

# Election Handbook for The South Carolina Education Association

This Election Handbook is designed to assist candidates who seek election to The SCEA Office. The SCEA Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules set forth the basic requirements for candidates who seek an elective office of The SCEA.

The Nomination Form must be completed by persons wishing to run for the office of President, Vice President, Executive Board of The SCEA, NEA Board of Directors or NEA Delegate. The Nomination Form will be available on The SCEA website [www.thescea.org](http://www.thescea.org) from The SCEA Elections Committee Staff Contact and from the Local Education Association president.

This document will be distributed to members who file the Nomination Form. Additionally, the guidelines (Election Handbook), as a component of The SCEA Governance Handbook, will be distributed annually to LEA presidents to inform them of the appropriate role of governance affiliates in an election campaign. A governance affiliate is an LEA that is affiliated with the state and national associations and is a recognized and chartered group of a school, administrative unit, retired educators, or students attending higher education institutions.

The candidate must abide by all campaign regulations. The candidate also has the responsibility to ensure that all campaign workers are instructed to abide by the campaign regulations. **Violations of these regulations could result in disqualification as a candidate or removal from office.**

Questions pertaining to the interpretation of the election procedures or the contents of this Election Handbook should be directed to the chairperson of the Elections Committee of The SCEA, 421 Zimacrest Drive, Columbia, SC 29210.

*Footnotes in this document refer to statements made from another governance document. See page 10.*

## **I. Election Requirements and Terms of Office**

### **A. Executive Officers**

1. All candidates for the offices of President or Vice President shall have been active members of a local, where eligible and available, state, and the National Education Association for at least three (3) years immediately preceding the election. All executive officers shall maintain active membership in the United Education Profession. All candidates for executive office must have participated in The SCEA leadership development program.<sup>1</sup>
2. The term of each executive officer shall be four (4) years beginning July 16 following the election. Each executive officer shall remain in office through July 15 of the year in which a successor is elected. An executive officer will be limited to a life time limit of one term in the same office.<sup>2</sup>

### **B. Executive Board**

The term of office of District Directors shall be three (3) years, except when a shorter term is necessary to fulfill the requirements of staggered term or when elected to fill a vacated seat. If a district director is filing more than one-half of a term of a vacated seat, he/she would be limited to one additional three (3) year term. The term of office begins July 16 following the election. District Directors will be limited to a lifetime limit of two terms.<sup>3</sup>

### **C. NEA Director**

The term of office of NEA Director shall be for three (3) years. A Director may serve no more than two (2) terms. All candidates for this office shall have been active members of the NEA for at least two (2) years immediately preceding the election and shall maintain membership throughout their term of office.<sup>4</sup>

The term of office of The NEA Director shall begin on September 1 following the election.

### **D. NEA Delegates**

The term of office shall be one (1) year beginning immediately upon election. Candidates for this office shall be active members of the NEA in South Carolina at the time of nomination.

## **II. Nominations**

### **A. General Election**

1. The SCEA shall conduct all elections with open nominations.<sup>5</sup>
2. All nomination forms are due by a date established annually by the Executive Board and shall be filed with the elections chairperson and The SCEA staff contact for elections.
3. Vacancies for the general election process shall be available on The SCEA website and by correspondence to local affiliate presidents. Such announcements shall include requirements, duties and responsibilities for each office, the nomination procedure and deadlines for filing.<sup>6</sup>
4. Each candidate for office shall file a nomination form, biographical sketch and platform, if required, with the chairperson of the Elections Committee and a copy with the staff contact of the Elections Committee by the deadline. Following the deadline, the Elections Committee will certify those candidates who meet all requirements. All candidates shall be notified of the decision of the committee.<sup>7</sup>
5. Platforms will be required for the following offices: President, Vice President, District Director and NEA Director. Platform for President and Vice President shall be limited to 150 words. Platform for District Director and NEA Director shall be limited to 75 words. No platform shall be printed for NEA State Delegates. Platforms that exceed word limits shall be cut at the specified number of words.

### **B. Special Elections**

1. The SCEA shall conduct all elections with open nominations.<sup>8</sup>
2. Special elections shall be held as necessary.
3. Vacancies occurring during a term shall be posted on The SCEA webs \ website and notice sent to LEA Presidents, Executive Board members, and delegates to the most recent The SCEA Representative Assembly, or by individual notification to members affected.
4. Nominations will end two weeks after the notice of vacancies is mailed.
5. Elections will be conducted of the affected group (as indicated by The SCEA Constitution and Bylaws) within four (4) weeks.

