

School Board 101

Thursday, February 2, 2023

Presented by: The West Chester Area School District and Chester County Intermediate Unit

School Board 101: Agenda

- Introduction and Overview
- Role of a School Board Member
- How to Become a Candidate
- Questions



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School Board 101: Overview

Provide our community with information regarding the school board

Present how to run for school board

Provide insights into the role of a school board member

Answer any questions that may arise

Quick Facts About WCASD

- WCASD educates over 12,000 public school students in 17 schools
- 75 square miles in eight municipalities
- 10th largest district in Pennsylvania out of 500 districts.
- Over 1,500 employees
- \$297 million budget in 2022
- Property tax millage rates remain one of the lowest in Chester County
- Provides transportation services to over 2,747 non-public, special education, and charter school students
- Transports to 112 different schools

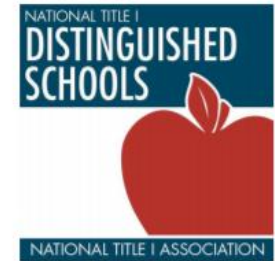
Points of Pride



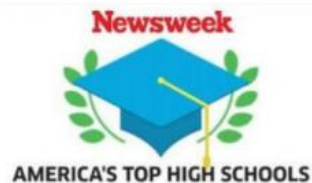
East, Henderson, & Rustin High Schools are consistently ranked among the top public schools in the nation according to U.S. News & World Report.



WCASD is considered a top-rated school district according to Niche.com and Schooldigger.com users.



Multiple WCASD elementary schools recognized for having superior, federally-funded school programs.



Newsweek ranks East, Henderson, & Rustin High Schools among the top high schools locally, regionally, and nationally.

