SCHOOL ELECTION CALENDAR 2027 WITH FORMS

Days From Election	Deadlines	Event (Special Instances Identified in Green)	MCA Citation	Forms
Not less than 145 days before*	**Thursday, December 10**	**Trustees call for an election.** The trustees must pass a resolution stating: 1) the date of the election; 2) the purpose of the election; 3) whether the election will be by mail or poll; 4) the voting locations and boundaries for each location, if there are multiple locations within a district (if changed from a previous school election the new locations must be specifically noted); and 5) the time the polls will open, if before noon. The trustees do NOT have to set levy amounts at this time; however, they must be set in time for the clerk to certify the ballot (not less than 40 days before the election). The resolution must be delivered to the county election administrator within 3 days of passage, but it need NOT be posted. The trustees must also appoint three election judges per precinct. • **Bond Elections** are subject to additional requirements (see 20-9-422, MCA). **Request for a mail ballot election** must be sent from trustees to the election administrator. Exception: Even if no request is received, the election administrator could decide to request a mail ballot election. **The deadline of 145 days ONLY applies to the regular school election.* ***Special elections must be called at least 70 days before the election.***	13-19-202 13-19-203 20-9-422 20-20-201 20-20-203	Declaration of Intent and Oath of Candidacy for Trustee Candidates Trustee Resolutions Calling for School Election
At least 142 days before (within 3 days of passage of the election resolution)*	**Monday, December 14**	**Last day to file resolutions for school election with county election administrator.** To assist with the provisions of late registration, include the name and best contact number for the district's election administrator with the resolution. **For special elections, the election resolution must be sent to the county election administrator within 3 days of passage (not later than 67 days before the election)*	20-20-201(2)(a)	
No earlier than 145 days, or later than 85 days before	**Thursday, December 10 through Monday, February 8**	**Trustee candidates file for election.** A Declaration of Intent and Oath of Candidacy must be filed with district clerk (regardless of who is running the election). **NO CANDIDATE MAY APPEAR ON THE BALLOT UNLESS THE CANDIDATE MEETS THIS DEADLINE.** *Candidates must be registered to vote by the filing deadline (exception for candidates turning 18 after the filing deadline and prior to the election).*	13-10-201 20-3-305	
85th day before the election	**Monday, February 8 (by 5 p.m.)**	**Last day trustee candidates may withdraw from the election.** Any candidate that has already filed for election, but wishes to withdraw their name, may do so by sending a statement of withdrawal to the election administrator.	20-3-305(3)(a)	
At least 70 days before	**Tuesday, February 23**	**Deadline for amendments to election resolutions.** The trustees may amend an election resolution passed at least 145 days prior to the election. Financial considerations not indicated in the initial resolution may be included in an amendment. *Special elections (elections held on a date other than the regular school election day) must be called at least 70 days before the election.*	20-20-201	

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At least 70 days before	**Tuesday, February 23**	**Deadline to call for a Special Election**. Special elections must be called at least 70 days before the election. A special election is an election held on a date other than a day specified for a primary election, general election or regular school election.	20-20-201	
Not later than 5pm the 65th day before the election	**Monday, March 1 (by 5 p.m.)**	**Deadline for write-in candidate for a trustee position on a school board to file Declaration of Intent** (must be filed with the district clerk, regardless of who is running the election**Votes only count for write-in candidates who file a Declaration of Intent.*	20-3-305(2)(b)	Declaration of Intent and Oath of Candidacy for Write-In Candidates
At least 60 days before	**Friday, March 5**	**Election administrator posts mail ballot election plan/timetable/sample instructions.** • **For elections conducted by the school district**: publish the mail ballot plan in a newspaper of general circulation, if one in the district and/or in 3 public places AND publish on the school district website, if active. • **For elections conducted by the county election office:** publish on the county election office website or other means of publication OR follow the publication instructions for elections conducted by school districts. Failure to publish plans by this date and in this manner default to a polling place election. School districts conducting their own elections must send a copy of the plan to the county election administrator.	13-19-205	
4 weeks preceding the close of regular registration	**Monday, March 8**	**Notice of close of regular registration.** The county election administrator publishes the notice of close of regular registration for school districts at least 3 times in the 4 weeks preceding the close of regular registration. Contact the county election administrator to coordinate that publication.	13-2-301	
Not less than 40 days before	**Thursday, March 25**	**Election administrator certifies ballot.** The election administrator prepares the final ballot form, listing all candidates and propositions to be voted upon. The ballot must then be delivered to the election administrator, if other than the clerk. *Trustees must pass a resolution stating exact levy amounts by this date for the clerk to certify the ballot.* This resolution must include the durational limit, if any, on the levy.	20-20-401	
Not more than 35 days before	**Tuesday, March 30**	**Deadline for mail ballot amendments**. The plan may be amended by the election administrator at any time prior to the 35th day before election day by publishing in the same manner as the original mail ballot plan.	13-19-205	
No later than 30 days before	**Friday, April 2**	**Election by Acclamation and Cancellation of Election - Notice.** If the number of candidates filing a nomination petition or filing a declaration of intent to be a write-in candidate is equal to or less than the number of open trustee positions to be elected, the trustees cancel the trustee election. They must then give notice that a trustee election will not be held. The trustee election may not be declared by acclamation until all candidate filing deadlines have passed. **Send a copy to the county election administrator to aid with the provisions of late registration.** ***A trustee election held in single-member or trustee nominating district is considered a separate trustee election for declaring the election by acclamation.*	20-3-313	Notice of Trustee Election Cancellation

