

BALDWINSVILLE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Information for Board of Education Candidates

2024

Introduction

This information is provided to individuals interested in serving on the District's Board of Education. It is intended to inform candidates and prospective candidates regarding the campaign process, the voting process, and the role of a Member of the Board of Education. This is a summary prepared by the District as a courtesy, and in an effort to ensure those interested in serving are aware of the basic rules and expectations for a fair and transparent election, as well as with what will be expected if elected to office. Candidates and prospective candidates are responsible for understanding and complying with all legal requirements.

Please note that the District is a Central School District within the meaning of the New York State Education Law, and uses a system of poll registration for voters. The rules for the nomination of Board candidates and the conduct of a school election may be different for other types of school districts.

Additional information on Board candidacy is available through the New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA) at:

<https://www.nyssba.org/member-services/running-for-the-school-board/>.

The Role of a Board of Education Member

1. Board Members are elected to represent the interests of the Baldwinsville Central School District and the students we serve. Board Members must be prepared to divest themselves from personal and professional conflicts of interest, as defined by the General Municipal Law and [Board Policy 6110 \(Code of Ethics for Board Members and All District Personnel\)](#), prior to service.

The Board of Education is a corporate body authorized to exercise only those powers and perform those duties expressly delegated to it under the law. The Board of Education adopts those policies and rules it deems necessary to effectuate its legal obligations, and delegates authority to the administration relative to the implementation of daily school district affairs.

Prospective candidates may wish to review the Board's Policy Manual, as available on the District's website, for more information on the governance and operation of school district affairs.

The Duties and Responsibilities of a Board of Education Member

Board Members must commit to attending the regular meetings of the Board of Education, and a failure to do so can result in removal from office. Board Members must adhere to the District's Code of Ethics, the District's Code of Conduct, and generally comport themselves as a role model for our students.

Board Members act only as a corporate body, and based upon a majority vote of the entire Board. While divergent opinions are common and indeed indicative of thoughtful consideration of the issues before the Board, Board Members have an obligation to support the will of the majority of the Board once a vote is taken. Board Members must understand that the Board of Education often shares authority with the Superintendent of Schools, with examples of such shared authority being the appointment of employees and conferral of tenure or permanent employment status after an employee's service in a probationary period.

Board Members should be prepared to receive and review information provided to them in advance of Board meetings, such that they are in a position to act on matters on the meeting agenda. They must also be aware that there are times when information cannot be shared with them by the administration until such time as the Board is called upon to review and make a determination on the issue. There are circumstances in which Board neutrality must be preserved prior to review and decision on a matter. Board Members must also understand and adhere to strict rules regarding the confidentiality of certain information provided to them.

Newly elected Board Members are required to attend six (6) hours of training within their first year of office. This training is mandatory under the New York State Education Law, and failure to complete the training timely is grounds for removal from office. The training is designed to further inform Board Members about their role and obligations. The District will provide newly elected Board Members with information on when the training is available and make every effort to facilitate a new Board member's participation.

Qualifications to Serve

In order to serve on the Board, an individual must:

- Be a qualified voter of the District. A qualified voter of the District is one who is (1) at least 18 years of age; a United States Citizen; and not otherwise adjudicated to be an incompetent.
- Be a District resident for a continuous and uninterrupted period of at least one year.
- Be able to read and write.
- Not have been removed from school district office within the previous year.
- Not reside with another member of the Baldwinsville Central School District Board of Education as a member of the same family (for example, spouses).

- May not be a current employee of the District. Current employees wishing to run for the Board should seek additional information on separation from employment in connection with candidacy for the Board.
- May not simultaneously hold another incompatible public office (for example, tax collector or treasurer).

Concerns regarding a candidate's qualifications to serve may be directed to the District

Clerk. **Campaigning for a Seat on the Board**

Nominating Petitions

Interested and qualified candidates must file a nominating petition with the District Clerk no later than 5:00 p.m. on Monday, April 22, 2024. The petition must be signed by at least 55 qualified voters of the District. A qualified voter is one who is at least 18 years of age, a United States Citizen, a resident of the District for at least 30 days prior to the vote on May 21, 2024, and who is not otherwise disqualified from voting (for example, as a result of certain criminal convictions). It is recommended that candidates secure more than the minimum number of signatures in the event some signatures are disputed or must be discounted.

Candidates may, but are not required, to use the sample nominating petition form available in the District Clerk's office.

Placement on the Ballot

The Education Law sets forth a process for determining the order of nominated candidate names on the ballot. This process will take place the day after the deadline for submission of nominating petitions, and involves a random selection of names for placement on the ballot. Candidates or a designated representative of a candidate are permitted to attend.

Campaign Expenditure Reporting

Candidates are required to file sworn (notarized) campaign expenditure reports in connection with the election if expenditures on the candidate's behalf and with the candidate's approval exceed \$500.00. Reports must be filed with the District Clerk and the Commissioner of Education:

- On or before the 30th day before the election, which this year is Monday, April 22, 2024 (thirty days prior to May 21, 2024 is Sunday, April 21, 2024, and therefore, the deadline falls to the next business day of Monday, April 22, 2024);
- On or before the 5th day before the election, which this year is Thursday, May 16, 2024;
and

- Within 20 days after the election, which this year is Monday, June 10, 2024; and
- Within 24 hours of receipt of any contribution or loan greater than \$1,000, if received after the deadline for the most recent report but before the election.

