

Guide to interviewing/recommending candidates for school board or community college board of trustees

Once the candidate filing deadline has passed, your association will need to determine which candidates to support. This is accomplished by conducting an interview session with the candidates. The screening interviews should be scheduled as soon as possible after the filing deadline to give your local sufficient time to:

- 1 Form an Interview or screening team
- 2 Conduct the interviews
- 3 Reach a decision on which candidates to recommend
- 4 Communicate decision to members and ISEA government relations staff, morgan.miller@isea.org
- 5 Inform the recommended candidates of the association's support.
- 6 Write letters to the other candidates informing them of the association's decision

Election timeline

Aug. 28	Candidate filing begins (<i>need at least 50 signatures</i>)
Sept. 21	Candidate filing deadline
Oct. 18	Early voting begins
Nov. 7	Election Day, polls open 7am to 8pm

Preparing for the interview process

The association should begin by seeking a team of bipartisan volunteers for the interview committee. Likely people for this committee would be association governance (e.g., PAC chair) and members looking to take on more leadership roles. A chairperson should be chosen as well.

The interview team should initially meet to set a date, time, place, and schedule for the interviews. The team should plan each interview for 30 to 45 minutes. Time should be built into the schedule between interviews for debrief and break. Contingency arrangements, such as an alternative date, phone or virtual interview, or other arrangements should be considered for any candidate who is unable to attend the interview.

A personal letter should be sent to each candidate thanking them for their decision to run for office and informing the candidate of the screening process including the date, time, and place of the interview. You may also decide to send the interview questions with the invite letter.

The interview team must also decide at the first meeting which questions it will ask the candidates during the interview. The questions should be specific to the district and reflect current local and state situations. Use ISEA's recommended candidate interview questions as a template for your interview. The same questions should be asked of all candidates interviewed.

Conducting the interview

If in-person, the interview site should be ready to enhance seating comfort for both the candidate and the interview team. Water, soft drinks and/or coffee should be provided.

Prior to the arrival of the first candidate, the team should review the questions and scoring and decide who will ask the questions. Another person should assume the role of the host and be prepared to meet the candidates and usher them into the room. The role of the other committee members during the interview is to listen and take notes for use during the committee's deliberations.

As each candidate arrives, welcome them, and provide introductions to the group. It may also be helpful to provide nametags or nameplates for the interview committee. Make sure you ask the candidate campaign related questions as well as what they desire from the association if they receive the recommendation.

At the conclusion of the interview, inform the candidate of the process of arriving at a recommendation and an approximate date when they might expect to hear from the committee.

At all times during the interview, be gracious and courteous to the candidates. Remember, the person elected may not be the candidate that the committee recommends for support to the membership, and a good impression during the screening process is key to any future interactions with this individual should they be elected.

After the interviews

After the candidate has left, the interview team reviews the summaries and discusses the results. Often, factors such as an incumbency or electability of the candidate make the decision subjective and easier or more difficult to reach; therefore, all factors must be considered before drawing a conclusion about which candidate to recommend for endorsement. Reaching consensus is clearly the best decision, a majority vote of the team is needed to make a recommendation.