SCHOOL ELECTION CALENDAR 2027 WITH FORMS

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30 days before any election	**Monday, April 5**	**Close of regular voter registration.** Registration forms postmarked by this date and received within 3 days are accepted for regular registration. Late registration must be completed at the county election office.	13-2-301	
Not more than 30 days before	**Monday, April 5**	**Contact your county election administrator** for the absentee ballot list.	13-13-212 20-20-312	
No later than the 30th day before	**Friday, April 2**	**Deadline to notify election judges of appointment.**	13-4-101	
Not more than 30 days before	**Monday, April 5**	**Performance Testing and Certification of Voting System.** The election administrator must publicly test and certify that the system is performing properly.	13-17-212	
Day after Close of Regular Registration	**Tuesday, April 6**	**Start of Late Registration.** Late voter registration starts and continues through election day. Late registration must be completed at the office of the county election administrator.	13-2-304	
Not less than 10 days, or more than 40 days before	**Thursday March 25 Through Saturday April 24**	**Notice of election is posted.** The election notice must be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the district if available, posted in at least three public places in the district AND posted on the district's website for the 10 days prior to the election, if the district has an active website. Notice using any other recognized media may be used to supplement the posting. The notice must include: 1) the date and voting locations for the election; 2) voting location hours; 3) each proposition to be considered by the electorate; 4) the number of trustee positions, if any, subject to election and the length of the terms for those positions; 5) where and how absentee ballots may be obtained; and 6) where and how late registrants may obtain a ballot on election day. • If the polling place has changed from the previous school election, that change must be referred to in the notice. • If more than one proposition will be considered in the same district, each proposition must be set apart and identified or placed in separate notices.	20-20-204	School Election Notices
At least 20 days before	**Wednesday, April 14**	**Absentee ballots available.** The election administrator prepares ballots for absentee voters. Remember to enclose four things in the absentee package. • The ballot, stamped official ballot (with stub removed); • Instructions for voting and returning the ballot; • A secrecy envelope, free of marks that would identify the voter; and • A self-addressed, return envelope with affirmation printed on the back of the envelope (affirmation must include a line for signature AND the elector's year of birth).	13-13-214 20-20-401	Absentee Voter Materials
Not before the 20th day or later than the 15th day	**Wednesday, April 14 through Monday, April 19**	**Mail ballots mailed.** If conducting a mail ballot election, all ballots must be mailed on the same day (the day noted in the district's mail ballot plan). If an inactive elector reactivates after the ballots are mailed, the elector should be provided with or mailed a ballot. If the elector reactivates after noon on the day before election day, the elector must come in on election day to receive a ballot.	13-19-207	

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Not more than 12 days or less than 2 days before	**Thursday, April 22 through Sunday, May 2**	**Absentee/Mail Ballot Counting Notice.** Districts must publish in a newspaper of general circulation in the county a notice indicating the method that will be used for counting absentee/mail ballots and the place and time that the absentee/mail ballots will be counted on election day. *This notice may be combined with the Publication of Information Concerning Voting Systems, the Polling Location Accessibility Notice and/or with the Notice of Election if the notice is published between the **12th and 10th day** prior to the election.*	13-15-105	Absentee/Mail Ballot Counting Notice
Not more than 12 days or less than 2 days before	**Thursday, April 22 through Sunday, May 2**	**Publication of Information Concerning Voting Systems.** Districts shall broadcast on radio or television or publish in a newspaper of general circulation in the county a diagram showing the voting system to be used by voters and a sample ballot (newspaper only), a statement of location of where the voting system to be used is on public display, and instructions on how to vote. *This notice may be combined with the Publication of Information Concerning Voting Systems, the Polling Location Accessibility Notice and/or with the Notice of Election if the notice is published between the **12th and 10th day** prior to the election.*	13-17-203	Notice of Information Concerning Voting Systems
Not more than 10 days or less than 2 days before	**Saturday, April 24 through Sunday, May 2**	**Polling Location Accessibility Notice.** Districts must publish in a newspaper of general circulation in the county a statement of the location of the polling places and whether each location is accessible or inaccessible. *This notice may be combined with the Absentee/Mail Ballot Counting Notice, the Publication of Information Concerning Voting Systems, and/ or with the Notice of Election if the notice is published **on the 10th day** prior to the election.*	13-3-105 13-3-207	Notice of Polling Place Locations and Accessibility Designations
Day before (By Noon)	**Monday, May 3**	**Deadline for absentee ballot requests.** Voters who wish to vote absentee may request an absentee ballot in writing or in person until noon the day before the election.	13-13-211 13-13-214	Application for Absentee Ballot
Day before	**Monday, May 3**	**Deliver certified copy of the lists of registered electors.** Before the day of election, the county election administrator shall deliver a certified copy of the lists of registered electors for each voting location to the district. The district shall deliver them to the election judges prior to the opening of a voting location.	20-20-313	
Election Day 	**Tuesday, May 4**	**ELECTION DAY.** The election administrator must prepare the polling places, printed ballots, ensure election judges are present, and conduct a fair and unbiased election. **Notify election judges of the names of write-in candidates**	Title 13 20-20-105 20-20-401 20-20-411	Display of Instructions for Electors Election Judges' Oath

