

What Happens If A District Does Not Have Enough Board Candidates?

When the end of candidate filing approaches, some districts might be worried if they have only one candidate or no one has signed up for the election. What happens?

First of all, there will be an election even if the district does not have a single candidate registered for the election. The difference is that all write-in votes will be counted, even if the person the ballot is cast for did not register as a write-in candidate with the county clerk. This could mean that a person could be elected to school board with as little as one single vote – not very representative of the community.

For this reason, MSBA strongly recommends that districts – and specifically school board members – take action to prevent an election with fewer candidates than positions:

- **Recruit.** Board members need to recruit candidates from the community. No one knows better than an existing school board member what it takes to be a good board member. Do not assume that this is the superintendent's job. It is awkward for a superintendent or other administrator to recruit for these positions because Board members will ultimately supervise the administrative staff.
- **Advertise.** Some districts spend more dollars and time soliciting milk bids than Board candidates. Make sure that the local newspaper, radio and TV stations know that there are positions open. Make sure that district stakeholders such as employees, parents, the PTO, booster clubs, and community civic groups know that the district is recruiting Board members as well. Include the candidate filing deadline in district newsletters, texts, and on the district website.

Even if the filing deadline comes and goes, the district can still recruit a write-in candidate. That person will just need to work diligently to get his or her name out into the community as it will not appear on the ballot. Encourage the write-in candidate to register with the county clerk(s) and advertise!

For more information on this or other election questions, contact the School Laws Department at (800) 221-6722.