How to Navigate Running for School Board

November 4, 2026

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Candidate Livestreams

09/23/2026

- **How to Navigate Running for School Board: Understanding the Board Member's Role**

10/07/2026

- **How to Navigate Running for School Board: Petition Circulation**

10/21/2026

- **How to Navigate Running for School Board: The Statement of Economic Interests**

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- **How to Navigate Running for School Board: Petition Filing**

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Petitions and Objections



How, when, where, and what to file, and how the objection process works

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IASB | How to Navigate Running for School Board, Part 4 | November 4, 2026

What we will cover today



Part 1: Your nomination papers

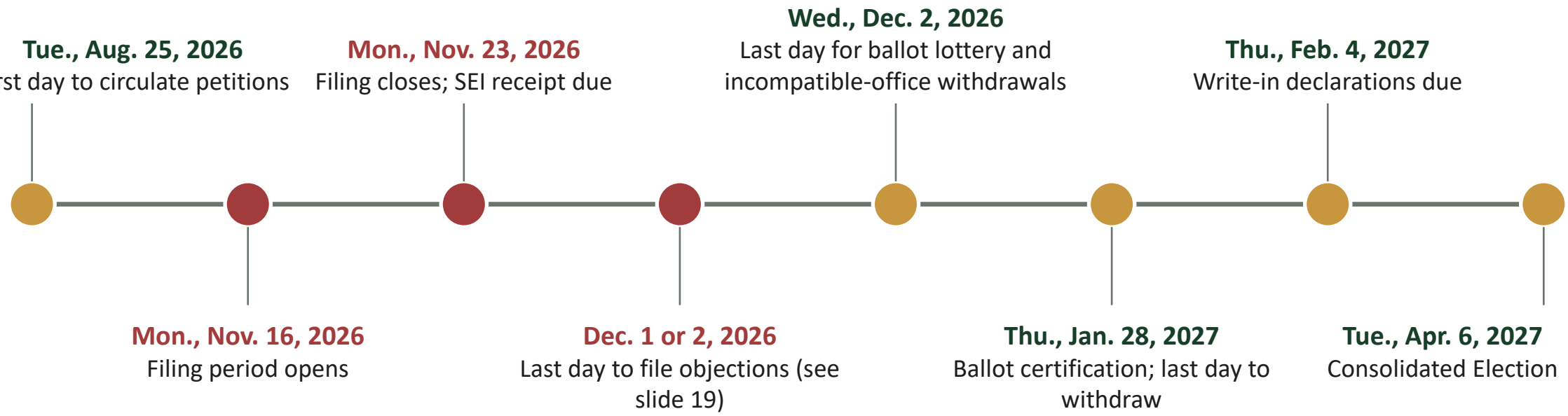
- What goes in the packet
- Where and when to file
- Signatures, signers, and circulators
- Statement of Candidacy and Statement of Economic Interests
- Assembling and filing the packet
- The mistakes that end candidacies



Part 2: The objection process

- Who can object, when, where, and how
- Who decides: the electoral board
- How the hearing works
- Common grounds for objections
- Judicial review and the ballot

The 2026-2027 calendar at a glance



Sources: 10 ILCS 5/10-4, 10-6, 10-7, 10-8, 10-15, 17-16.1; 105 ILCS 5/9-10, 9-11.1; SBE 2027 Election and Campaign Finance Calendar (issued June 29, 2026).

Part 1: Your nomination papers

How, when, where, and what to file



What goes in your packet

REQUIRED

Petition sheets

Original sheets signed by voters and circulators. SBE Forms P-7 / P-7A (2027 Candidate's Guide, p. 48).

Statement of Candidacy

Sworn before a notary. Nonpartisan SBE Form P-1A. Goes on top of the packet.

SEI receipt

Receipt from the county clerk showing you filed your Statement of Economic Interests.

IF IT APPLIES

Name changed within the last 3 years? The petition must show "formerly known as" and you must attach an affidavit listing prior names and dates (105 ILCS 5/9-10).

OPTIONAL

Loyalty Oath (the Guide notes courts have held the requirement unconstitutional) and the Code of Fair Campaign Practices. Leaving these out is not a defect.