### **III. General Campaign Requirements**

#### **A. Campaign Period**

Candidates for The SCEA President, Vice President and NEA Director may announce their candidacies and campaigns no earlier than one (1) year prior to the election. Campaigning may continue until the deadline for votes to be cast.

#### **B. Filing Deadline**

The filing date of the nomination form shall be established annually by the Executive Board. The nomination form shall be filed with the Chairperson of the Elections Committee and the staff contact for the Elections Committee.

#### **C. Campaign Revenue and Expenditures**

1. Campaign revenues shall mean financial contributions and goods and/or services in kind made available to the candidate by groups or individuals.
2. Campaign expenditures shall include costs connected with printing materials that directly advance the position of the candidate(s) on issues pertaining to the office being sought. Campaign expenditures shall include, but not be limited to, the following: mailing of said materials, operation of hospitality rooms (suites) during the campaign year, expenditures for campaign committee members, travel, lodging, meals, and give-aways such as: buttons, flyers, gifts, signs, and posters.
3. No resources paid for by dues money and no portion of dues money collected at the local, state or national level shall be used to promote the candidacy of any individual for office in local, state, or national position.

#### **D. Campaign Activities**

1. Campaign activities shall include those activities such as speeches, receptions, personal visits, press interviews, radio and television spots, and other appearances which contribute to the candidate's attempt to persuade the voting constituencies of his/her merits in the pursuit of the office in question. Accordingly, money spent to

promote, implement, or publicize any of these activities must be reported as a campaign expenditure.

2. Campaign materials, approved by The SCEA Elections Committee, may be distributed at official meetings of The SCEA.
  - a. Prior to the beginning of a meeting, materials may be placed within the meeting area.
  - b. For additional campaigning, an area will be designated by The SCEA President.
3. When appropriate, The SCEA President or presiding officer will provide all candidates the opportunity to address the group.
4. No campaign activities shall interfere with a meeting.
5. Candidates will be offered a booth/table at The SCEA meetings/conferences at cost.

**E. Campaign Materials**

1. Campaign materials shall include posters, brochures, biographical sketches, position papers, buttons or any objects or printed material bearing the name of the candidate or promoting the candidacy of an individual for local affiliate as well as The SCEA office. Newspaper advertisements, billboards, radio and or television interviews, or participation in talk shows, the tapes of which may be disseminated to advance the candidate's campaign, also fall into the classification of campaign materials.
2. No materials may bear the official logo of any local, state or national association.
3. All posters and flyers shall carry the note, "paid for by....."?
4. A copy of all campaign materials shall be submitted to the Elections Committee and judged for compliance with the guidelines before distribution.
5. The Elections Committee or its designee (a subcommittee of the Elections Committee) will meet when necessary to review materials submitted. There will be a written response to the candidate within five (5) days of the decision.

**F.**     Publicity

The Elections Committee shall notify each certified candidate of the availability of advertising from The SCEA for general elections. Membership names, addresses, phone numbers or email addresses will not be provided to candidates by The SCEA.<sup>10</sup>

1. Coverage of candidates for association offices will be limited to a photograph, biographical information, and a platform. Coverage for candidates in the same category (director, president, vice president, etc.), will be approximately the same length, and will be posted on The SCEA website following the filing deadline.<sup>12</sup>
2. Candidates for President, Vice president and NEA Director will have available to them, before the election free advertising on The SCEA website for which candidates must supply copy and design. The advertising may promote a slate of candidates if desired by the persons running for president and vice president.
3. Approved campaign material(s) will be emailed by The SCEA to members and posted on The SCEA Website in the general election. Campaign material from candidates must be received by the elections committee chair and the elections committee staff contact for approval at least 2 weeks prior to e-ballots being sent to members. In case of a runoff election, runoff campaign materials will be posted on The SCEA website, but The SCEA will not send out an additional email to members with campaign material.

**G.**     Voting

Reference the Nominations and Elections Procedure for Statewide Office.

Electronic Ballots (e-ballots) shall be emailed to members under the specific guidelines as developed by the Elections Committee and approved by the Executive Board.

1. All elections will be by secret ballot. An election by secret ballot may be waived and the candidate(s) declared elected if, following a period of open nominations, the number of candidates is equal to or less than the number of positions to be filled. Voting cannot take place at The SCEA Headquarters.