SCHOOL ELECTION CALENDAR 2027 WITH FORMS

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No sooner than 3pm on the 6th day after the election	**Monday, May 10**	**The first date that provisional ballots may be counted.** Following the election, unresolved provisional ballots are sealed. These ballots may not be opened until after 3pm on the 6th day after election. The election judges convene, and a determination is made as to whether the ballots are counted. If there are provisional ballots in a school election, the canvass may not occur until after all provisional ballots are resolved.	13-15-107	Provisional Ballot Instructions
Following receipt of the tally sheets from all polls and within 25 days after the election	**By Friday, May 28**	**Trustees canvass the votes, issue certificates of election, and publish results.** Trustees review the tally sheets compiled by the election judges to ascertain their accuracy. Recounts are ordered, if necessary. If tally is complete and accurate, trustees issue certificates of election to successful candidates. The canvassed results shall be published immediately in a newspaper that will give notice to the largest number of people in the district.	20-20-415 20-20-416	Certificate of Election of Trustee Canvass of Votes and Results
Within 5 days after the official canvass	**Monday, May 10 through Wednesday, June2**	**Deadline for filing a petition for recount.** When a question submitted to a vote of the people is decided by a margin not exceeding ¼ of 1% of the total votes cast for and against the question, a petition for recount must be filed within 5 days after the official canvass.	13-16-201	Petition for Recount
Within 5 days of receipt of notice from the election administrator	**Monday, May 10 Through Monday, June7**	**Deadline for convening the School Recount Board.** When a tie vote has been certified to the election administrator or conditions have been met for filing a recount petition, the board shall convene at its usual meeting place to perform a recount. The recount must be completed within 5 days of receipt of official canvass or recount petition.	13-16-204 20-20-420	
Within 25 days of election	**By Friday, May 28**	**Deadline for trustees to hold organizational meeting** to elect chair and appoint clerk.	20-3-321	School Board Organization
By June 1	**Tuesday, June 1**	**Deadline for trustees to request county election administrator to conduct school elections for next year.** The school district clerk/election administrator is designated the election administrator for school elections. However, the trustees of any district may request the county election administrator (EA) to become the election administrator for school elections. The request must be made by a resolution of the board of trustees. If the county EA accepts, then he/she must perform all the duties the school clerk would have. The school district must assume all costs of the election.	20-20-417	Trustee Resolution – Request for County to Conduct Elections
Within 15 days after receipt of certificate of election	**By Friday, June 11**	**Candidate completes and files Oath of Office** with the County Superintendent. **Newly elected trustees may not be seated until the oath is filed. The issuance and the oath may be administered at the organizational meeting (below) but must be completed within 15 days of issuance.* ***In the event of a recount, the deadline for a candidate to complete and file the oath is 15 days from receipt of the certificate of election.*	20-3-307 20-1-202 1-6-101	

SCHOOL ELECTION CALENDAR 2027 WITH FORMS

1-1-307, MCA. Postponement of day appointed for an action when it falls on a holiday or Saturday. Whenever any act of a secular nature, other than a work of necessity or mercy, is appointed by law or contract to be performed upon a particular day, which day falls upon a holiday or a Saturday, such act may be performed upon the next business day with the same effect as if it had been performed upon the day appointed.

If the deadline, as read in statute, is phrased "not later than…" the deadline does not move to a later date but an earlier one.

Additional References:
Sample forms can be found at this address: School Finance Election Webpage

Election Manual: School Election Handbook

MT Secretary of State's Office: Secretary of State's Election Webpage

Candidates for trustee positions in 1) a first-class district located in a county with populations of 15,000 or more; or 2) a county high school district with an enrollment of 2,000 or more are required to file a C-1-A Statement of Candidate within 5 days of becoming a candidate. For reporting dates and instructions contact the Montana Commissioner of Political Practices at: Commissioner of Political Practices Webpage.