

Parent Association Election Guide

Scheduling Parent Association (PA¹) Elections

- It is the association's responsibility to conduct annual elections each year between the third Wednesday in May and the third Friday in June to ensure that there will be a PA in place during the summer and for the opening of school in the fall. The PA must establish a nominating committee to facilitate elections.
- If a nominating committee cannot be formed, the PA executive board must schedule expedited elections to take place in the spring and provide notice to the general membership of the date and time at least ten school days prior to the election date. All nominations are taken from the floor during an expedited election meeting.
- The principal should be notified of the date and time of the annual PA election by April 1st of each school year. If the principal is not notified by May 1st, she/he must request a scheduled date and time for the election meeting from all PA executive board members. If the PA executive board members fail to respond within 7 school days, the principal must notify all parents and convene a meeting in May to form a nominating committee and schedule elections. Principals may obtain a meeting notice template for convening parents to form a nominating committee from OFIA.
 - In instances where there is not enough time for the principal to convene a nominating committee and for the committee to provide proper notice of nomination and election meetings, the principal should convene the parents to schedule a date to conduct expedited elections in lieu of establishing a nominating committee.

The Role of the Nominating Committee

- The procedures for establishing a nominating committee and the committee's duties must be outlined in the PA bylaws.
- In general, the nominating committee will be responsible for soliciting candidates, ensuring candidate eligibility, and presiding over the nomination meeting and the election meeting.
- Whenever possible, the nominating committee should ensure that information, both written and oral, is provided in languages spoken by parents other than English.
- **Soliciting Candidates:** Typically, the nominating committee will send notices to all members informing them of the need to hold annual spring elections. The notices should include:
 1. A list of all available executive board positions (The PA bylaws may reserve non-mandatory positions to be elected in the Fall).
 2. An acknowledgement that the only qualification for all offices is that the candidate be a parent of a child in the school
 3. Term limits, if they are included in the bylaws

¹ For the purposes of this guide, the term PA refers to both parent associations and parent-teacher associations.

4. The mechanism(s) by which candidates should notify the nominating committee of their interest in running
 - Many nominating committees include a tear-off so that members have a way to communicate their nominees to the nominating committee.
5. The date that nominations will be officially closed. (Nominations may be closed the night of the election, immediately prior to voting.)

▪ **Conducting a Nomination Meeting:**

1. **Written Notice:** The nominating committee must send written notice to the PA membership indicating when and where nominations will be held. The notice must be dated and distributed at least 10 school days before the nomination meeting. Notice may be sent by email, but the nominating committee must also send notice by backpack or postal mail. Meeting notice templates are available on the [DOE Parent Leadership page](#).
2. **The Flow of the Nomination Meeting**
 - **Ensure that the Recording Secretary is Recording Minutes** – Minutes must be taken at every PA meeting. It is especially important to have a thorough record of what transpired during the nomination meeting. If the recording secretary is not available, a parent member should be selected to take minutes.
 - **Welcome** – Once all parents have signed in and assembled in the election room, welcome members and emphasize the essential role an effective PA plays in the development of a strong school community.
 - **Quorum** – Ensure that representation by at least 8 PA members, including a minimum of 2 executive board members and 6 parent members are present (see CR A-660, Section I.H.4). The PA bylaws may specify a quorum that exceeds the minimum provided in CR A-660. In the absence of a quorum, a PA cannot conduct nominations.
 - **Open Nominations:**
 - Nominating committee members should be introduced and their names should be recorded in the minutes.
 - Announce the names of all candidates who have been nominated prior to the nomination meeting (i.e., those names submitted using the tear-off provided in the nomination meeting notice).
 - Remind members that they can nominate themselves or someone else.
 - Remind members that they can be nominated for more than one office, but can only hold one elected office.
 - Request nominations for each position one at a time. Be sure to read the duties of office for each position as provided in the bylaws prior to accepting nominations (i.e., “We will now accept nominations for the position of President. The President shall preside at all meetings of the association and...”).
 - Be sure that the recording secretary is recording the correct spelling of the names of all candidates

