

# 2020 COMMUNITY TOOLKIT

SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION



## BOARD DUTIES

### Statutory duties of Arkansas School Board Members

1. Attend their board's meetings, including the regular monthly meeting and any special meetings.
2. Determine and set the mission and direction of the school district.
3. Follow all the state and federal laws that govern public schools.
4. Make, enforce, and obey school district policies.
5. Employ staff and conduct hearings.
6. Employ a superintendent of schools to oversee the day-to-day operations of the school district.
7. Evaluate the superintendent annually or at least before extending his or her contract
8. Oversee school district finances and all aspects of the budget, never permitting the district to end the fiscal year with a negative balance.
9. Visit district schools and classrooms, when students are present, at least annually and also attend some events and functions.
10. Receive the training and professional development necessary to serve as active, informed members of the school board.



## GETTING READY!



### What Do You Need?

- List of those voting in recent school elections\*
- Maps of the school district divided by precinct\*
- Absentee ballot applications\*\*
- Voter registration forms\*\*
- List of civic and club leaders

\*Contact your County Election Commission or  
 \*\*County Clerk's Office for this information.

### Things to Do During the Campaign

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| • Letters to the editor      | • Absentee voting                           |
| • Cards to friends           | • Target favorable and turnout precincts    |
| • Mailing/Literature drop    | • Develop literature/cards for distribution |
| • Neighborhood gatherings    | • Develop coalitions with other groups      |
| • Telephone/Get-Out-The-Vote | • Schedule candidate appearances            |

Campaigns utilize the frequent voter lists with telephone numbers and methodical, repeated contacts with those voters. Favorable voters and undecideds who are leaning toward our recommended candidate(s) are identified for get-out-the-vote (gotv) contacts.

# SCREENING CANDIDATES

## Why Screen School Board Candidates?

SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES ARE SCREENED FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

- To establish a dialogue with the candidates on the issues, educate the candidates on important educational issues, and develop a candidate’s understanding of the community’s positions.
- To determine the candidates’ position on issues, background, and base of support.
- To provide information necessary for making an informed decision on recommending a candidate.

If a local association decides that it would rather not screen school board candidates for the purpose of making a recommendation, it is important to provide an opportunity for candidates and school employees to share their views. The local may wish to sponsor a forum where all candidates will be invited to speak and answer questions from school employees.

