

BULLETIN BOARD

Election of Officers— A Few Tips

With new board members taking office in January, many boards hold officer elections during the January monthly meeting. Michigan statute does not dictate the method through which school boards conduct officer elections, but local board bylaws may outline some requirements about how the officer elections should be conducted. Always look to your bylaws first to determine what rules must be observed. If there are some parts of the procedure that are open-ended, you could consider the following:

Nomination Process

Many boards gather nominations by having the presiding officer call for nominations from the floor. Each board member has the opportunity to make nominations. Nominations need not be seconded, but it is acceptable for members to second a nomination.

Voting Methods

As with voting on other school business, voting for officers must be done in such a way that the public knows how each member voted. No secret ballots are allowed under the Open Meetings Act for school board officer elections.

Unless your local bylaws describe otherwise, you could consider the following voting methods:

Voice Vote

The presiding officer calls for votes of each nominee in the order in which they were nominated. The chair asks for ayes and nays. If the first nominee does not get a majority of votes, the chair moves on to the next nominee. The first nominee with a majority of the votes is elected to the officer position.

Roll Call Vote

Board members are called on one by one to say which nominee they support. Voting continues until one nominee gets the majority.

Roberts Rules of Order does not allow the lowest vote-getter to be dropped because, in the end, that person may be the compromise candidate who eventually gets the majority.

Be Careful With Premeeting Discussions

As with other board action, the Open Meetings Act requires that deliberations of a school board about who would be the best person for each officer position must be conducted at a public meeting. Premeeting discussions by a quorum of the board over the phone, email or text could be construed as deliberations outside the required public meeting and be violations of the OMA.



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