- **Close Nominations:**
 - Call for nominations a total of three times for each office before announcing the official close of nominations and moving on to the next office.
 - Announce that once nominations are officially closed, no additional candidates may be added to the ballot the night of the election.
- **Verifying Candidate Eligibility:**
 1. The nominating committee must determine candidate eligibility in consultation with the school principal or her/his designee. The only qualification for any office is to be a parent of a child in the school.
 - “The definition of parent includes: birth or adoption parent, step-parent, legally appointed guardian, foster parent, and “person in parental relations” to a child currently attending the school.” -- CR A-660, Definitions
 2. Parents members are ineligible to run for the following reasons:
 1. They have been prohibited from serving on a PA executive board by the Chancellor, Chancellor’s designee, or the Chief Family Engagement Officer.
 2. They are excluded by a term limit provision present in the bylaws.
 3. They do not meet the PA membership requirements outlined in CR A-660, Section I.D.1.
 4. They are members of the nominating committee.
 3. Parent members with one child graduating and another child entering the school may only run for a non-mandatory office during Spring elections.
 4. A candidate’s eligibility should be verified as soon as possible after the candidate has been nominated. Candidates who are determined to be ineligible should be informed immediately.
- **Conducting an Election Meeting:**
 1. **Before the Election Date:**
 - **Principal Notification:** The nominating committee must inform the principal of the proposed date and time of the election meeting to ensure that a building permit and security will be arranged. The principal should be notified by April 1, but no later than May 1.
 - **Review of PA Bylaws:** The nominating committee should review the PA bylaws to ensure compliance with A-660. Remember, any PA member may present a motion at a general membership meeting to amend a provision of the bylaws that is not in compliance with A-660. Amendments that bring the bylaws into compliance must be voted on immediately after the motion is presented (see CR A-660, Section I.H.1).
 - *Reminder:* The nominating committee should check to see whether the bylaws set term limits. If so, the committee must be mindful that some candidates might be barred from running the night of the election.
 - **Identifying Certifying Staff Member:** The nominating committee must find out which school staff member will be present to verify voter eligibility and certify the election. Remember the Parent Coordinator cannot serve this function.

- The nominating committee should advise the selected staff member that they should have an ATS biographical roster printout containing student and parent names to verify voter eligibility.
- **Ballot Preparation:**
 - The nominating committees may close nominations during a separate scheduled nomination meeting or choose to close nominations the night of the election.

Nominations Closed Before Election Night	Nominations Closed on Election Night
<p>If nominations have been closed in advance of the election meeting, ballots should be prepared ahead of time and must list all candidates alphabetically by surname for each office.</p>	<p>If nominations will be closed the night of the election, the nominating committee should inquire whether a copier will be available to run off ballots. If so, the candidates' names can be printed on the ballots after the close of nominations and copied that night. Otherwise, the nominating committee must use a ballot that will allow voters to write in the name of their chosen candidate for each office. In such cases, the candidates will be listed on chart paper alphabetically by surname for each office.</p>

- The nominating committee must ensure that a ballot box be available.
- **Written Notice:** The nominating committee must send written notice to all PA members informing them of the date and time of the election meeting. The notice must be dated and distributed at least 10 school days before the election meeting. Notice may be sent by email, but the nominating committee must also send notice by backpack or postal mail. If nominations have been closed, the notice may include the names of the candidates listed alphabetically by surname. Meeting notice templates are available on the [DOE Parent Leadership page](#).
 - The PA bylaws may include a process for the distribution of candidate statements prior to the elections, but after nominations have been closed. All candidates must be given an equal opportunity to participate.

2. **Election Night**

- **Materials:** The nominating committee should have the following items prepared
 - Stickers, post-its, etc. (see voter eligibility recommendation below).
 - Ballots – one copy of the template if a copier will be available, otherwise be sure to have enough blank ballots for the assembled members. Translated ballot templates are available on the [DOE Parent Leadership page](#).
 - Attendance sheets
 - Chart paper and markers – if no copier will be available.

