

The Roles and Responsibilities of

# SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY ELECTIONS

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND LEARNERS

TAKE PART  
IN SGB  
ELECTIONS.  
MAKE YOUR  
VOICE HEARD

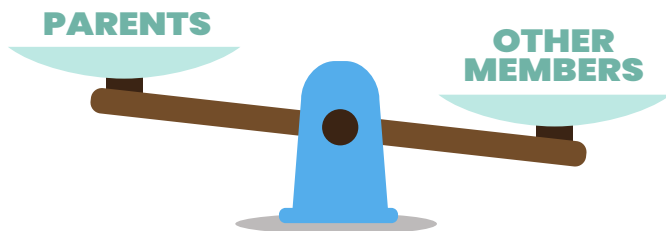


## WHAT IS A SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY

Every public school in South Africa must have a school governing body (SGB). A new SGB is elected every three years. SGB's are important for proper school governance. They make decisions on how the school is run. These decisions relate to things such as how school money is spent, hiring teachers, and what policies the school has.

Who must  
be on the  
SGB (PUBLIC  
ORDINARY  
AND SPECIAL  
SCHOOLS)

The SGB is made up of different members of the school community, but parents must make up the majority of the SGB. This means there must be more parents than other members on the SGB.



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## There are three different types of members on an SGB:

### Appointed members

The principal – the principal is always automatically a member of the SGB and does not have to be elected.

### Elected members

Parent, learners (in Grade 8 or above), educator, and non-educator representatives who are voted in by the school community.

### Co-opted members

These are members invited to join the SGB by the democratically elected members. They are not elected, so they cannot vote on SGB decisions.

An SGB may “co-opt” (choose) members of the community and invite them to join the SGB to assist them with their responsibilities. These co-opted members may have specific skills which the SGB feel would add value to the SGB. Co-opted members do not usually have voting rights on the SGB.



The SGB of a **special school is slightly different**: the types of people who should be on the SGB is not as strict, some groups like educators and the Principal must be on the SGB, but other groups like parents and people from organisations of persons with disabilities can be members if it is possible. The South African Schools Act says the following people **must** be a member of an SGB:

- **Educators at the school**
- **Members of staff at the school who are not educators**
- **The Principal**
- **Experts in appropriate fields of special needs education**

The SGB Chairperson **MUST BE A PARENT** who is not employed by the school.

The following people **can** be members of the SGB, if possible:

- A parent of a learner at the school, who is not employed at the school, if possible. For example, if the school is very far away from where parents stay, it might not be possible for them to be members on the SGB.
- Representatives of sponsoring bodies (only if schools have sponsoring bodies).
- Learners attending the eighth grade or higher, if possible.
- Representatives of organisations of parents of learners with special education needs, if applicable.
- Representatives of organisations of persons with disabilities, if applicable
- Persons with disabilities, if applicable.

The size of an SGB and how many members of each category must be included depends on things like if the school is a primary school or secondary school, and how many learners are in the school.



# Who are the role players in SGB elections that you should know?

Any parent, including the legal guardian or caregiver of a child attending the school, can sit on a school governing body. For example, a grandmother who is the primary caregiver of a child (but not necessarily their legal guardian) can be an SGB member.

## PARENTS

Sometimes a parent is not allowed to sit on an SGB. For example, if they were on an SGB before and did not perform their duties properly, their spouse is already on the SGB, they have been in prison for more than 6 months, or are mentally ill. (The full list of these exclusions can be found in SASA)

## LEARNERS

Learners between Grades 8 and 12 who are on the representative council of learners (RCL) are allowed to run for elections to be on the SGB. The RCL members will choose who of them will sit on the SGB.

## DISTRICT ELECTORAL OFFICER

These are officials appointed by the District to make sure SGB elections run well and that the rules and laws are followed. This official must make sure election officials working at schools are trained. If there are any disputes about the elections in your school or you are concerned about rules not being followed, you may approach this person to assist you to resolve it.