Where and when to file

Where

County clerk (or county board of election commissioners) of the county where the district's principal office is located

Not the school district office, the board secretary, or the regional superintendent

If the district lies entirely within a municipal board of election commissioners' jurisdiction, file with that board

105 ILCS 5/9-10; 10 ILCS 5/10-6

When

Nov. 16 to Nov. 23, 2026 (141 to 134 days before the election)

Check your clerk's office hours for the filing week, including the last day

The clerk acknowledges acceptance in writing within 7 days or on the last day for filing, whichever is earlier

10 ILCS 5/10-6; 105 ILCS 5/9-10

Ballot order

- Names are certified in the order petitions are filed
- Everyone in line at opening on Nov. 16 is deemed filed at the same time; a lottery breaks the tie
- Petitions filed in the last hour are deemed filed simultaneously

105 ILCS 5/9-11.1; 10 ILCS 5/10-15

How many signatures do you need?

50

Board of Education
or 10% of the voters residing in the district, whichever is less

25

Board of School Directors
or 5% of the voters residing in the district, whichever is less

105 ILCS 5/9-10

"There is no close enough."

Jackson-Hicks v. East St. Louis Bd. of Election Comm'rs, 2015 IL 118929, ¶ 37

The Illinois Supreme Court held a statutory minimum signature requirement is mandatory; falling short removes the candidate from the ballot.

Build a cushion. Expect some signatures to fail (unregistered, outside the district, illegible, duplicates). Many practitioners advise gathering roughly double the minimum. The School Code sets a minimum, not a maximum.

Get the petition heading right before you circulate

1. **District**
   Full name and number of the school district

2. **Signatures**
   The required number (or percentage) of voters

3. **You**
   Your name and residence address, city or village, and township

4. **Office**
   “Member of the Board of Education” (or Board of School Directors)

5. **Term**
   Full term or vacancy (unexpired term), and pick only one

6. **Election**
   “Consolidated Election to be held on April 6, 2027”

The rules

Identical on every sheet (10 ILCS 5/10-4)

Complete it first, then copy blank sheets for circulating

Uniform sheet size

Use the SBE form; the School Code form is in 105 ILCS 5/9-10

Your name as it will appear on the ballot

You may use

- Your given name or names
- Initials
- A nickname you are commonly known by
- Any combination of these, with your surname

You may not use

- Political slogans
- Titles or degrees (“Dr.,” “Rev.,” “Ph.D.”)
- A nickname that implies a title, degree, or professional status

Be consistent. Use the same name on your petition heading and your Statement of Candidacy. Name changed in the last 3 years (other than marriage, divorce, or adoption)? Disclose it on the petition and attach the affidavit.

105 ILCS 5/9-10

Who may sign your petition



Each signer must

- Be a registered voter who resides in the school district
- Sign in his or her own proper person; no one signs for a spouse, parent, or child
- Write or print a residence address: street address, city or village, county, and state
- Sign petitions for no more candidates than there are seats to be filled (SBE Guide, p. 21)

10 ILCS 5/10-4; 105 ILCS 5/9-10



Signatures most often challenged

- Signer not registered, or registered at a different address
- Signer lives outside the district boundary
- Missing or incomplete address
- Same person signed twice
- Signature does not match the voter registration record
- One person signed for another

Circulators: who may collect signatures, and how

Age

18 or older, or 17 if turning 18 by April 6, 2027 and otherwise qualified to vote (10 ILCS 5/3-6(c))

Citizenship

Must be a U.S. citizen (10 ILCS 5/10-4)

Residency

Need not live in the district; you may circulate your own petitions (SBE Guide, p. 21)

Presence

Must personally witness every signature on the sheet; no petitions left on a counter or table

Timing

No sheet circulated before Aug. 25, 2026 (90 days before the last filing day)

Sworn statement

Signs the circulator's statement at the bottom of each sheet before a notary

The Statement of Candidacy

What you swear to

- Your residence address
- The office you seek
- That you are legally qualified for that office
- That you have filed (or will file before the filing period closes) your Statement of Economic Interests
- A request that your name be printed on the ballot

10 ILCS 5/10-5



Use SBE Form P-1A (nonpartisan)



Sign it in front of the notary, not ahead of time



Name, address, and office must match your petition heading



“Qualified” means on the date of the election: citizen, 18+, one-year district resident, registered voter (105 ILCS 5/10-10)

After the board rules



Judicial review

Within 5 days after service of the decision, file a petition in the circuit court of the county where the hearing was held

Name the electoral board, its members, and the prevailing parties

Serve each respondent by registered or certified mail, and file proof of service, within the same 5 days

Hearing within 30 days after the petition is filed

10 ILCS 5/10-10.1

On the ballot

Certification is due Jan. 28, 2027. If the objection was sustained, the ballot reads “OBJECTION SUSTAINED”; if still pending or on review, “OBJECTION PENDING.”