- Pens – for the voters.
 - Ballot box – if the school is unable to provide one
 - [Tally Sheets](#) – you will need at least one per elected office
 - [PA Election Certification Form](#)
- **Conducting the Election**
 1. **Verify Voter Eligibility** – It is important to ensure that only eligible PA members receive ballots. The mechanism used to verify voter eligibility should be reliable and transparent.
 - *Recommendation* – As parents enter the school building have them sign in. At this time the staff member verifying voter eligibility should check the parents' names against the ATS printout. Once a parent's eligibility is verified, the staff member should give her/him a sticker, post-it, etc. and inform the parent that during ballot distribution she/he will have to exchange the sticker, post-it, etc. for a ballot.
 - If nominations have been closed in advance of the election meeting, ballots will have been prepared ahead of time and may be distributed to voters as their eligibility is verified.
 2. Elections - **Uncontested Offices**
 - If there is only one candidate for an office, inform the members that a member must make a motion for the recording secretary to cast one vote to elect the candidate for office. A vote of the membership is required for approval of the motion. The result of the motion must be recorded in the minutes (see CR A-660, Section I.G.1.e.).
 3. Elections - **Contested Offices**
 - Ballots are required.
 - If nominations were closed prior to the night of the election meeting, ballots should already be prepared and ready for distribution.
 - If nominations were closed the night of the election meeting, ballots should be prepared while candidates are provided an opportunity to present brief statements to the membership.
 - If a copier is available, invite the candidates to present brief statements while the names are written *alphabetically by surname* on the ballot template and ballots are copied.
 - If a copier is not available, invite the candidates to present brief statements while the names are written *alphabetically by surname* for each office on chart paper. Blank ballots should be ready for distribution.
 - Verify that the ballot box is empty. The box should remain in the front of the room in full view of the assembled members.

- Instruct the members on how to complete the ballot. For ballots with the candidates' names preprinted, voters check the box next the name of the candidate they choose for each office. If blank ballots must be used, voters should be informed that all candidates are listed on chart paper (alphabetically by surname for each office) at the front of the room and that they must write the full name of their chosen candidate for each office on the ballot provided.
- Inform the members that incorrectly completed or illegible ballots will not be counted.
- Begin ballot distribution. *Remember that only eligible voters should receive ballots.* If stickers, post-its, etc. were distributed to verified voters, those distributing ballots should exchange one ballot for one sticker, post-it, etc.
- Instruct voters to deposit their completed ballots in the ballot box.
- Once all ballots are deposited, announce that voting is closed.
- Ask for three volunteers from the membership to tally the ballots in view of the membership.
 - *Recommendation* – One person can remove the ballots from the ballot box and unfold them. A second person can read the names of the selected candidates. The third person can mark down the votes on the [tally sheets](#).
- Once all ballots have been tallied, the nominating committee should instruct the volunteers to re-check their totals. Make sure the number of ballots does not exceed the number the number of tallied votes for each office. Likewise, make sure that the number of ballots does not exceed the number of present eligible voters.
- Have the volunteers initial or sign the tally sheet.
- Request one of the volunteers to announce the winning candidate for each office.
- The nominating committee should inquire whether the elected president is willing to serve as the school's representative to the Presidents' Council. If the elected president is unwilling or unable to do so, the nominating committee should follow the process contained in the PA bylaws to elect a permanent designee.
- Thank all candidates for running and encourage them to stay interested and involved. Note that additional leadership opportunities will arise, such as chairing various committees.
- Newly elected PA officers should work with the principal or designated staff member to complete the [PA Election Certification Form](#). The principal or designated staff member should certify the election by signing the form.
- Once PA elections are complete, the PA should proceed with filling SLT parent member vacancies (provided that proper notice was given).

- *Special Note:* While it's not necessary to announce, *Robert's Rules of Order* provides the following: "If the vote is taken by ballot, there is always the opportunity to write in a name. In this case, a person can win as a write-in candidate without ever being nominated."

3. **After the Election**

- Ensure that the principal is provided with a copy of the PA Election Certification Form. The original must be maintained by the PA along with the ballots, tally sheets, attendance sheets, and minutes of the election meeting.