## SCHOOL ELECTORAL OFFICER

The district director or delegated official must appoint a school electoral officer who is a principal of another school. Under special circumstances, this person can be a deputy principal. Their role is to arrange the logistics of the election, monitor the duties of election officials, and help if there are any disputes. Electoral officers must not take any sides and must be honest.



# nominations

Before voting (“elections”) happens, a list of people who are running for elections must be made. This happens in the “nominations” process. In this process, people can either put their own names down or put someone else’s name down (in other words, “nominate” someone). This results in a list of possible people to vote for (a “ballot paper”) that will be used on the day of elections.

## There are three ways that SGB elections and nominations can happen:

- 1. nomination and election:** this is where both nominations and elections happen on the same day
- 2. full day elections:** where nominations happen before the day of election
- 3. e-elections:** nominations happen before elections happen, but both these processes happen online.

## For each type of nomination process the following must happen:

- The school electoral officer must prepare notices which give the date, time, duration (how long) and place of the nomination and election. These notices must be put in places where people can see them at the school and in the community at least 14 days before the day of nomination and elections. For e-elections, these notices can be sent electronically.
- nomination forms (where you can choose who you want to be on the SGB) must be given to parents to fill in, and the school electoral officer must help anyone who needs help with the form.
- If you nominate someone, someone else must support the nomination otherwise that person cannot run for elections.
- The person who is nominated, the person who nominated them and the person who supported the nomination must appear on the voter’s roll;
- The school electoral officer must make sure that the person nominated, the person who nominated them and the supporter are all parents who are allowed to be SGB members.

## a. Nomination and election mode

For this type of elections, the nomination and elections will happen on the same day. When the nomination session ends, the election session starts immediately. The principal must make sure that every learner at the school is given a copy of the elections notice and tell the learners to give it to their parents. The school can also use a different way of letting parents know as long as no one is disadvantaged. For example, if the Principal knows that all parents have access to internet and have an email address, they may email the notice.

### On the day nominations and voting happens, the school electoral officer must make sure that:

- At least 15% of the people who can vote are there before nominations start ;
- explain how nominations will work if the 15% is achieved;
- Decide how much time will be used for the nomination process;
- nominations that were sent to school are announced ahead of opening for new nominations;
- make nomination forms available to parents to complete;
- ensure that each form is correctly completed with the signature of the person nominated, the person who nominated them and the person supporting the nomination;
- disqualify nominations forms which do not meet the requirements;
- prevent the nomination of candidates through the raising of hands; and
- close the nomination meeting when the time has finished.

## b. Full day election mode

This type of election is where nominations happen before the day of voting and voters physically come to the venue to vote on the day of elections. Unlike the previous type of election, this type does not need a meeting to be held before voting.

### Nomination for Full Day Election

- Nominations happen before election day and must be done in the week (7 days) before election day, and but also at least three days before election day.
- Nomination forms are made available to parents to fill in. On the form, a parent will include:
  - their name and signature
  - the name of the person who they are nominating,
  - the name and signature of the person who supports the nomination, and
  - the signature of the person being nominated to show that they accept the nomination.
- The people who have been successfully nominated ("Candidates") must have their information displayed on school grounds at least three days before the election and, with the permission of the candidate, may be distributed by electronic means to all parents.

## c. E-Election Mode

e-Elections are a type of elections that happen electronically through online platforms. This type of election can only be used by schools if they have the specific resources (like internet and computers) and if most parents have access to technology and data to participate in the election.

### Nomination for e-Elections

- Nomination is similar to the nomination procedures in Full Day Elections except that the whole process from sending out notices, information and the submission of nomination form is done electronically.
- The completed nomination forms must be given to the School Electoral Officer between seven days and 24 hours before elections.





## nominations

### d. Nomination and Election of Learner Members

The Representative Council of Learners ("RCL") elects, from its ranks, learners who will be members of the governing body. The learner representative on the SGB must be a member of the RCL. Only RCL members can vote for the learner representative on the SGB.