The write-in route

Write-in declarations are due Feb. 4, 2027 (61 days out). A candidate removed after that date on a sustained objection may file a write-in declaration up to Mar. 30, 2027 (7 days out).

10 ILCS 5/10-15, 17-16.1

Statement of Economic Interests in three steps

1. File the SEI

With the county clerk of the county where the district's principal office is located

2. Get the receipt

Filing online through the clerk's system? Make sure you receive a written or printed receipt

3. File the receipt

With your nomination papers, no later than the close of filing on Nov. 23, 2026

No receipt, no candidacy. Nomination papers “are not valid” unless the candidate files the county clerk's receipt, either earlier in the same calendar year or within the filing period. File the receipt even if you think you are covered.

105 ILCS 5/9-10, 10-10; 10 ILCS 5/10-5; 5 ILCS 420/4A-101.5, 4A-105, 4A-106.5, 4A-108

Assembling and filing the packet

1

Notarize

Each circulator signs the circulator's statement before a notary

2

Order

Statement of Candidacy on top, then the petition sheets

3

Fasten

In book form, securely, at one edge; paper clips and clipboards are not secure

4

Number

Number the petition sheets consecutively, starting with 1

5

Copy

Make a complete copy of everything before you file

6

File

File the originals, and ask for a file-stamped copy or written receipt

Originals only. File the original signed sheets, not photocopies. Blank sheets may be copied before circulation.

Once filed, it is final. A filed petition cannot be withdrawn, altered, or added to. Review everything before you hand it over.

10 ILCS 5/10-4; SBE 2027 Candidate's Guide, p. 19

Full term or vacancy, withdrawals, and duplicate filings

Full term or vacancy

If you petition for both a full term and an unexpired term at the same election, you must withdraw from one by written declaration.

105 ILCS 5/9-10

When is a vacancy on the ballot?

No election if the vacancy occurred with fewer than 868 days left in the term, or fewer than 88 days before the next regular election; the appointee serves out the term.

105 ILCS 5/10-10

Filed more than one set?

The clerk notifies you; you have 3 business days to cancel earlier sets. If you do not respond, only the first set counts.

10 ILCS 5/10-6.2

Withdrawing

Written request, signed and acknowledged before a notary, filed by Jan. 28, 2027. Incompatible offices: withdraw from all but one by Dec. 2, 2026.

10 ILCS 5/10-7

Ten mistakes that end candidacies

1. Too few valid signatures, with no cushion
2. Signers outside the district or not registered
3. Someone signs for a spouse or family member
4. Circulator did not witness every signature
5. Circulator's statement unsigned, incomplete, or not notarized
6. Headings differ from sheet to sheet
7. Wrong office, district, term, or election date in the heading
8. No SEI receipt filed by the close of filing
9. Sheets not fastened securely or not numbered
10. Filed in the wrong office or outside Nov. 16 to 23

Before you file, compare your packet to the Candidate Checklist on p. 15 of the SBE 2027 Candidate's Guide.

Part 2: The objection process

Who can object, when, where, how it is decided, and what comes next



Objection basics: who, when, where, and what



Who

Any legal voter of the school district. The objector does not have to be a candidate.



When

Within 5 business days after the last day for filing. For this cycle: Dec. 1 or Dec. 2, 2026 (next slide).



Where

In the office where the nomination papers were filed (the county clerk or board of election commissioners).



What

A written objector's petition plus 2 copies, stating the objector's name and residence address, the objections in full, the objector's interest, and the relief requested.

