KASC GUIDANCE FOR ONLINE ELECTIONS

April 20, 2020 -- KASC advice is in accordance with the KDE email to SBDM Coordinators on 3/26/20; this version has been improved based on discussions with PTA and feedback from member schools.

Please note this information will be updated as needed, please visit Weekly News on the KASC website to see the latest recommendations.

As you know, most council terms run June 30 to July 1, so teacher and parent elections are taking place in April and May.

In schools/districts there is a lot of discussion about online elections. KASC has been putting out guidance since March, and we continue to update and refine that information.

THE ITEMS OF GREATEST CONCERN

1) Election Decisions

✔ Teachers decide teacher election procedures and conduct the election.
✔ Parents decide parent election procedures and conduct the election.

If using online elections, each group will likely need support from school/district personnel, but final decisions must be made by the group in charge of the election.

2) Election Protections

Remember the protections by relating them to the basics of democratic elections.

✔ Only eligible voters vote
✔ Eligible voters are not prevented from voting
✔ Individuals' votes remain anonymous
✔ Voters only vote one time

The voting platform is vital in providing the election protections. KASC did a teacher pilot election with the free version of Survey Monkey. When using other voting platforms be sure they offer the same voting protections. (see Teacher Elections on next page)
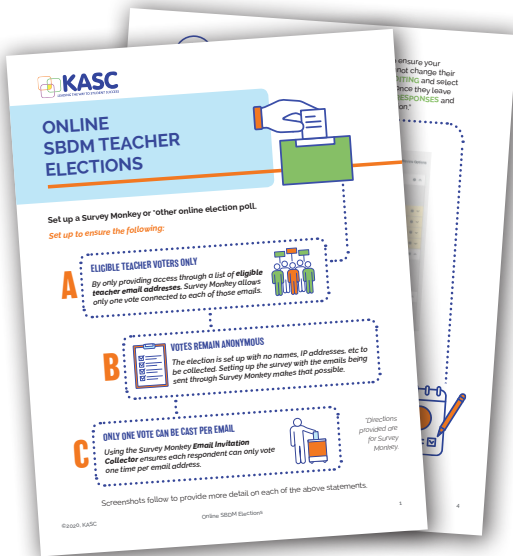
Teacher Elections

This KASC member freebie (first shared on March 11, 2020) addresses the election protections above. The freebie has steps, with screenshots, for setting up and conducting an election using Survey Monkey, but other platforms may be used and as long as they offer the same protections.

Parent Elections

This KASC teacher election member freebie is applicable for parent elections, BUT additional steps must be taken before your online parent election will meet each of the election protections. (see ideas in the section that follows)

PARENT ELECTIONS

If your school's parent organization wants to have an online election, it will take more planning than a teacher election, and remember, the parent organization makes those decisions. Because of the differences from school to school, there is no best process for all schools. Below is KASC guidance on a possible process that can meet the Election Protections.

Possible Parent Election Process for Online Election
➡ **Set up a dedicated email account for parent election communication**
Not required, but makes the communication clearer and less likely to be accidentally deleted
➡ **Nominations**

A. Information to include
 	
 • who is eligible to serve as a parent member
 • deadline for nominations to be turned in
 • various ways nomination forms can be turned in
 • election date (plus an explanation of the election process, if decided – see section on page 3)
 • details needed from the candidate
      ▫ his/her student(s) in the school for the next school year
      ▫ biographical information to include for voters

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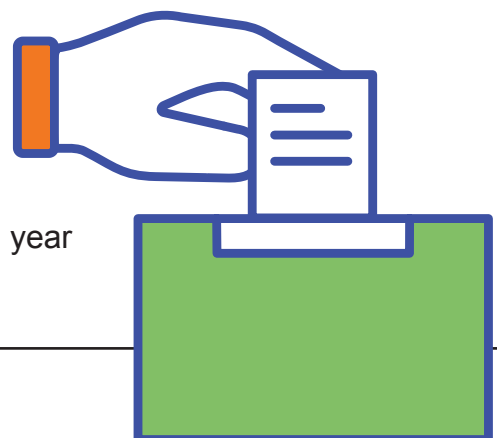
B. Communication

- advertise widely for nomination of candidates — all-call system, email distribution lists, NTI communications, social media, posted on the school's website, etc. (remember to include parents whose students aren't in your school this year but will the next)

- if election details aren't decided yet, just include the date of the election with that more information will follow

C. Eligibility of nominees

Check the eligibility of each nominee and confirm inclusion on the ballot.

