



Constitution of the Ossining Teachers Association

Dated November 1995 at Ossining, New York

Revised 2007 at Ossining, New York

Amended 2024 at Ossining, New York

ARTICLE I – NAME

This organization shall be called the Ossining Teachers Association (herein The OTA).

ARTICLE II – PURPOSES

1. To protect the rights of its members.
2. To promote the general welfare of its members.
3. To secure conditions necessary for the optimum performance of its members in schools.
4. To promote the interests of public education.
5. To advance the standards of the profession of education.
6. To maintain a close relationship with other professional and affiliated educational organizations.
7. To promote effective and productive communication among members, the administration, and The Board of Education.
8. To communicate the functions, progress, and concerns involving The OTA and The Ossining Union Free School District to the public.
9. To fairly represent all members as the exclusive bargaining representative; actions can not be arbitrary, discriminatory, or in bad faith, in accordance with the Taylor Law.

ARTICLE III – AFFILIATIONS

This organization shall be affiliated with New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) and its national affiliates.

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

1. There shall be three categories of members: active, on leave (personal, medical, child rearing, FMLA, or other leave), and retired.
 - a. Active: All certificated staff hired to fill an OTA position shall be eligible for active membership upon completion of NYSUT enrollment/payroll authorization form and by payment of dues through payroll deduction to The OTA. This includes members

who are on paid leave, as they are still paying dues.

- b. Leave: All OTA members who are on unpaid leave (not paying dues) from active service in the District.
 - c. Retired: Former members of The OTA who have retired.
2. A non-member is a certificated staff hired to fill an OTA position who has chosen not to enroll in the union or has taken action to withdraw membership from the union. A non-member shall have no right or privilege to participate in any election, attend OTA meetings, receive OTA notifications, or be eligible for the OTA Sick Bank or other OTA functions, nor will they be entitled to receive any NYSUT services as defined by NYSUT policies pertaining to non-membership. Members who re-enroll shall be required to pay 25% of back dues in order to be an active member.
 3. Membership is not to be barred on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or political beliefs or activities.

ARTICLE V – EXECUTIVE BOARD

1. There shall be an Executive Board comprised of a President, a 1st Vice President, a 2nd Vice President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and an Executive Board Intern of The OTA.
2. These officers shall be elected by ballot of the active members between May 15th and June 1st of the election year, shall assume office on July 1st, and shall hold office for two years.
3. The elected Executive Board Officers shall:
 - a. expedite in every possible way the legislative and executive business of The OTA.
 - b. serve as an executive body in all matters delegated to it.
 - c. consider all matters presented for the attention of The OTA, and report its recommendations to the membership.
 - d. meet at least once per month during the school year in addition to maintaining constant communication with each other. Additional meetings may be called by the President or by a majority of the members of the Executive Board.
 - e. meet once per month during the school year with the Superintendent's Cabinet to address contractual, instructional, and district-wide concerns continuously, following up as needed.
 - f. represent and protect the rights of OTA members in personnel meetings with the Central Administration.
 - g. arrange for representation of The OTA at public meetings of the Board of Education when deemed necessary.
 - h. have the right to attend building meetings of OTA members in any of the District's schools.
 - i. notify the Representative Council of non-budgeted expenditures or budgeted expenditures that were under-budgeted for (ex: accounting fee increase; additional unforeseen retiree gifts, etc.) over two thousand five hundred (2500) dollars.