10 ILCS 5/10-8. Objection petitions filed without 2 copies "shall not be accepted."

The objection deadline: count business days

Mon 11/23	Tue 11/24	Wed 11/25	Thu 11/26	Fri 11/27	Sat-Sun	Mon 11/30	Tue 12/1	Wed 12/2
Filing closes	Day 1	Day 2	Thanksgiving	Day 3?	Weekend	Day 3 or 4	Day 4 or 5	Day 5 (SBE)

The rule

"Business day" means a day the election office is open to the public at least 7 hours. Thanksgiving is a State holiday; the Friday after is not on the statutory list.

10 ILCS 5/1-3(22), 1-6, 10-8

The SBE calendar

Lists Wednesday, Dec. 2, 2026 as the last day to file objections, which assumes the Friday after Thanksgiving is not a business day. A note in the same entry refers to Dec. 1.

SBE 2027 Election Calendar

The practical answer

Ask your county clerk whether the office will be open at least 7 hours on Nov. 27. If you are objecting, file by Tuesday, Dec. 1 and remove the question.

Practice pointer

Who decides: the County Officers Electoral Board



County Clerk
Chair



State's Attorney
Member



Clerk of the Circuit Court
Member

Each may act through a designee. The school board does not hear objections to its own candidates.

10 ILCS 5/10-9(2), (2.5)

Variations

County board of election commissioners: that board serves as the electoral board

District entirely within a municipal election commission: that commission serves

Multi-county district: the board of the county where the principal office is located

Member is a candidate for that office: a substitute serves

How the process runs

1

Objection filed
With the clerk, original plus 2 copies

2

Papers sent
Clerk transmits to the board chair by noon, 2nd business day

3

Call issued
Chair sends the call within 24 hours; sheriff serves it

4

Hearing
3 to 5 days after the chair receives the papers

5

Evidence
Rules adopted; subpoenas; records examination

6

Decision
In writing, stating which objections are sustained

What the board decides

- Are the papers in proper form?
- Were they filed on time and as the law requires?
- Are they genuine?
- Should the objections be sustained?

The records examination

For signature objections, boards typically have each challenged signature compared against voter registration records, with both sides able to observe. The results are often what decides the case.

10 ILCS 5/10-8, 10-10

Common grounds for objections

Signatures

- Not registered at that address
- Outside the district
- Not genuine
- Duplicate
- Count falls below the minimum

Circulators

- Statement missing or unsworn
- Did not witness signatures
- Circulated before Aug. 25
- Not qualified to circulate
- Pattern of fraud on sheets

The papers

- Heading errors or inconsistencies
- Statement of Candidacy defects
- Not fastened or numbered
- Photocopies, not originals
- Candidate not qualified

Timing and SEI

- Filed outside Nov. 16 to 23
- Filed in the wrong office
- No SEI receipt
- SEI filed late

Mandatory or not? Courts treat many Election Code requirements, including the minimum signature count, as mandatory. Some technical defects may be excused if the purpose of the requirement was served. The answer depends on the requirement and the facts.

Practical pointers for candidates and objectors



If an objection is filed against you

- Read the objection immediately and note the hearing date
- Keep your copy of everything you filed
- Consider talking with an election-law attorney right away
- Gather proof: signer and circulator affidavits, registration records
- Attend the hearing and the records examination
- Mind the 5-day judicial review deadline



If you are considering objecting

- Confirm you are a registered voter of the district
- Review the filed papers (they are public records)
- State each objection fully and specifically
- File the original plus 2 copies, on time
- Be prepared to prove what you allege
- Expect to attend the hearing and the records examination

Where to find the rules

SBE 2027 Candidate's Guide

Issued July 7, 2026. Petitions (pp. 19-23), objections (pp. 25-26), Candidate Checklist (p. 15), board of education forms (p. 48), school directors (pp. 50-51).

SBE 2027 Election and Campaign Finance Calendar

Issued June 29, 2026. Every deadline for the April 6, 2027 Consolidated Election.

Your county clerk

Filing location and hours, petition forms, SEI filing and receipts, voter registration lookups.

The statutes

Election Code, 10 ILCS 5/10-4 through 10-10.1; School Code, 105 ILCS 5/9-10, 9-11.1, 10-10; Governmental Ethics Act, 5 ILCS 420/4A.

Both SBE publications are available at www.elections.il.gov. They are guidance, not law; where they differ from the statutes, the statutes control.

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Questions



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General information only; not legal advice for any individual candidate or objector.