2. Names will be placed on the ballot in an order determined by a lottery.
3. The Elections Committee shall certify the election results and the chairperson shall present the report of each balloting to The SCEA President who shall notify all candidates as to the results of the elections. Results of the elections shall be posted on The SCEA website and all candidates will be notified by email.
4. In an election for those positions requiring a majority vote, if no candidate receives a majority, a run-off election will be held with the candidates receiving the highest and second highest number of votes.

#### **IV. Eligibility of Voters**

All active members (full and part-time) and NEA/The SCEA Life members in good standing affected by the election as outlined in The SCEA Constitution are eligible to vote.

#### **V. Prohibition of Dual Office Holding**

No one may simultaneously hold more than one of the following offices: The SCEA President, The SCEA Vice President, The SCEA Executive Board or NEA Director except when the balance of the term of the first office shall be ten weeks or less.

#### **VI. Responsibilities of the Local Education Association**

- A.** No affiliate is required to provide any service on behalf of any candidate for office in The SCEA. If any service is provided to one candidate, the same service must be provided at the request of any other candidate. Therefore, an affiliate should not provide any service unless it is able to comply with a number of requests from other candidates for that same service.
- B.** In order to insure that services are provided equitably and that dues are not used to support candidates for office, services provided to or on behalf of a candidate must meet the following conditions:
  1. The request of a candidate to an affiliate must be in writing.
  2. The affiliate must bill the candidate under the standard billing procedure of the affiliate. The affiliate must

charge the actual cost of the services so that the affiliate is not providing a subsidy to the candidate. However, if an affiliate regularly provides the same service to other affiliates or other organizations or persons, the affiliate may use the same schedule of charges that are uniformly applied to such affiliates, organizations, or persons.

- C. No resources paid for by dues money and no portion of dues money collected at the local, state or national level shall be used to promote the candidacy of any individual for office in local, state, or national position.
- D. Campaign materials may be distributed at official meetings of the LEA.
  - 1. Prior to the beginning of a meeting campaign materials approved by the elections committee may be placed within the meeting area or may be distributed while the candidate is speaking.
  - 2. For additional campaigning, an area may be designated by the LEA president if space is available.
- E. When appropriate, the LEA president or presiding officer will provide all candidates the opportunity to address the group.
- F. No campaign activities shall interfere with a meeting.
- G. No material may bear the official logo of any local, state or national association.

### **General Comments**

- 1. You will not be able to vote after the stated deadline.
- 2. Voting records will be kept on file for one (1) year after the election.
- 3. Deadline on challenges:
  - a) All challenges on campaign materials must be filed by the time the Elections Committee meets to certify election results.



- b) Challenges on activities and vote tabulation must be filed within ten (10) days of vote tabulation.<sup>16</sup>
- 4. The Elections Committee will review the Constitution, Bylaws, Standing Rules, Policies, and Operating Procedures as they pertain to nominations and elections and make necessary recommendations to the Executive Board.
- 5. All elections shall comply with the following:
  - a) The SCEA Constitution, Bylaws, Standing Rules, Policies, Operating Procedures, and Elections Handbook.
  - b) The NEA Constitution, Bylaws, Standing Rules, and Campaign Regulations.

(Revised 2/19/2006)  
(Revised 2/24/2012)

## **FOOTNOTES**

- <sup>1</sup> The SCEA Constitution, Article IV, Sec.2.
- <sup>2</sup> The SCEA Constitution, Article IV, Sec.3.
- <sup>3</sup> The SCEA Constitution, Article V, Sec.2.b.
- <sup>4</sup> NEA Constitution, Article V, Sec. 2. a. b. & d.
- <sup>5</sup> NEA Bylaw, 8-1.b.
- <sup>6</sup> The SCEA Standing Rule 4.B.2. a. & c.
- <sup>7</sup> The SCEA Standing Rule 4.B.3.
- <sup>8</sup> NEA Bylaw, 8 -1.b.
- <sup>9</sup> NEA Campaign and Election Requirements
- <sup>10</sup> The SCEA Standing Rule 4.B.4.
- <sup>11</sup> The SCEA Operating Procedure IV. A.1.
- <sup>12</sup> The SCEA Operating Procedure IV. A.2.
- <sup>13</sup> The SCEA Operating Procedure IV. A.3.
- <sup>14</sup> The SCEA Operating Procedure IV. A.4.
- <sup>15</sup> The SCEA Standing Rule 4.B.8.
- <sup>16</sup> The SCEA Standing Rule 4.B.9.  
(B.15.E. Def. 14.1E.)