4. Past Presidents who have remained active members of The OTA may attend meetings upon the invitation of the members of the Executive Board.
5. The Executive Board shall consist of the following members and duties:
 - a. The President, who:
 - i. must have been in the District for at least three years and must be tenured.
 - ii. shall be the chief executive of and act as chief spokesperson for The OTA.
 - iii. shall preside at all meetings of the Executive Board, Board of Officers, and General Membership meetings.
 - iv. shall appoint the members of all committees (subject to approval of the Executive Board), and shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.
 - v. shall be the ranking delegate to all conventions of all organizations with which The OTA is affiliated.
 - vi. shall fulfill such other duties as the office requires and as are consistent with the Constitution and its Bylaws.
 - b. The 1st Vice President, who:
 - i. must have been in the District for at least three years and must be tenured.
 - ii. chairs the Instructional Council, and is a member of both the Negotiating Committee and the Grievance Committee.
 - iii. shall be actively involved in the executive function of The OTA and shall carry out those executive duties delegated by the President.
 - iv. shall assume all duties of the President in the case of absence or resignation of the President.
 - c. The 2nd Vice President, who:
 - i. must have been in the District for at least three years and must be tenured.
 - ii. chairs the grievance committee and is a member of the negotiating committee.
 - iii. shall be actively involved in the executive function of The OTA and shall carry out those executive duties delegated by the President.
 - iv. shall assume all the duties of the President in the case of absence or resignation of both the President and the first Vice President.
 - d. The Secretary, who:
 - i. must have been in the District for at least three years and must be tenured.
 - ii. is a member of the grievance committee.
 - iii. shall keep a record of all meetings of The OTA, of the Executive Board, and of the Board of Officers.
 - iv. maintain accurate member lists and contact information.
 - v. shall assist the President with internal and external communication.
 - vi. creates and distributes election ballots, and disseminates official election results to members.
 - vii. shall be actively involved in the executive function of The OTA and shall carry out those executive duties delegated by the President.
 - viii. shall assume all the duties of the President in the case of absence or resignation of the President, the first Vice President, and the second Vice President.

- e. The Treasurer, who:
 - i. must have been in the District for at least three years and must be tenured.
 - ii. is a member of the grievance committee.
 - iii. shall be responsible for the collection of all dues of The OTA and/or assessments.
 - iv. with the President, shall have charge of all funds of The OTA and shall deposit them in a bank in the name of The OTA.
 - v. shall ensure all purchases are approved by two members of the Executive Board through the use of The OTA Expense Form. Additionally, the Treasurer shall ensure all cheques written from The OTA account will have the signature of 2 Executive Board members.
 - vi. presents periodic financial reports to the Board of Officers.
 - vii. works with the OTA accountant to process tax forms and taxes.
 - viii. maintains OTA spending receipts (2 years) and tax records (7 years).
 - ix. shall be responsible, along with the President and the Executive Board, for the annual budget, and presenting it to the Representative Council.
 - x. arranges for an annual audit of The OTA's finances and presents said audit to the Board of Officers.
 - xi. shall be actively involved in the executive function of The OTA and shall carry out those executive duties delegated by the President.
- f. The Executive Board Intern, who:
 - i. must have been in the District for at least three years and must be tenured.
 - ii. shall be actively involved in the executive function of The OTA and shall carry out those executive duties delegated by the President.
 - iii. is not a voting position on the Executive Board, however, may vote at the Board of Officers meetings.

ARTICLE VI – REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

1. Each building will elect 2 to 4 Building Representatives, whose numbers will be determined at the discretion of the Executive Board.
2. These officers shall be elected by ballot of the active members of their assigned school between May 15th and June 1st of the election year, shall assume office on July 1, and shall hold office for two years.
3. The Building Representatives, who:
 - a. must have been in the District for at least three years and must be tenured.
 - b. address contractual, instructional, and building-based concerns (ex. communication, safety, etc.) with the building-level administration on a continuous basis, following up as needed.
 - c. represent and protect the rights of individual building members in personnel meetings with building administration.
 - d. represent building members (in total) in other matters such as those related to health and safety in meetings with building administration.