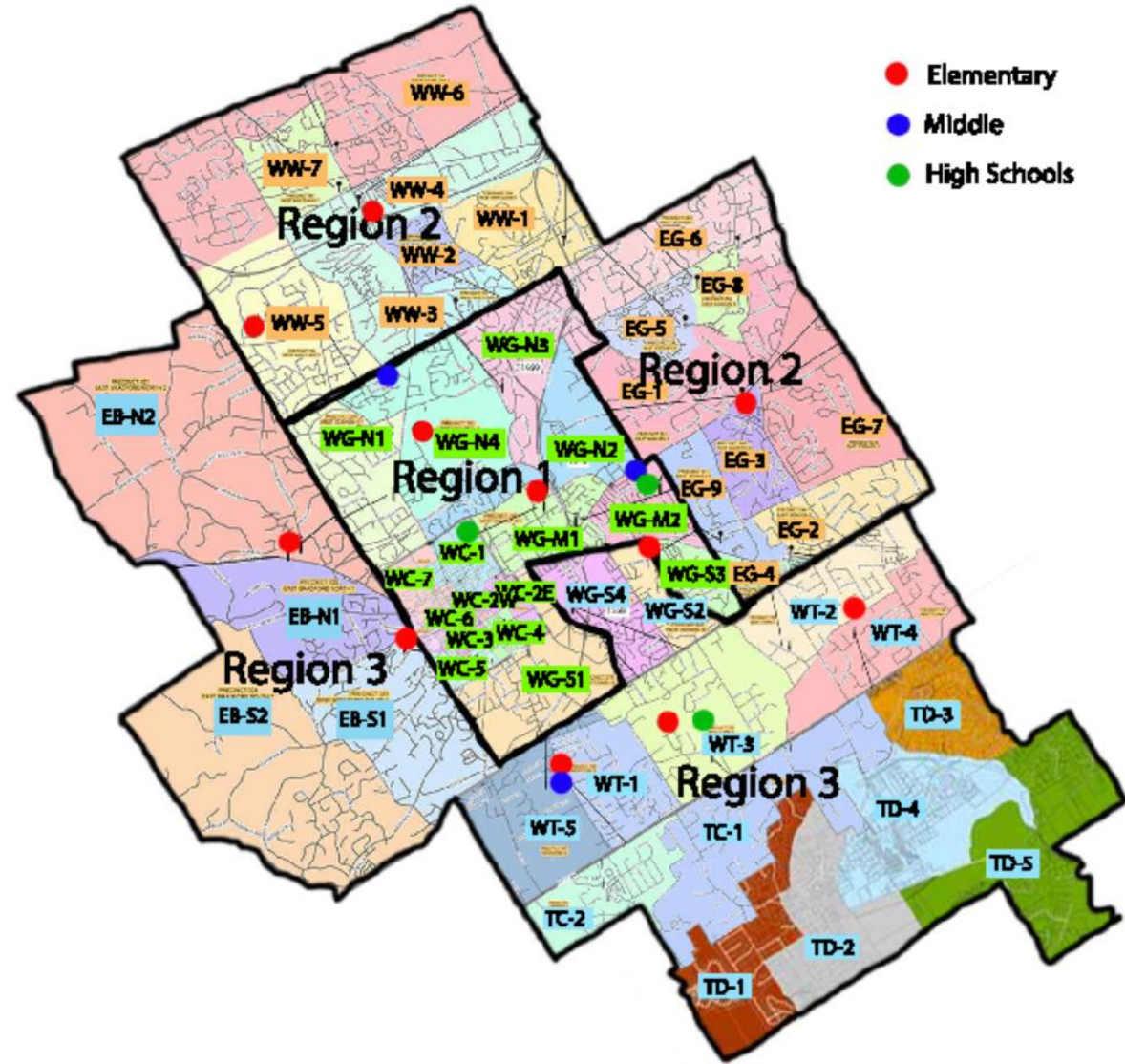


Multiple recognitions as a Best Communities for Music Education by the National Association of Music Merchants Foundation.



WCASD schools have been awarded the U.S. Department of Education's coveted National Blue Ribbon Award multiple times.

School Board Directors are Elected by Region





Board and Superintendent Communication



- Serve on the following committees: Education, Pupil Services, Personnel and Property & Finance.
- Attend at least one committee meeting and a board meeting monthly.
- Meetings take place on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Monday of the month.
- Provided with weekly packets to review and prepare for each meeting.
- School Board Directors have authority as a unit. Individual board members have no authority to speak for the board unless the school board gives permission to do so.

Thank You!

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2023

RUNNING FOR SCHOOL DIRECTOR

PUBLIC EDUCATION IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA



Constitution of Pennsylvania
Article III, Section 14

“The General Assembly shall provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of public education to meet the needs of the Commonwealth.”

School Code & Other Laws

School Code delegates responsibility to:

- **State Board of Education**
- **Department of Education**
- **School districts (500)**
- **Other school entities**

State Board of Education

Power “. . . to adopt broad policies and principles, and establish standards governing the educational program of the Commonwealth.”

State Board of Education

- Policy-making body
- Created by statute and granted wide regulatory authority
- 21 members:
 - 4 legislators
 - 17 others (governor nominates/senate confirms)

Department of Education

- Oversees and provides
 - Administrative support
 - Subsidies/data gathering/federal programs
 - Technical assistance
 - Compliance
 - State library and public libraries
- Authority to
 - Promulgate regulations/standards
 - Enforce laws, regulations, standards

Local School Boards of Education

- Elected in 499 school districts
- Responsible as a “corporate body” to provide public schooling
- Authorized to (see Article V of Pa. School Code).
 - adopt policies
 - approve budgets, levy taxes
 - build & operate schools
 - hire superintendent and other employees
 - adopt and enforce reasonable rules and regulations
- Superintendent shall have a seat on the board and the right to speak on all matters before the board, but not to vote (see 24 P.S. 10-1081).

Running for school director

What does a school board do exactly?



Key concepts of board service

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1

The school board governs the district while the superintendent and administration manage it.

