

STOKES COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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Changes in Board of Education Candidate Filing and Elections

Following a 2019 change in state law, Board of Education elections in Stokes County are now partisan contests (a candidate filing for office must be registered to vote with one of the recognized political parties in North Carolina). They were previously nonpartisan (a candidate did not file for office as a member of a political party). This change began with the elections in 2020.

As a result, candidates for Board of Education now follow the same schedule and requirements as candidates for other partisan contests (county commissioner, Register of Deeds, etc.):

- Submit a notice of candidacy (aka “file for office”) during the candidate filing period for the primary election. The filing period for Board of Education is now the same as that of other partisan seats – county commissioner, sheriff, etc. Candidate filing will typically take place in December of odd-numbered years, with the primary election taking place the following March. This schedule may change based on legislative changes or court-ordered alterations. Dates for the candidate filing period will be posted on the elections website, and local media will provide notice. Please contact the Stokes County Board of Elections office for more information as a scheduled candidate filing period approaches.
- Be registered to vote as a member of one of the recognized political parties in North Carolina (Democratic, Libertarian, or Republican); a candidate must be affiliated with one of these parties. They can no longer submit a notice of candidacy for Board of Education during the filing period and also be registered as an Unaffiliated (often referred to as ‘independent’) voter.
- Be registered with that political party for at least 90 days prior to the date of their filing for office
- Participate in the primary election if enough candidates from a particular political party file for office

(For instance, if there are two Board of Education seats on the ballot, and three candidates from a recognized political party file for the office, there will be a primary to determine the two candidates from that political party who will advance to the November general election. The top two vote-getters in this example would move on to the general election. If there are two seats on the ballot, and only one or two candidates from a political party file, they will automatically advance to the general election.)

Additional information:

- In a general election, as with other partisan contests, the Board of Education candidate's political party affiliation will appear below the candidate's name (When Board of Education contests were nonpartisan, party affiliation did not appear on the ballot.). Also, the Board of Education contest will be grouped with other partisan races on the ballot, and there will not automatically be write-in lines (as there were when Board of Education was nonpartisan).
- When Board of Education elections were nonpartisan, candidate filing took place in June and July of even-numbered years, and all candidates automatically advanced to the general election without the possibility of having to participate in a primary. That is no longer the case. As noted previously, candidate filing will take place at the same time as other partisan contests, and candidates will participate in a primary if necessary.
- Prior to the law change, the top 2 vote-getters for Board of Education received a 4-year term, and the 3rd-place vote-getter received a 2-year term. That is also no longer the case. All winning candidates now receive a 4-year term. There were 3 open seats for Board of Education on the ballot in 2020, and the top 3 vote-getters in the general election received a 4-year term. In 2022, there will be 2 open seats on the ballot. The top 2 vote-getters in the 2022 general election will also receive a 4-year term. This 3-2-3 pattern will alternate during elections in even-numbered years.
- As with other partisan contests, an individual who wishes to run for Board of Education as an unaffiliated candidate or a write-in candidate must complete a petition process. This would be in lieu of the candidate filing and primary election nomination process previously described. Please contact the elections office for more information.
- The North Carolina General Assembly session law that created these changes can be found here: <https://www.ncleg.gov/Sessions/2019/Bills/House/PDF/H134v3.pdf>