**The procedure for the nomination and election of learner members is as follows:**

- The School Electoral Officer will decide on a date, time and place for the nomination and election for learner members.
- The principal must give the School Electoral Officer a list of all the learners on the RCL at the public school.
- The School Electoral Officer must make sure that each RCL member receives a copy of the notice of the Nomination at least 14 days before the date of the election.
- A learner can only be nominated by another RCL member at the public school. If a learner is nominated, a second person (also a member of the RCL) must support that nomination.
- The completed nomination forms must be given to the School Electoral Officer not more than seven days and not less than 24 hours before the elections.
- If the total number of valid nominations is equal to the required number of learner members, those nominated are declared to be elected.
- If the nominations are more than the required number of learners, elections are conducted by secret ballot, using the same procedure as described for the parent members' elections.

### Voters roll

A voters' roll is a list of everyone who is eligible to vote in the SGB elections at a school. A voters' roll for each category of SGB member (e.g.: learners, parents, teachers) must be made available by the School Electoral Officer at least 14 days before the close of the voters' roll. The voters' roll must close 7 days before the election day.

- The voters' roll for parents must be based on the school's register and will consist of those that appear as parents or caregivers of the child.  
**Only 2 parents per learner are eligible to vote.**
- The voters' roll for learners must include the names of all members of the RCL.

The voters' roll reflects who is allowed to vote for a specific category of SGB member. In other words, parents may only vote for people who were nominated in the parent category of the SGB membership.





## Voting

A quorum of 15% is required for SGB elections.

If the quorum is not met at the election, then the election must be rescheduled to another date and time. If quorum is not met again at the rescheduled election, then the election can go ahead anyway.

**Only parents** vote for the parent member representatives on the SGB. A parent is allowed one vote for each nominee with a maximum number of votes equal to the number of parent members that need to be elected. For example: If 20 parents are nominated but there are only 6 parent member places to be filled on the SGB, a voting parent will have 6 votes but may only vote once per candidate – they cannot vote 6 times for the same person.

Parents do not vote for any of the other SGB member categories during the election (ie. Learner members, educator members, and non-educator members).

It must be noted that SGB associations can observe the elections, however this is limited to 1 observer per public school.

In a situation where the number of parents nominated is equal to the number of parent places that need to be filled on the SGB, then no vote will occur, and these nominees will be declared elected. For example, if there are supposed to be six parent members on an SGB and only six parents get nominated, they will automatically be SGB members.

## Quorum

means the minimum amount of people who must vote.

This means that 15% of parents on the voters' roll must be present at the vote. According to the law, it is not possible to ask or let someone vote on your behalf.

## Voting Process

The **ballot paper** must list all of the people who have been nominated in alphabetical order and must have the school stamp on it or have some other feature that allows for fake ballots to be easily identified.

All nominated parents/caregivers must be given a chance to introduce themselves to those present and must provide:

- i. their full name,
- ii. the name and grade of their child,
- iii. their skills, occupation and any experience they feel may benefit the SGB, and
- iv. their vision for the school.

Voting takes place using a **secret ballot**. Each parent present at the vote must be checked to make sure their name is on the voter's roll and then given a ballot that they must complete in secret. It is then folded and placed in a closed container.

Anyone unable to read or vote due to physical difficulty may request the school electoral officer's assistance.



## Counting votes



Once voting is complete, votes are then counted by the school electoral officer. The school electoral officer must open the ballot box and count the votes in the presence of election monitors, any observers, and anyone who was nominated that wishes to be present.

### A ballot will be rejected if:

- It does not have the school stamp or relevant identifying feature on it,
- If someone casts more votes than the number of places available. For example, if there have been 7 crosses made, but there are only 6 parent member places that are required to be filled.
- The ballot is not marked clearly or it is unclear against which name a vote has been cast.

The school electoral officer will then declare who has been elected.