- e. presides over monthly building meetings (before or after school) to relay information from Board of Officers meetings and to provide building updates and gather concerns (not to relay info from building administration).
- f. maintains communication with fellow building reps to ensure everyone is on the same page.
- g. communicates with the OTA President immediately on all matters that involve members and administration above the building level principal (ex. Superintendent, Human Resources, Directors, etc.), with outside agencies (law enforcement, etc.), or if a personnel issue arises or a member is served with any legal paperwork relating to work-related matters.
- h. communicates with the OTA President and/or Executive Board when unsure about how to handle situations (the President has a reduced teaching load to be available to reps and members).
- i. has meetings with the school administration at least once a month (may be outside of school hours) (reps and admin are on equal footing at these meetings) to discuss building-related and instructional concerns and updates.
- j. attends monthly, after-school meetings of the Board of Officers.
- k. is responsible for communication between the Executive Board and the members of the school.
- l. is responsible for communicating and coordinating with building committee members and liaisons on a regular basis (Instructional Council, PTA, New Member, Political Action, Staff Development Center, etc.).
- m. chairs the Faculty Council in the school (Meetings/communication with the Faculty Council may vary by building).
- n. mediate conflicts within the building between OTA members.
- o. solicits member participation on committees and at OTA functions.
- p. is a member of the Nominating Committee for the Executive Board and Delegates for Conferences (NYSUT-RA, NYSTRS, AFT).
- q. calls special meetings upon the written request of five (5) active members in that school.
- r. shall provide summary reports of all building meetings to the Executive Board upon request.

ARTICLE VII – BOARD OF OFFICERS

1. There shall be a Board of Officers comprised of the Executive Board and the Representative Council.
2. The Board of Officers shall:
 - a. consider and act on all policy matters of The OTA.
 - b. be the final authority in The OTA, except for matters that are decided by vote of the entire membership, such as the election of officers, approval of the annual budget and dues, and acceptance of a collective bargaining agreement between The OTA and The School Board.
 - c. meet at least once a month during the school year, after school dismissal. Additional

meetings may be called by the President or by written request of at least five (5) members of the Board of Officers.

d. cast a quorum vote consisting of $\frac{2}{3}$ of the Board of Officers.

ARTICLE VIII – FACULTY COUNCIL

1. There shall be a Faculty Council comprised of members of each school in the District, the number of which shall be approximately one for every ten active members.
2. These Faculty Council members shall be elected by ballot of the active members of their assigned school between May 15th and June 1st of the election year, shall assume office on July 1, and shall hold office for two years.
3. Faculty Council members shall assist the Building Representatives of their school in maintaining communication between the Board of Officers and the active OTA members of their school.

ARTICLE IX – COMMITTEES

1. Negotiating Committee: The negotiating committee shall carry out all phases of collective bargaining as the official representative of The OTA. It shall have a maximum of eight (8) active members and must include the NYSUT Labor Relations Specialist, the President of The OTA as chief negotiator, or the President's designee for chief negotiator, the 1st and 2nd Vice Presidents or designee. There shall be at least one member from each educational level – Elementary, Middle, and High. The members of this committee shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the Executive Board.
 - a. Negotiating liaisons: The negotiating liaisons shall be comprised of two (2) active members from each school, representative of as much of the membership as possible. The liaison's primary responsibility shall be to gather the suggestions/recommendations of the building's members to be considered in negotiations and relay this information to the negotiating committee. Liaisons shall be established within one year before negotiations and shall continue in service until negotiations are completed. During this time, they may be called upon by the negotiating committee to perform needed tasks concerning membership input and activity. The liaisons shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the Executive Board.
2. Grievance Committee: The grievance committee is comprised of the Executive Board. The Second Vice President, or designee, shall represent The OTA as the chairperson of this committee in the grievance procedures prescribed by the collective bargaining agreement. The grievance chairperson shall review and investigate grievances as initiated by members or by The OTA. The grievance committee members discuss the merits of contract violations and determine appropriate action, and the grievance chairperson shall take appropriate action.
3. Chairperson positions: The Secretary shall, each June, put out an all-call to members for interest in chairperson positions. The Secretary will share the list of interested members with

the President who will appoint these chairpersons with the approval of the Executive Board. These chairpersons may be requested, by the Executive Board, to attend Board of Officers meetings when necessary to present or clarify information from their committees. These positions take office July 1st and serve for a year term. They include but are not limited to: APPR, community outreach, media, membership, political action, sick bank, and VOTE Cope.