2

A successful school board is more than a group, it is a team.

3

The superintendent is part of the team as the 10th non-voting member.

4

Power and authority is granted to the full board acting as the district's governing body.

5

Most board work and all decision making is performed at meetings open to the public.

6

The ***Principles for Governance and Leadership*** model is the framework for successful school boards across PA



To understand¹⁸
the role of the
school board,
focus on the
verbs...


- Approves
- Adopts
- Communicates
- Evaluates (data/progress)
- Establishes

Roles & Responsibilities of Boards of Education (As a Team)



The law conveys authority through the board acting as a governing body making **collective decisions**.

- Develop & improve education
- Provide adequate & effective staff
- Provide adequate & safe facilities
- Provide adequate financial resources
- Select & work harmoniously with the Superintendent



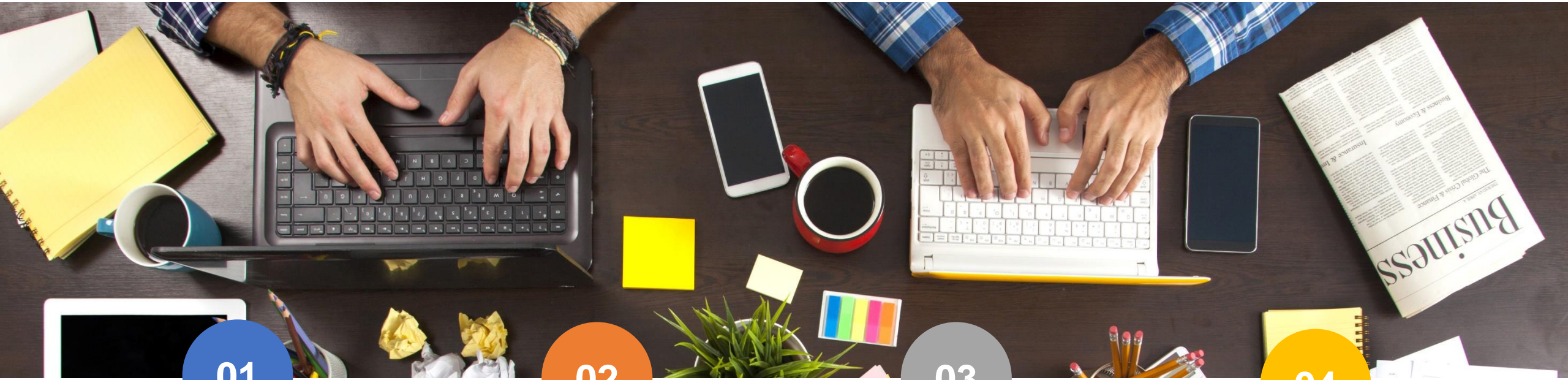
Roles and Responsibilities of Individual Board Members

- Build common ground
- Serve as a school and community liaison
- Improve your schools and your students
- Model good behavior
- Treat all with respect – no favorites

Effective School Board Service

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01

Commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction. Define clear goals toward that vision

02

Strong shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students and of the system's ability to teach all children to high levels

03

Accountability driven, spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement

04

Collaborative relationship with district administration and the community, establishing a strong communications structure to inform and engage stakeholders

Eight Characteristics of an Effective School Board

Center for Public Education, National School Boards Association



05

Data savvy, embracing and monitoring data even when the information is negative, using it to drive continuous improvement

06

Align and sustain resources, such as professional development, to meet district goals.

07

Lead as a united team with the superintendent, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust.

08

Take part in team development and training to build shared knowledge values and commitments for their improvement efforts.

Eight Characteristics of an Effective School Board

Center for Public Education, National School Boards Association

How can I prepare to serve on the school board?

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Do I need training to run for or serve on a school board? ²⁵

No training or experience is required to run for the school board.

PA General Assembly requires training for both newly and re-elected school directors.

