

Any appointment to a School Board after the 3rd Monday in July shall not be required to run for office during that calendar year.

N.J.S.A.18A:12-15 (signed into law 12/27/13)

f. By a majority vote of the remaining members of the board after the vacancy occurs in all other cases.

Each member so appointed shall serve until the organizational meeting following the next annual election unless the member is appointed to fill a vacancy occurring within the 60 days immediately preceding such election if the annual election is held in April, or occurring after the third Monday in July if the election is held in November, to fill a term extending beyond such election, in which case the member shall serve until the organizational meeting following the second annual election next succeeding the occurrence of the vacancy, and any vacancy for the remainder of the term shall be filled at the annual election or the second annual election next succeeding the occurrence of the vacancy, as the case may be.¹

(cf: P.L.1996, c.153, s.1.)

FAQ

WHAT CANDIDATES WANT TO KNOW ABOUT BEING A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER

Below are frequently asked questions from school board candidates.

What are the main responsibilities of board members?

The board of education adopts policies under which the school district operates; oversees the budget; approves the curriculum; hires and evaluates the superintendent; represents the public during contract negotiations; and serves as a communications link between the community and the school system. School board members must remember that they have no authority except that which results from participation in decisions of the board during an official meeting. Actions, promises or commitments made by individual board members are without legal basis and have no binding commitment upon the district. Board members should be aware that they are elected to represent the entire district in all matters pertaining to education, and not any one segment.

How much time does it take to be a school board member?

A survey by the National School Boards Association found 63 percent of board members spend 11 to 50 hours a month on board duties – with some dedicating even more time to the position. As a school board member, you will provide oversight of one of the largest operations in your community. By accepting this responsibility, you effectively agree to attend regular and special board meetings, to review the board packet in advance of meetings, and to keep yourself informed about the issues on which you will make decisions.

What is the relationship between the board and superintendent?

The function of the school board is not to run the schools, but to see that they are run effectively. The board establishes school district policy and goals and communicates those goals to the superintendent. The superintendent is accountable to the board, and all other staff members are accountable to the superintendent. Teamwork between the board and superintendent is essential. Board members should look to the superintendent for leadership and guidance on educational procedures.

What is the relationship between board members and teachers?

The board is responsible for adopting the policies, rules and regulations that define the responsibilities of teachers (as well as other school employees), and for approving all employment contracts. Observation and evaluation of teachers is the job of the superintendent and those supervisors to whom he or she delegates the responsibility. The board's role is to set standards, or expectations, in the form of policies that detail the criteria the superintendent should use in recommending and evaluating staff members.

Board members should treat teachers and other staff members with respect, and must always observe the chain of command, recognizing that the appropriate channel for board/staff communications is through the superintendent. Board members should also keep in mind that the board can appoint, transfer or remove employees only upon the recommendation of the superintendent.

Who decides how district money is spent?

The school budget is the district's financial plan, and reflects all program needs. The board's budgeting responsibilities include discussing these needs and setting the parameters for budget development. The superintendent then works with other staff members to draft a budget that meets board goals and student needs, complies with state regulations, and stays within the district's financial resources. The board adopts the budget after a public hearing. After the budget is finalized, the superintendent is responsible for administering it. The board provides financial oversight by signing off on the bill list to approve expenditures throughout the year.

Who hires and evaluates a district's superintendent?

The selection of a superintendent is considered to be one of the most significant decisions a school board makes. A systematic procedure for selection should be used, requiring months of careful planning and well-organized steps in screening the most qualified candidates. In addition, state law requires that boards

evaluate superintendents annually. An effective evaluation process is based on the achievement of specific, agreed-upon goals between the board and the superintendent.

When are executive sessions permitted?

All meetings of the school board are open to the public, except for specific topics that may be discussed in "executive," or closed session. Executive sessions are limited to matters deemed confidential, including matters that by law must remain private, such as student records; pending litigation; topics involving attorney-client privilege; discussion of land purchases; negotiations strategies; and personnel issues.

The purpose of an executive session must be announced prior to going into closed session. Only the specifically announced subject may be discussed. Minutes must be kept and approved at a subsequent meeting, and then released to the public when the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

Will I have a say in deciding what is taught and which textbooks are used?

The board is required by state law to approve courses of study, including all textbooks and materials. The board should ask its administrators to demonstrate how these curriculum materials will help students achieve the state's Core Curriculum Content Standards. The board establishes what will be taught, when and where it will be taught, to whom it will be taught, and with what materials. Administrators and teachers manage and carry out the instructional tasks.