4. Building Level Committee Members: The Building Representatives shall request and take note of members who are interested in serving as building representatives on the following committees, and relay these names to the President. The President will appoint these members with the approval of the Board of Officers. These positions take office July 1st and serve for a year term. These committees include but are not limited to: APPR, community outreach, instructional council, political action, sick bank, and VOTE Cope.

ARTICLE X – NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

1. Fair and Equal Right to Run
 - a. Tenured OTA members may run for Executive Board or Building Representative positions.
 - b. Members who are running for Executive Board or Building Representative positions may, if they choose, campaign for office. In order to maintain consistency and fair representation in such campaigns, the Secretary will share with all members [a voluntary question set](#), approved by the Board of Officers. In order to maintain consistency and fair representation in such campaigns, the Secretary will share with all members a question set, approved by the Board of Officers. Members who plan to run must submit their answers to the Secretary no later than noon on April 25th. The Secretary will share the responses with the membership by April 30th via email. Members who petition (see section X.2.b.6.) to run after the April 28th deadline may submit their responses to the Secretary by May 10th. Members who petition (see section X.2.b.6.) to run after the April 28th deadline may submit their responses to the Secretary by May 10th. The Secretary will share the responses with the membership by May 14th via email.
 - c. Candidates are given the opportunity to have observers at each voting location and at each place where the ballots are counted.
 - d. Ballots and other election records are preserved for the term of office.
 - e. The results of the election will be reported to the members by the Secretary within 2 school days of the election.
2. Nominations for The Executive Board of The OTA, and the following conventions: New York State United Teachers Representative Assembly (NYSUT-RA) delegates, American Federation of Teachers (AFT) delegates, & New York State Teachers Retirement System (NYSTRS) delegates, are for 2 year terms.
 - a. A nominating committee consisting of the Representative Council shall meet after March 15th of each Executive Board Member election year to prepare a slate of the Executive Board for The OTA, a slate of NYSUT-RA delegates, a slate of AFT delegates, & a slate of NYSTRS delegates. The Executive Board shall appoint two Building

Representatives as the nominating committee chairpersons.

- b. A call for nominations to be a representative on any of the above slates shall be put out to the general membership by the nominating committee chairpersons by March 1st and is due back to the nominating chairpersons by March 15th of every election year.
- c. Members may nominate themselves or other members.
 - i. There shall be delegates to NYSUT- RA, AFT, and NYSTRS according to the number prescribed by the Constitution of those organizations. The President of The OTA or their designee shall be the ranking delegate at all conventions.
 - ii. Any nominated member interested in serving on the Executive Board shall be interviewed by the nominating committee. Nominated members for the NYSUT-RA, AFT, and NYSTRS may be interviewed by the nominating committee. All meetings and interviews with the nominating committee shall be confidential. All such interviews should be completed by April 28th of said election year.
 - iii. Once the nominating committee decides upon the slates, the chairperson will contact the nominees for the Executive Board Slate and confirm the acceptance of their nominations.
 - iv. The nominating chairpersons will send the slates to the Secretary by April 28th of said election year.
 - v. The Secretary will present the slates to the membership by April 30th of said election year, via email.
 - vi. Any additional nominations for the above offices may be made by presenting to the Secretary of The OTA, by May 10th of said election year, a petition signed by at least twenty active members.
 - vii. The Secretary will then create the official ballots, including the nominating committee's slates and any additional nominations.
- d. These officers shall be elected by ballot of the active members between May 15th and June 1st of the election year, shall assume office on July 1st, and shall hold office for two years.

3. Building Representation (2-year term)

- a. The Secretary shall put out a call for nominations for each building's open Representative seat(s) to the building membership by March 16th of every election year.
- b. Members may nominate themselves or other members.
- c. Nominations should be reported to the Secretary by April 15th of every election year, who will then confirm with nominated members that they are choosing to run. The Secretary will present these nominees to the members of the building by April 30th of every election year, via email.
- d. Any additional nominations for the above offices may be made by presenting to the Secretary of The OTA, by May 10th of every election year, a petition signed by at least twenty active members.
- e. These officers shall be elected by ballot of the active members of their assigned school between May 15th and June 1st of the election year, shall assume office on July 1, and

shall hold office for two years.