5 hours for newly elected

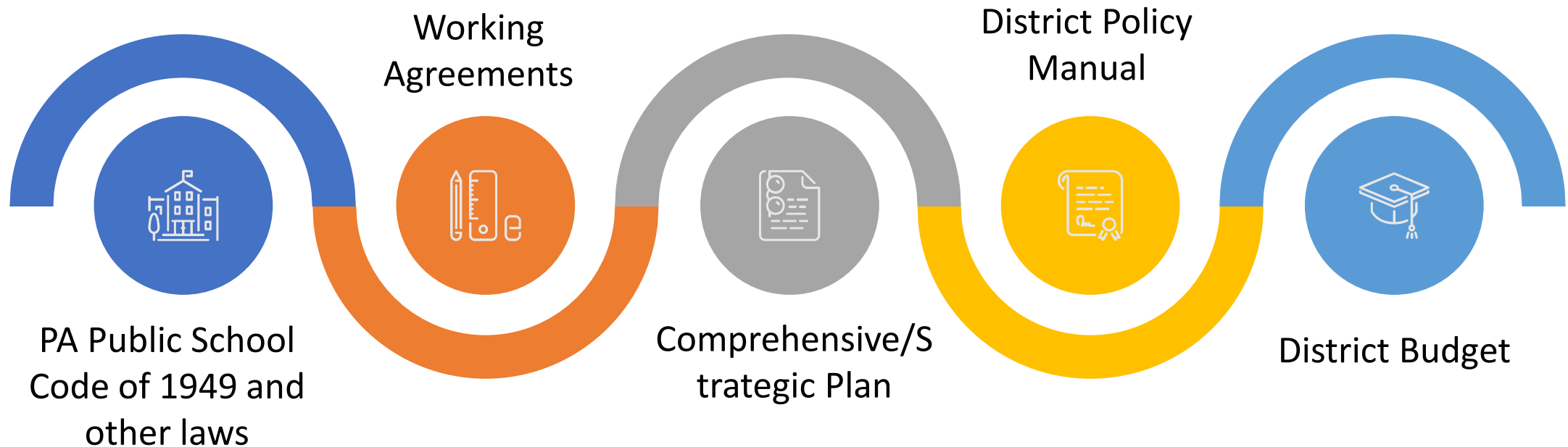
3 hours for re-elected

Includes an hour on trauma-informed education

Completed within the first year of term



Governance Documents, Foundational Guides



****Board Meeting recordings and/or posted minutes****
Posted/Adopted Board Goals

How to be an Effective School Director

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01

Be a team player

Approach school board service with a team mentality.

02

Be prepared

Understand the time commitment you have made and do the work.

03

Follow the procedures

Your board has processes and procedures for how it operates. Know them. Follow them.

04

Be fair and objective

Focus on what is best for ALL students in the district.

05

Connect decisions

Use the district's foundational statements and goals to guide your work.

06

No surprises

Provide each other the opportunity to arrive prepared for the conversation.

07

Support the board

You may not always vote in the majority, but you must forward in order to govern.

08

Be professional

This may not be your place of employment, but it is for many.



RUNNING FOR SCHOOL DIRECTOR THE PROCESS

2023

Topics

Election Cycle Calendar

Petitions, Filing Fees, Cross-filing

Statement of Financial Interest

Campaign Finance Reports



2023 Election Calendar

filing petitions and reports

- [Campaign Finance Reporting Dates](#)
- [Important Dates for Upcoming Election](#)

Voter registration Deadline: 05/01/2023

Absentee and mail-in ballots:

- Last Day to Apply 5/09/2023
- Voted Ballots must be received to Voter Services by: 5/16/2023 8pm



Nomination Petitions

Online petitions will be available on the [Chester County Voter Services website](#) in early February or you may pick them up in our office.

Voter Services does not mail petitions.

Complete the top section of each petition in full **prior** to circulating.