Since the decision-making authority is vested in the board and not in the individual members, you will be successful in achieving your personal goals only if you can convince a majority of the members of the board that your proposals have merit. As a board member, you have an obligation to express your views and then to accept and support the board's final decisions.

Will I be involved in collective bargaining with employee unions?

Since 1968, school districts have been required to negotiate contracts with their employee unions. A board member may be directly involved in collective bargaining if he or she serves on the negotiations committee. The board sets the guidelines used by the district's bargaining representative (a committee of the board, or a professional negotiator), who regularly reports to and takes direction from the board. Board members participate in negotiations and vote on the final agreement, unless a conflict of interest prevents the board member from participating or voting.

How can a board remove poor employees? What is tenure?

State laws, union contracts and local district policies spell out employment, discipline and release procedures for all employees. The local school district's administration and board follow these procedures.

New Jersey's education tenure laws are particularly significant. Tenure is the right of certain employees to continuing employment after working in the district for an established period of time. Traditionally, teachers have earned tenure after three years and a day, but a new law enacted on August 6, 2012, the TEACHNJ Act, adds a fourth year for teachers who were hired after the law's enactment. The new law requires enhanced evaluation procedures and requires that teachers meet additional criteria in order to earn tenure. It also reduces the time and cost of removing tenured teachers for reasons such as inefficiency or unbecoming conduct. After a local board files "tenure charges" to remove an employee, under the new law tenure charges will be decided by an arbitrator, not the Commissioner of Education as in the past. (It is important to note that since September 1991, newly hired superintendents are no longer eligible for tenure, but work under a negotiated three-to-five-year contract. During the contract, superintendents have tenure protection.)



New Jersey School Boards Association

Requirements of the NJ School Ethics Act

ATTENTION PROSPECTIVE SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES

Legislation, (P.L. 2011, c.202), signed by Governor Christie on Jan. 17, 2012 gives communities the option to change the date of the annual school board member election to November. Most communities have changed their Annual School Election from April to November. Please check with your local board of education office to confirm the date of the 2014 Annual School Election in your community.

The New Jersey *School Ethics Act* (N.J.S.A 18A:12-21 to 18A:12-33) requires local board of education members to

- File disclosure statements
- Avoid prohibited conduct
- Adhere to the Code of Ethics
- Undergo training in the responsibilities of school board membership

New Jersey administrative regulations (N.J.A.C. 6A:28-1 *et seq* and N.J.A.C. 6A:32-3.2) clarify school board members' responsibilities under the School Ethics Act. The basic requirements, as stated in the Act, are listed below.

DISCLOSURE

Each year by April 30 (or within 30 days after taking office), school officials, including board members, must disclose sources of income and the employment or contractual relationship of relatives with the school district. The disclosure statements are public records, kept by the executive county superintendent and the local school board secretary. The School Ethics Commission has access to the disclosure statements through the county office.

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

The Act's financial disclosure provisions require the reporting of only *sources* of income above a certain amount, but not the actual dollar amounts. Board members must report the sources of income for themselves and the members of their immediate families (spouse, and dependent children living in their household).

The financial disclosure statement must include—

- Sources of income exceeding \$2,000 for each family member during the prior calendar year. (Interest or securities income need not be reported unless the family member retains more than 10% of the ownership or control of the financial institution or business organization.)
- Sources of fees and honoraria earned by each family member during the prior calendar year, which totaled more than \$250 from a single source. (Fees and honoraria are payments for such services as personal appearances, speeches or writing.)
- Sources of gifts, reimbursements or prepaid expenses valued at more than \$250 from a single source that were received by each family member during the prior calendar year. (Gifts from relatives need not be reported. Relatives include spouse, children, parents or siblings of the board member.)

the board member or a member of his or her immediate family had an interest during the prior calendar year. (Interest in a business is defined as ownership or control of more than 10 percent of the profits, assets or stock of the business.)

PERSONAL/RELATIVE DISCLOSURE

The law also requires board members to disclose the following:

- The name and position of any relative (spouse, child, parent, sibling) or person related to the board member by marriage and employed by the school district in which the board member serves.
- The nature of any contract between the district and the board member or his or her relative or person related to the board member by marriage.
- The name of any business that has a contract with the school board and with which the board member or relative has one of the following relationships: (1) The board member or relative is employed by the business; or (2) The board member or relative receives compensation from the business; or (3) The board member or relative has an interest in the business. (Interest in a business is defined as ownership or control of more than 10 percent of the profits, assets or stock.)