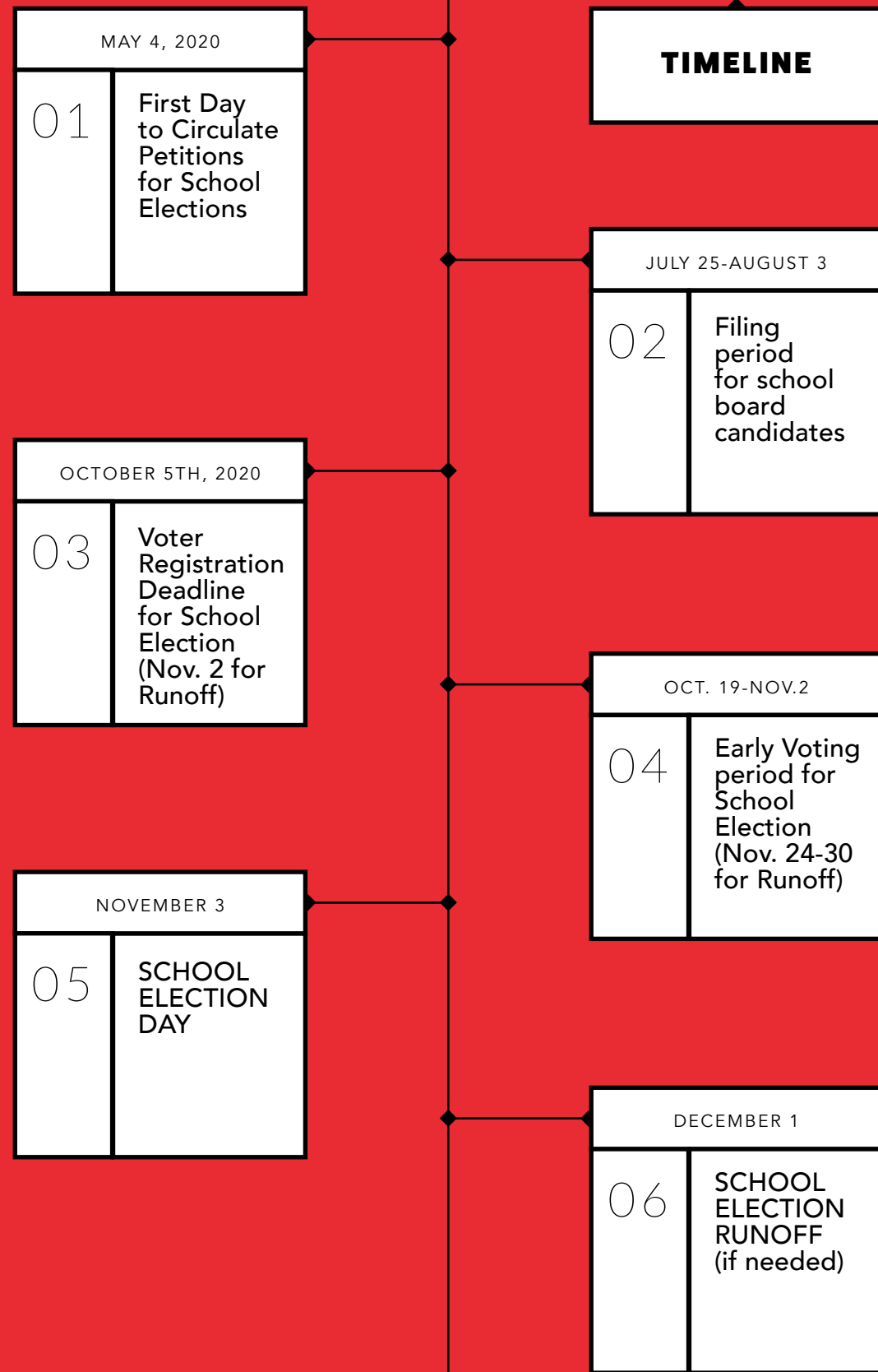


## These are the types of questions...

YOU SHOULD CONSIDER WHEN THINKING ABOUT RUNNING FOR A POSITION ON THE SCHOOL BOARD, AS WELL AS QUESTIONS YOU MAY POSE TO CANDIDATES.

- 1 Why do you wish to serve on the school board?
- 2
  - A) What do you see as the major strengths of our school district? What problems face the school district?
  - B) If elected, what solutions or ideas would you offer for resolving the problems you’ve noted?
  - C) If elected, how will you use the district’s strengths to build on student success?
- 3 Please review your qualifications or expertise in the following:
  - A) Budget
  - B) Policies
  - C) Personnel
  - D) Instruction and Curriculum
  - E) Would you share your educational background?
  - F) What other insights and abilities do you feel you can bring to the position of school board member?
- 4
  - A) Are you aware of the salary and benefits offered to employees in our district?
  - B) How do you feel about the salaries/benefits provided by our District in terms of recruiting and Retaining the best possible employees?
  - C) What priority do you believe needs to be given to efforts to increase the school district’s contribution for employee health insurance in this district?
- 5 If our district were to receive unexpected funds, what would you list as the three top priorities for these monies?
- 6 What types of things do you believe the school district can do to improve community relations and build more community support?

# PROPOSED QUESTIONS



# ELECTION INFO

## FILING TO RUN AS A CANDIDATE FOR A LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD

Each Arkansas school district is governed by a board of education elected by the voters of the district. To qualify for the school board, one must be:

1. a resident of the district in which he or she wishes to serve,
2. a qualified elector of the district.

In 2017, the Arkansas Legislature changed the law governing school board elections. Districts are now required to hold elections on either the date of the primary election or the general election in November.

A candidate can file for the local school board in two different ways.

If a candidate wishes to have his or her name on the ballot, he or she must file a petition with the county clerk of the county where the school district administration is located. The petition must include the names of at least twenty (20) registered voters who are residents of the school district, and, if applicable, of the school board zone.

