

INFORMATION ABOUT SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS FOR PTAs

It is vital that PTA members pay attention to who is running for school board in their district. The seats on school boards are staggered, so about half the seats are up every odd-numbered year. Colorado has extensive “local control” by school boards over curriculum, hiring, policies, and school buildings – so local school boards have most of the decision-making about what goes on in the district’s schools. (School boards do not have control over how much funding they receive for schools, which is up to the State Legislature, but they are in charge of determining how the funding is used, and they can ask their voters for extra money in the form of “mill levy overrides” and “bond issues.”)

As a 501c3 nonprofit organization, PTA is somewhat restricted in what it can do regarding these elections, by IRS regulations as well as state law. If your PTA endorses a candidate or violates other campaign laws, you jeopardize not only your PTA’s nonprofit status, but also the nonprofit status of every PTA in the state of Colorado. Here are the key things to know:

What PTAs **CANNOT** do:

- Support, oppose, or endorse candidates.
- Make a campaign contribution to, or an expenditure for, a candidate or a candidate committee.
- Rate candidates on who is most favorable to your issue(s).
- Let a candidate use the school’s or PTA’s facilities or resources, unless they follow the district’s guidelines for renting a table.

What PTAs **CAN** do:

- Conduct or support voter registration – ask members to check their voter registration status, and if necessary, register to vote at www.GoVoteColorado.com.
- Educate voters on the voting process – letting them know how and when to vote – especially regarding the fact that voting in Colorado is now conducted mainly by mail ballots, which all registered voters receive mid-October.
- Organize Get-Out-the-Vote (GOTV) activities.
- Host, co-sponsor, or encourage members to attend candidate forums.
- Educate members on candidates. Encourage PTA members to do their own research by looking at candidates’ websites and flyers, reading articles in the media, and/or looking at the endorsements by other organizations.
- Distribute nonpartisan sample ballots, candidate questionnaires, and election guides.
- Educate the candidates on PTA’s Mission, Purposes, Resolutions, Position Statements, and Legislative Priorities.
- Encourage and remind members to vote no later than Election Day.

More information can be found on the COPTA website under [Advocacy](#) and in the document [PTA Guidelines for School Board Elections](#).