No report need be filed if the candidate expended nothing, or the only expenditures were for personal expenses, which when combined with total expenditures incurred by others on the candidate's behalf, are \$500.00 or less. It is recommended that candidates consider filing a report even if this exception applies.

Candidates must file a report with the District Clerk (but not the Commissioner of Education) when expenditures, as well as contributions received, did not exceed \$500.00.

“Personal expenses” are limited to travel and incidental related expenses; writing/printing/preparing the transmission of a letter or other publication not issued at regular intervals and which contains a statement of the candidate's position upon public or other questions; stationary and postage; and telegraph, telephone and other public messenger services. “Personal expenses” are limited to those that are directly and personally incurred and paid by the candidate.

Please note: individuals or groups making expenditures on behalf of a candidate without the candidate's approval must file a sworn statement with the District Clerk and the Commissioner of Education indicating the candidate did not approve of the expenditure. Expenditures of this nature are limited to \$25.00 and are not included for purposes of the candidate's expenditure reports, as described above.

The District does not monitor or otherwise ensure that candidates comply with campaign expenditure reporting obligations. Candidates are responsible for compliance with the requirements under the Education Law, and are encouraged to seek competent guidance or counsel of their own choosing with respect to their obligations.

Campaign Activities

School resources may not be used in furtherance of any campaign. This includes use of District copiers, printers, office supplies, email, listservs, and the like. It also includes use of (or use of images of) the District's buildings, facilities and equipment, such as classrooms and school buses. Similarly, use of the District's logo, mascot and other District-specific images during the campaign or on behalf of candidates is prohibited. The District has an obligation to ensure its resources are not used for partisan political purposes, and therefore candidates should expect special diligence in the District's monitoring of the potential use of its resources. Any suspected use of the District's resources for partisan activity should be reported to the Superintendent of Schools immediately.

Endorsements by labor unions or interest groups are permissible so long as no District resources are used in furtherance of the endorsement. The District takes no position on endorsements.

The District may host a “Meet the Candidates” night. Equal opportunity will be provided to any candidate wishing to participate. Communications at any “Meet the Candidates” night must be consistent with pre-established District protocols, for example, a time limit per candidate, and requirements for behavior on school property as set forth in the District’s Code of Conduct. The District may also afford candidates the opportunity to present brief biographical and information on the reasons for running for office in a District newsletter. Again, equal opportunity will be provided to any candidate wishing to participate, and candidates must submit information consistent with pre-established protocols such as word counts. The District reserves the right to ensure any candidate information is presented in a manner appropriate for a District-sponsored publication.

The District requests that all candidates conduct a campaign in a professional and civil manner fitting for the position of School Board Member. Candidates should remember that Board Members are role models for students, and should comport themselves accordingly throughout the campaign process.

Electioneering

Electioneering is generally defined as advocating for or against a particular candidate or proposition. Electioneering is strictly prohibited within 100 feet of the entrance to the polling location on the day of the vote. Signs and markers will be posted. Any suspected electioneering should be reported to the District’s election workers immediately, and any prohibited electioneering will be promptly addressed.

It is permissible for candidates to be present at the polling location so long as no electioneering takes place. Candidates should use extreme caution and avoid any appearance of electioneering activities on the day of the vote. Unlike with federal, state and local elections, there is no authority for candidates to have poll watchers present on the day of the vote.

Voting

Qualifications to Vote

Unlike federal, state and local elections, there is no requirement for an individual to be registered to vote in order to cast a ballot at the School District election. So long as an individual is a United States Citizen, is over age 18, has lived in the District for thirty (30) days prior to the vote, and is not otherwise disqualified from voting, the individual is permitted to vote. Challenges to voter qualifications must be made to an Election Inspector prior to when the individual casts a ballot, and such challenges may be overcome by an individual’s issuance of a voter declaration.

The Role of Election Workers

Election workers will be appointed to work the School District election. Please remember that these individuals are volunteering to perform a public service, and must be treated with respect and civility. Election workers have specific obligations under the New York State Education Law that may be different than in other types of elections. Please do not assume that all practices and procedures typically associated with a federal, state or local election will also apply to a School District election, as certain rules may be different.

Election workers will have the ability to request the assistance of the District's administration and/or law enforcement to ensure order is maintained on the day of the vote.

Absentee, Military and Early Mail Ballots

The legal notice of the Annual Meeting and General Election will have information on the availability of absentee, military or early mail ballots. Applications for all are processed by the District Clerk. The District Clerk is not authorized to provide an absentee ballot to anyone other than the individual who applied for and is entitled to receive the ballot. Absentee, military and early mail ballots must be received by the District Clerk by the close of polls on the day of the vote to be canvassed. The Education Law sets forth the rules for potentially disqualifying absentee or military ballots, for example, if the oath on the envelope in which the ballot is returned is unsigned.

Counting the Votes

Interested individuals may be present for the counting of the ballots after the polls close, so long as they observe the rules established by the District. Presence is limited to observing the process. An individual's presence cannot interfere with the work to be performed by the appointed election workers; those individuals will be provided with sufficient space and autonomy to perform their work without disruption or intrusion.

Announcement of the Results

The results of the vote will be announced as soon as possible, which will likely be the evening of May 21, 2024. The results of the election are final as of the time this announcement is made. There is no requirement or authority for the District's Board of Education to confirm or approve of the vote results. Unlike in some other types of elections, there is no authority for an automatic vote recount in the event of narrow vote margins.