A candidate may begin circulating a

petition no earlier than ninety (90) days before the filing deadline. For a March election in 2020 that date is August 14, 2019 (or May 4, 2020 for a November Election). Any signature dated more than thirty (90) days before the filing deadline cannot be counted.

The petition and the candidate's political practices pledge must be filed with the county clerk between noon on November 4th, 2019 and noon on November 12 (or between noon on July 25, 2020 and noon on August 3 for a November election).

A person can also file to run as a write-in candidate for a local school board. A write-in candidate must file a notice of intent, an affidavit of eligibility and a political practices pledge with the county clerk between noon on November 4th, 2019 and noon on November 12 (or between noon on July 25, 2020 and noon on August 3 for a November election).

The order in which names of the candidates are to appear on the ballot is determined by lot at a meeting of the county board of election commissioners.

**To confirm the date of your local school board election, contact the office of your local county clerk.**

FIND CONTACT INFORMATION AT:  
[HTTPS://WWW.ARCOUNTIES.ORG/COUNTIES/](https://www.arcounties.org/counties/)

# DEVELOPING CAMPAIGN



## THEME DEVELOPMENT

- Why is the candidate running?
- What is his/her concept of the job?
- How do the candidates differ? What are the strengths and weaknesses of each?  
Records of each?
- What is the meaning of the campaign?
- What message is the campaign trying to get across?
- Is it likely that the message will develop as the issue of the campaign?

## STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

- How badly do the candidate and his/her campaign workers want to win?
- How many votes are needed to win?
- Where are the votes?
- How can undecided voters be identified and persuaded?
- How can the base support be solidified?
- How can the vote be turned out?
- What are the local issues?
- What will be the strategy of the opponent?
- How much time is the candidate committing to the campaign?
- Will a sufficient amount of money be raised to carry out the strategy?

## VOTING EXPECTATIONS

- What is the demographic breakdown of the district?
- What will be the strongest areas? Which will be most easily organized?
- What will be the weakest areas?
- What will be the turnout by precinct?
- What groups will likely influence the outcome of the election?
- How can the support of these groups be gained?

## VOLUNTEERS

- How many volunteers will be needed? How many will be available?
- What will they be used for?
- Who will recruit the volunteers?
- How will the volunteers be managed?
- How can the volunteers be made to feel they are an essential part of the campaign?

## COMMUNICATIONS

- What is the nature of the media market?
- Is it possible to get free media coverage? Can letters to the editor be effective?
- How will news releases be handled?
- How can voter contact programs reinforce the message?
- What media events should be planned?
- What printed materials could be effectively used?
- Who will develop a social media strategy and how will it be implemented?
- What paid media should be used to get the message across? Radio? TV? Newspapers? Direct Mail? Billboards? Lawn signs? Bumper Stickers? Telephone?
  - How should each be utilized?

## SCHEDULING THE CANDIDATE'S TIME

- How can the candidate's time best be used?
- Who will coordinate and advance the candidate's schedule?
- When will a plan be completed for the best use of the candidate's time?

## RESEARCH

- What opposition research needs to be done? How soon?
- Will polling be done? When? How will the results be used?
- What type of targeting will be done?

