



Filing as a write-in candidate for a seat on a board of education

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Citizens in a school district may file as write-in candidates for open seats on boards of education. This may be an appealing option for a citizen if, after the candidate filing deadline has passed, the board of education has more open seats than potential candidates. This fact sheet includes information to help citizens understand this form of candidacy. The information is of a general nature. Readers should seek the advice of legal counsel with specific legal problems or questions.

What is a write-in candidate?

A write-in candidate is someone whose name does not appear on the ballot, but whose name must be written on the ballot by voters. Only the names of those write-in candidates who have filed a valid declaration of intent to be a write-in candidate will be counted.

What qualifications must I meet in order to be a write-in candidate?

A write-in candidate must meet all of the qualifications of the office being sought. In order to run for the board of education, you must be at least 18 years old and both a resident in the school district and registered to vote in the district for 30 days before the election.

Do I have to file paperwork to be a write-in candidate for my school board?

Yes. Any person wanting to be a write-in candidate must file a [declaration of intent to be a write-in candidate](#). Only write-in candidates who have filed a valid declaration of intent will have votes counted in the election for which the candidate filed (Ohio Revised Code ([RC 3513.041](#))). Petitions should be filed at the office of the county board of elections in the county where the school district is located ([RC 3513.041](#)). If the school district is in more than one county, the petition is filed in the most populous county of the school district. If the position is for the governing board of an educational service center (ESC), and the ESC is in more than one county, the petition should be filed with the board of elections in the county where the ESC's central administrative offices are located.

Can I file a declaration of intent to be a write-in candidate if the county board of elections has already rejected my nominating petition for the office of school board in same election?

No. A board of elections is prohibited from accepting a declaration of intent from a person if that person has already filed a nominating petition to be a candidate for the same office at the same election ([RC 3513.041](#)).

When is the deadline to file paperwork to be a write-in candidate for my school board?

A write-in candidate must file a [declaration of intent to be a write-in candidate](#) before 4 p.m. of the 72nd day preceding the election. For the specific candidate filing deadline date, please visit OSBA's Revised Code Dates and Deadlines calendar or check with your county board of elections.

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For more information on this subject, please contact OSBA's Division of Legal Services

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Is there a filing fee?

Yes. At the time of filing a declaration of intent to be a write-in candidate, the candidate must pay a \$30 filing fee ([RC 3513.10](#)), which is the same filing fee required for all candidates for board of education or ESC governing board.

How do voters vote for a write-in candidate?

Voters will know there is a write-in candidate for a specific office because a blank line will appear on the ballot with "Write-in" below the line. Voters won't be given a list of official write-in candidates, but election officials will provide a list, if requested. Voters who know the name of a write-in candidate they support can simply type in the name on the voting machine or write in the name on an absentee ballot.

How many votes does a write-in candidate have to win in order to be elected to a board of education?

Write-in candidates need only poll more votes than their opponents. There is not a threshold number of ballots that is required to be cast for a write-in candidate in order for the write-in candidate to be elected.

The information in this fact sheet is intended as general information. It should not be relied upon as legal advice. If legal advice is required, the services of an attorney should be obtained.