PROHIBITED CONDUCT

The School Ethics Act also establishes ethical standards of conduct which serve as guidelines for the activities of school officials, including school board members. The standards are summarized below:

- a. School officials or immediate family members cannot have an interest in any business, or engage in any business, transaction or professional activity that is in substantial conflict with school officials' duties.
- b. School officials cannot use or attempt to use their positions to obtain unwarranted privileges, advantages or employment for themselves or anyone else.
- c. School officials must excuse themselves from any matter in which their objectivity might reasonably be expected to be impaired because of the financial involvement of themselves, an immediate family member, or a business in which they have an interest. School officials must also excuse themselves from any matter where they have a personal involvement that is or creates a benefit to the school official or an immediate family member.

whether compensated or not, which might reasonably be expected to prejudice his or her independence of judgment in the exercise of official duties.

- e. No school official may solicit or accept anything of value if given or offered for the purpose of influencing his or her official actions. This provision also applies to the official's immediate family members and to business organizations in which he or she has an interest. School officials, however, can solicit and accept campaign contributions if they reasonably believe the contributions are not given to influence their official actions.
- f. School officials cannot use or allow the use of their public office or any confidential information for personal financial gain or for the financial gain of either an immediate family member or business with which he or she is associated.
- g. A school official or business organization in which he or she has an interest cannot represent anyone other than the board in any matter pending before the board or involving the board, Labor union representational responsibilities are permitted.
- h. If a school official is a member of a particular group, he or she can vote on a matter that benefits that group so long as he or she is not benefited to a greater extent than other members of that group.
- i. An elected board member can request information for a constituent so long as there is no remuneration attached to the board member or the board member's immediate family.
- j. School officials and immediate family members may represent themselves in any proceeding in the school district that involves their personal (family) interests. (For example, this provision would permit a board member, acting as a parent, to contest his or her child's academic grade or discipline.)

CODE OF ETHICS

In addition, the School Ethics Act requires school board members to abide by the following Code of Ethics for School Board Members:

- a. I will uphold and enforce all laws, rules and regulations of the State Board of Education and court orders pertaining to schools. Desired changes shall be brought about only through legal and ethical procedures.
- b. I will make decisions in terms of the educational welfare of children and will seek to develop and maintain public schools that meet the individual needs of all children regardless of their ability, race, creed, sex, or social standing.
- c. I will confine my board action to policy making, planning, and appraisal, and I will help to frame policies and plans only after

the board has consulted those who will be affected by them.

- d. I will carry out my responsibility, not to administer the schools, but together with my fellow board members, to see that they are well run.
- e. I will recognize that authority rests with the board of education and will make no personal promises nor take any private action that may compromise the board.
- f. I will refuse to surrender my independent judgment to special interest or partisan political groups or to use the schools for personal gain or for the gain of friends.
- g. I will hold confidential all matters pertaining to the schools which, if disclosed, would needlessly injure individuals or the schools. In all other matters, I will provide accurate information and, in concert with my fellow board members, interpret to the staff the aspirations of the community for its schools.
- h. I will vote to appoint the best-qualified personnel available after consideration of the recommendation of the chief administrative officer.
- i. I will support and protect school personnel in proper performance of their duties.
- j. I will refer all complaints to the chief administrative officer and will act on the complaints at public meetings only after failure of an administrative solution.

TRAINING

The School Ethics Act requires all school board members to complete a training program conducted by the New Jersey School Boards Association on the skills and knowledge needed to serve as a board member. The School Ethics Act requires the training to be completed during the first year of the board member's first term in office and to include information regarding the New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJQSAC). Additionally, board members must attend training on school governance in each of the subsequent two years of the board member's first term in office, as well as an advanced training program on relevant changes to New Jersey school law within the first year of a board member's re-election or reappointment to an additional term. Also a board member must complete a training program on harassment, intimidation and bullying in the schools, within one year after being newly elected/appointed, or re-elected/reappointed. A board member is required to complete this program only once.

NJSBA provides this training through its Board Member Academy. For details on NJSBA's training programs, go to the "Training and Conferences" section of www.njsba.org or call (888) 88-NJSBA.



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**Campaign Reporting Requirements:
Contact the Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC)**

All candidates for school board office must comply with the provisions of the New Jersey Campaign Contributions and Expenditures Reporting Act. For further information, contact the Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC),

Toll free: 1-888-313-3532

Website:

<https://www.elec.nj.gov/forcandidates/overview.htm>

FAX: 1-609-633-9854