Collect signatures ONLY between February 14, 2023 to March 7, 2023.



Who is eligible to sign your petition?

Every
signer
must
be:

registered voter **and**

resident of the candidate's political district **and**

same political party as the candidate (or the same as the petition if cross-filing)

Each signer may sign petitions only for as many candidates for each office as they are permitted to vote for

Example: If 4 Republicans are running for 2 School Director seats, a registered Republican voter can sign 2 petitions.



Tips for Petitions

Avoid	Avoid nicknames.
Do not allow	Do not allow signers to use ditto marks or white out – get a complete address for EACH signer.
Ensure	Ensure correct date of signing notated.
Ensure back	Ensure back of petition is completed correctly and in full.

How to avoid petition pitfalls

Obtain more than the required number of signatures.

Make sure each signer's name is legible.

Make sure all signers are registered voters in your party (or on the correct petition if cross-filing).

File **ALL** required forms timely and make sure they are notarized.

If printing petition from website it **MUST** be double sided & printed in the proper sizing format.

Signature and Filing Fee Requirements

- Minimum 10 **valid** signatures for School Director .
- ***Protect your candidacy: get more signatures than required!***
- No filing fee required.



Cross-filing

- ***Who can cross-file?***
 - Magisterial District Judges
 - **School Directors.**
- ***How do I cross-file?***
 - Circulate and file **two separate petitions** - one for each political party.
- ***Can I circulate both petitions?***
 - Magisterial District Judges: YES
 - **School Directors: NO**, only the petition for your political party. **Someone from the other party must collect signatures on the other party's petition.**

Cross-filing (continued)

- ***How many signatures do I need?***
 - You need the minimum required signatures on **each** party's petition.
 - School Director requires a minimum of 10 signatures on Republican petition and 10 signatures on Democratic petition = 20 signatures.



Independents and 3rd Party Candidates

- Cannot run in the primary
- File nomination papers instead of petition (forms available after March 8, 2023)
- Signatures valid from March 8 – August 1
- Number of signatures needed
 - 2% of the largest entire vote count in the last municipal election for any officer in that election district
 - Check with Voter Services
- All other requirements apply



Statement of Financial Interest – what is it?

- Administered by the State Ethics Commission
- Used to disclose any potential conflicts of interest
- Filed annually by all candidates, elected officials and appointed officials
- Statements of Financial Interest are **public information**
- Personal financial information is usually not required

How to file a Statement of Financial Interest

1. File the form where you are seeking office (e.g. township office, borough hall, **school administration office**) on or before the last day for filing a petition (**March 7**).
2. **A copy of the form** must also be appended to the nomination petition, or your name will not be put on the ballot.
3. Be sure to complete **all** blocks and sign the form.
 1. The completed form must be printed and submitted, no online submissions will be accepted.
4. Questions regarding the Financial – call the State Ethics Commission **1-800-932-0936**

Campaign Finance Reporting

Are you
required to
file?

If you intend to
raise funds or
have a political
committee to
raise funds **AND**

you plan to
raise over \$250
in a reporting
period

4 reporting
periods for
candidates/co
mmittees

May, June,
October and
December

Penalties for
overdue
reports

Range from \$20
for first day to
maximum \$250

Filing a Waiver from Reporting

You may file a waiver if:

you do not intend to
form a political
committee

you do not plan to
receive contributions
over \$250 during a
reporting period

you do not plan to
spend over \$250
during a reporting
period



Complete the "Waiver of
Expense Account Reporting
Affidavit" on the petition and
have it notarized.



Tips about Waivers

- If you sign the 'Waiver of Expense' and find that you have spent or received more than \$250 for any of the reporting periods, then you are responsible for filing a Campaign Expense Report for that period.
- If you don't sign the waiver, you **must** file a report for each period.
- **Sign the waiver and only report if necessary.**

2023

RUNNING FOR SCHOOL DIRECTOR
QUESTIONS?