➡ **Deciding and setting up election procedures**

A. Election Protections — while developing procedures be sure:

- ✔ Only eligible voters vote
- ✔ Eligible voters are not prevented from voting
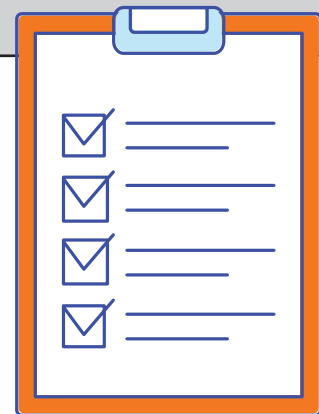- ✔ Individuals' votes remain anonymous
- ✔ Voters only vote one time

B. Select and set up the voting platform

Ensure the platform can be set up with the following controls:

- Eligible teacher voters only
- Votes remain anonymous
- Only one vote can be cast per email
- Be sure a closing and ending date is created, PTA recommends 3-5 business days for voting.

C. Communication

- share widely, through all-call system, email distribution lists, NTI communications, social • media, posted on the school's website, etc:
  - ▫ election dates and deadlines
  - ▫ detailed explanation of the voting process, including how to check if a parent is already registered in the voting platform
  - ▫ short bios of the candidates
  - ▫ a contact person for more information
  - ▫ advise how parents can vote if they do not have access to technology —if okayed by your school and district, you can provide for some votes to cast in person, as long as all the health guidelines can be followed.

➡️ Identifying and including eligible voters

This is the tricky part for online parent elections. The only way we know to identify eligible voters and have their votes remain anonymous is by using an email in the voting platform. The voting link will go to the email and that email is what will allow a parent to vote.

Think of this in two parts — Work with school personnel to figure out the most efficient way to:

1. enter the emails of as many eligible parent voters as possible (and have that email linked to student(s) of that eligible voter

2. check the eligibility of parents who sign themselves up as voters

   If a parent email has not already been entered and connected to his/her student(s), the parent will need to register and include:

   - his/her name
   - student(s) name and grade
   - parent role — parent, step parent, legal guardian
   - email address

The parent leaders or school personnel will need a process to check the accuracy of that information **before voting is activated**. Once voting has taken place there is no way to connect a vote back to a parent email.

➡️ Format the ballot

Be sure it includes:

- maximum number of candidates that can be selected by a voter — If there are two parent council member positions, you'll want to say, "Vote for up to two parents."
- each candidate with:
  - a bio (if one was submitted)
  - a place to cast a vote for that candidate

➡️ Double check the platform controls set up during the "Deciding and setting up election procedures" section

➡️ Conduct the Election

- send out the emails to eligible voters with:
  - link for casting a ballot
  - reminder of voting dates
  - contact in case of voting issues
  - share widely, through all-call system, email distribution lists, NTI communications, social media, posted on the school's website, etc. that voting is open and who to contact for more information.

Review and finalize results

A. KASC recommends 2-3 parents review the final tally in the voting platform and agree when the results are final.

B. Prepare the official results:

- Take a screenshot or make a PDF
- List parents who reviewed and agreed upon the final tally

C. Share the results with the principal

D. File the official results in the appropriate place for your school Parent council member election records should be kept for three years (Kentucky Department of Library and Archives, State Archives and Records Commission's Public Records Division)
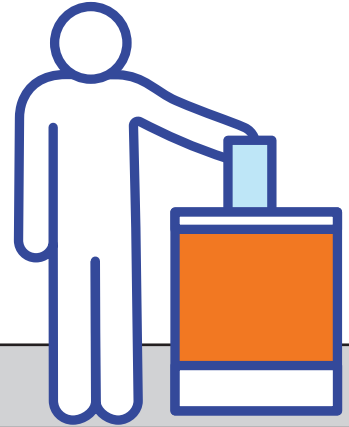
Announce Results

- Contact the parents who were elected
- Contact the parents who were not selected
- Make an official announcement with:
  - The names of the parents who were selected
  - A thank you to all the candidates, voters, and organizers

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As you find effective ways to conduct parent elections, let us know so we can share with other schools.

For nomination forms, announcements, and helpful steps, consider KASC's Election Toolkit, which can be downloaded by everyone involved through our LMS system.

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