## VOTER CONTACT AND GET-OUT-THE-VOTE (GOTV)

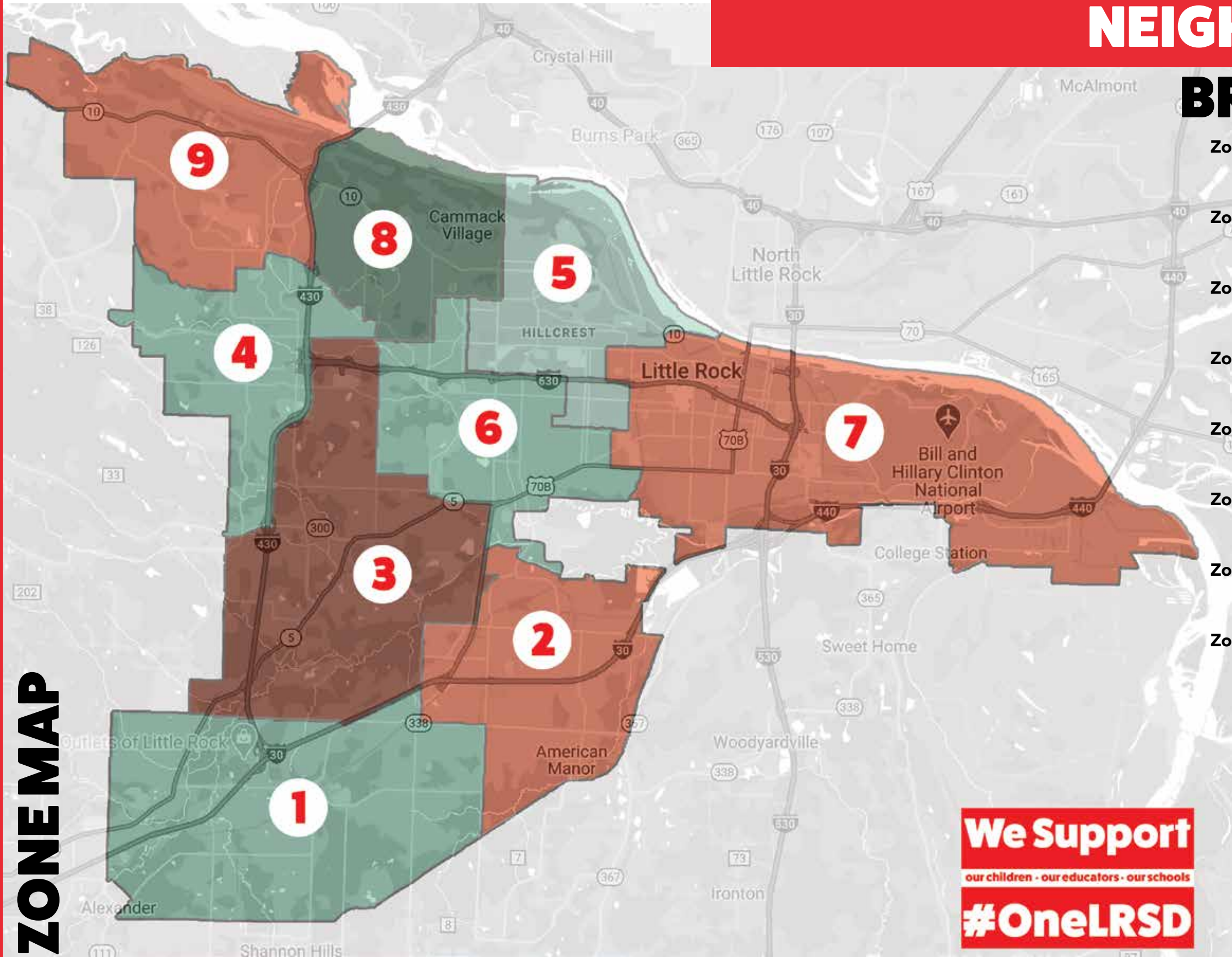
- Will the campaign need telephone banks?
- How important is a GOTV effort?
- Is there a clearly defined GOTV plan?
- Are sufficient resources available for a GOTV effort?

## Election Day

- Know the Rules - learn from Your County Election Commission
- Poll watchers can observe from outside
- a designee can also watch from inside the polling place

# SCHOOL BOARD

# ZONE MAP



# NEIGHBORHOOD BREAKDOWN

- Zone 1
- Zone 2
- Zone 3
- Zone 4
- Zone 5
- Zone 6
- Zone 7
- Zone 8

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## FACTORS TO LOOK FOR IN A CANDIDATE

- Issues and attitudes
- Attitude toward school employees
- Knowledge about the issues
- Positions on the issues important to the Association
- Name recognition
- Manpower availability – power base
- Finances – How much money is available for the campaign?
- Personality
- Candidate background
- Past record, both perceived & real
- Electability
- Who else is in the race?
- Other organizational support
- Issues to which the candidate is related
- Ability to project a winning image
- Ability to take advice
- Attitude toward the media
- Attitude toward fundraising
- Attitude toward winning
- Attitude toward hard work

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a lit candle. The candle is white with a bright yellow flame. The hand is wearing a yellow and black patterned sleeve. The background is dark with many out-of-focus, warm-toned bokeh lights, suggesting a festive or celebratory atmosphere.

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