

# **TENNESSEE SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDACY**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What Is A School Board?**

The local board of education is a policy-making legislative body of which the individual member is an official of the state. Except during an official meeting, a board member has no more power, authority or jurisdiction over school matters than any other citizen in the community.

A school board's primary duty is to provide the opportunity for the best and most appropriate education for all children entrusted to its care.

No greater honor can be bestowed upon a citizen than membership on a local school board. The office calls for the highest character and a dedicated interest in the welfare of all children, youth and adults in the community. The best, most capable and most farsighted citizens of each community should be drafted to serve on the school board. To be a school board member is to serve the future of your community, state, nation and world.

### **Who Is Eligible?**

In order to be eligible to be elected to a Tennessee school board, one must be:

- A citizen of Tennessee
- At least 18 years old
- A resident of the school district
- A high school graduate (or G.E.D.) A registered voter in the county
- All elections for school board members shall be conducted on a non-partisan basis. (TCA 49-2-201(a)(1))

### **What Are The Eligibility Requirements?**

- Basic qualifications of TCA 8-18-101; and
- Shall reside within and be a qualified voter of the district represented. (TCA 49-2-201)
- Shall file with the county election commission proof of graduation from high school or receipt of a GED, evidenced by a diploma or other documentation satisfactory to the commission. (TCA 49-2-202)
- No member of the county legislative body nor any other county official shall be eligible for election as a member of the county board of education. (TCA 49-2-202)

### **How Do I Get Started?**

- **Qualifying Petitions**  
Candidates may obtain a nominating petition from the county election commission office. The petition may either be issued directly to the candidate or may be issued to a third party on behalf of the candidate.
- **Voters' Signatures**  
The nominating petition must be signed by at least twenty-five (25) votes that are registered in the candidate's district. Each voter who signs the petitions must also supply his or her residence address as it appears on his or her voter registration record. No ditto marks or post office box addresses can be accepted. Each voter must sign his or her own name. Printed signatures are unacceptable.

- **Filing Deadlines**

Independent candidates shall qualify by filing all nominating petitions by 12:00 noon on the first Thursday in April for an August General Election or on the third Thursday in the third calendar month before an election.

### **How Do I File The Necessary Paperwork?**

- **Where to File**

Candidate must file petition at the county election commission office in the county in which he/she resides. If the elected office the candidate is seeking represents more than one county, it is the candidate's responsibility to provide certified duplicate of the petition to each county by 12 Noon on the qualifying deadline. The copies can either be hand delivered or mailed certified mail. There are no filing fees.

- **Appointment of Treasurer Form**

Upon becoming a candidate, a political treasurer must be appointed unless the candidate meets the requirements for exemption. No funds may be received or expended until a treasurer has been appointed. A candidate may appoint himself or herself to this position. A new form must be filed if the treasurer is changed. All signatures on this form must be witnessed. This form must be filed with the county election commission office.

- **Statement of Interest**

Candidates are required to file this form no later than thirty (30) days following the qualifying deadline. No dollar amounts need to be listed. If a candidate is running for the same office he or she holds and filed an annual statement of interest in JANUARY of the same year as the election, then the candidate is not required to file another statement.

### **What About Campaign Contributions and Disclosure Filings?**

- **When to File:** You will be notified by mail of filing deadlines. Financial disclosure forms do not apply to those positions that are part-time and the compensation is less than \$500 dollars per month and as long as the candidate does not spend more than \$1000 dollars on his or her campaign. (TCA 2-10-101(b))  
Where to File: The County Election Commission Office.
- **Reporting Periods:** Reporting periods include four (4) quarterly reports and a pre-general report.

### **Are There Different Requirements For Special School Districts and Municipal School Districts?**

- All the same paperwork must be filed with the county election commission, however;
- If the election dates are different from the regular county election dates the schedule will be different
- Check with your county election commission for specific information

### **What Are The Requirements For Board Members After Being Elected?**

State Board of Education Rules and Regulations require each member of a local board of education to participate annually in seven hours of training provided through the School Board Academy. All board members must complete the basic core modules (Policy, Board/Superintendent Relations, Vision, Advocacy and Finance) within a five-year period after assuming office. Any local board member who fails to attend training may be removed from office.

New school board members must attend a two-day Orientation session in Nashville, plus a seven-hour training session in their first year. Upon completion of each required session, board members will receive Academy credit and \$75 stipend from the State Department of Education.

### **What Are The Key Responsibilities Of A School Board Member?**

The decisions made by the school board affect virtually every important aspect of local schools, from boundaries to bus schedules, curriculum to clubs, and funding to field trips.

The school board hires the director of schools, the “chief education officer” responsible for managing district staff and operations.

The school board sets the priorities and adopts the budget that determines how millions in federal, state, and local tax dollars are spent.

The school board sets goals for student achievement and evaluates progress toward those goals. The school board decides how school boundaries are drawn and whether schools are constructed or closed.