

**Policy Category**

**ELECTION RULES**

**Policy Title**

**COUNTING PROCEDURES FOR  
GENERAL AND RUN-OFF ELECTIONS**

**I. Ballot Receipt Procedure**

1. SDEA will maintain two post office boxes dedicated to SDEA elections. One post office box will be used as the return address for the ballot mailing to members. One post office box will be used as the mailing address to which completed ballots will be sent to SDEA.
2. The post office box used as the return address for the ballot mailing will be checked daily by SDEA staff after the ballot mailing has gone out to check for returned ballot mailings. Such returned ballot mailings will be resent if another address can be located. Notations regarding dispositions of the returned ballot mailings will be maintained. Staff obligation for the daily check of the post office box will cease five calendar days prior to the date ballots are counted.
3. The post office box used as the mailing address to which completed ballots will be sent shall not be checked by anyone, staff or governance, during the election period. The only time during the election period this post office box may be accessed is on the day ballots are counted as described in Section II below.

**II. Counting Procedure**

Prior to the convening of the Elections Committee, SDEA/NEA Staff will count the ballots. The procedure for counting ballots will depend on the type of ballots used: (1) Scantron ballots or (2) paper (non-Scantron) ballots.

Prior to either procedure outlined below, SDEA Staff will retrieve the ballots from the post office box used as the mailing address to which completed ballots are returned. Candidates for Officer positions have the right to observe this retrieval. Prior to being opened, the ballot envelopes will be counted to determine how many were received.

**A. Scantron ballot counting**

SDEA Staff run ballots through the Scantron machine using the following procedure:

1. The SDEA/NEA President, or designee, will be present to oversee the counting of ballots.
2. Ballots received by the posted date for ballot counting shall be counted except as delineated below.

3. Envelopes are opened and the number of ballots is verified. If a return envelope contains more than one ballot envelope, all inside ballot envelopes are opened and ballots are counted except as delineated below. If a ballot envelope contains more than one ballot, all ballots contained in the ballot envelope are counted except as delineated below.
4. Each individual ballot is checked for irregularities such as too many votes, not marked in pencil, erasures, or other irregularities that would not allow for proper scanning. These irregularities are noted and the ballots set aside for the Committee to decide whether the discrepancy warrants rejection.
5. Ballots are scanned and totals are recorded for each race and the number of ballots run. The results are prepared for the Committee.
6. The ballots are stored in the vault until the Committee arrives for its meeting.
7. Envelopes are retained until the SDEA Board of Directors certifies the election. Election results and ballots are retained for one year.
8. Candidates for Officer positions have the right to observe the Scantron counting process.

B. Paper (non-Scantron) ballot counting

SDEA Staff hand-count the ballots using the following procedure:

1. The SDEA/NEA President, or designee, will be present to oversee the counting of ballots.
2. Ballots received by the posted date for ballot counting shall be counted except as delineated below.
3. Envelopes are opened and the number of ballots is verified. If a return envelope contains more than one ballot envelope, all ballot envelopes contained inside are opened and ballots are counted except as delineated below. If a ballot envelope contains more than one ballot, all ballots contained in the ballot envelope are counted except as delineated below.
4. Each ballot is separated into its unit for counting.
5. Each individual ballot is checked for irregularities such as too many votes, erasures or cross-outs or other irregularities. These irregularities are noted and the ballot is set aside for the Committee to determine whether the irregularity warrants rejection.

6. The ballots are then hand-counted by SDEA Staff working in teams of two. Each ballot is divided into sections for counting State Officers; UniServ Unit Board of Directors and delegates to the NEA RA; At-Large delegates to the NEA RA. Each properly completed section of a ballot is counted by SDEA Staff.
7. SDEA Staff perform a double count to ensure accuracy of the results.
8. Totals are recorded for each race and for the number of ballots counted. The results are prepared for the Committee.
9. The ballots are stored in the vault until the Committee arrives for its meeting.
10. Envelopes are retained until the SDEA Board of Directors certifies the election. Election results and ballots are retained for one year.
11. Candidates for Officer positions have the right to observe the hand-counting process.

### III. Duties of the Elections Committee

1. The Committee reviews all irregular ballots that have been set aside to determine if they will be counted. If the intent of the voter is clear, those ballots shall be counted by the Committee.
2. The Committee recognizes that the ballot is in three sections and the rejection of one section does not necessarily mean the rejection of the ballot as a whole. Those sections are as follows:
  - a. State Officers,
  - b. UniServ Unit Board of Directors and delegates to the NEA RA
  - c. At Large delegates to the NEA RA.Therefore, a ballot could be considered spoiled in one section but counted in the other two sections.
3. Envelopes containing ballots that were received after the deadline will not be opened and counted.
4. Write-in votes invalidate that specific section of the ballot. Any other written comments on the ballot invalidate the ballot as a whole.
5. The counting of ballots will be done in a common area supervised by the Committee Chair.
6. The Committee hand counts the set-aside ballots that were determined to be valid. A system of checks and balance will be used when doing any counting. A common practice is for members to work in pairs for hand counting. In addition, a member does not count any ballots from the unit he/she represents.

7. Once the hand counting is complete, the Committee receives the results of the earlier SDEA Staff counted ballots and compiles all tallies for a final count.
8. The Committee ranks candidates by number of votes received and designates alternates for the NEA-RA delegates.
9. The Committee Chair prepares a final election report that is forwarded to the SDEA/NEA Board of Directors for certification.

#### IV. Recounts

1. In accordance with SDEA/NEA Bylaw Article IX, Section 6, if a recount is requested, the Committee will determine the best procedure to complete the recount.

#### V. Notification

1. The SDEA/NEA President, or designee, will notify candidates of the outcome of the election after the meeting of the Committee. Candidates will be asked to supply an email address to use for notification.

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Mary J. McCorkle  
President of the Board

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