4. Faculty Council Representation (2-year term)

- a. The Secretary shall put out a call for nominations for each building's open Faculty Council seat(s) to the building membership by March 16th of every election year.
- b. Members may nominate themselves or other members.
- c. Nominations should be reported to the Building Representatives by April 15th of every election year and the Building Representatives should confirm the nominated member is choosing to run.
- d. Building Representatives should report nominations to the Secretary by April 16th.
- e. These Faculty Council members shall be elected by ballot of the active members of that school between May 15th and June 1st of the election year, shall assume office on July 1st, and shall hold office for two years.

5. Election procedures are as follows:

- a. Elections shall be held between May 15th and June 1st of every election year.
- b. The Treasurer shall present the proposed budget to the Board of Officers before the election, and then send a copy of the proposed budget to the Building Representatives. Building Representatives will let building members know, via email, where they can view the OTA budget for the three days before the election.
- c. Official ballots will be created by the Secretary, copied for each building, and delivered to the Building Representatives by the Executive Board.
- d. The Secretary will send out the vote by proxy form by May 10th, via email.

Vote by proxy forms:

- i. are to be used by active members or members on leave who are unable to be present to vote on the day of the election.
- ii. must be completely and properly filled out and signed by the member and the proxy to be accepted.
- iii. must be hand-delivered on the day of the vote by the proxy or scanned and sent to the proxy who will print the scan to show as proof of permission to vote for the absent member.
- iv. must be signed by a Building Representative or designee in charge of the vote.
- e. The Building Representatives will organize the overseeing of the building vote utilizing members who are not on the ballot (designees). They will get an OTA Member list for building members to sign off on the day of the vote from The OTA Secretary. They will inform building members via email as to when and where the ballot box will be located on the day of the vote three days before the vote.
- f. The vote should begin at least 30 minutes before the school day begins, and be held at the building's main entrance. After the start of the school day, Building Representatives (or designees) will move the ballot box to a secure, designated location, where it will remain until the close of the polls at the end of the school day.
- g. Building Representatives will ensure that at the voting location, one copy of the budget will be taped to a desk for members (to view only). Copies of the ballot, secure ballot box, pens, and member sign-in sheets will be provided for members to cast their votes.

Building Representatives will also do everything possible to ensure members have privacy while voting.

- h. Building Representatives will send no less than 3 reminders for members to vote on election day (Remind app, email, etc.).
- i. All voting is completed at the end of the school day.
- j. At the secure voting location, after the close of the vote, at least 2 Building reps or their designee(s) (members on the ballot cannot tally the ballots) tally the Executive Board, the conventions, The OTA Budget, and building level ballots and send the specific results (total ballots, breakdowns of yes/no for budget and open positions) electronically (email, text, etc.) to the Secretary by the end of the work day. The actual ballots, sign-in sheets, and proxies will be sent via Jeep mail to the President and saved for the term.
- k. In the event of a tie for the Executive Board, the Representative Council will determine the winner via a vote.
- l. In the event of a tie for a Building Representative position, the Executive Board will determine the winner via a vote.
- m. If The OTA budget does not pass, an alternate budget will be presented and voted on within three weeks. If the second budget does not pass, a contingency budget will be implemented.

ARTICLE XI – OPEN POSITIONS

1. All resignations and absences for Building Representatives shall be filled by Presidential appointment for that school year, in consultation with the Executive Board and that building's remaining Representative(s). The position will be voted on at the next yearly election.
2. All resignations and absences for the Faculty Council shall be filled by Presidential appointment for the rest of the member's term, in consultation with the Executive Board and the Building Representatives.
3. All resignations and absences for chairperson positions shall be filled by Presidential appointment, in consultation with the Executive Board.
4. All resignations and absences for the Executive Board, other than that of the President, shall be filled until the end of the term, by Presidential appointment, in consultation with the Executive Board.
5. In the case of the resignation or absence of the President, the 1st Vice President shall assume the office of President and shall arrange for new elections to take place within thirty (30) days.
6. In the case of the resignation or absence of the President and the 1st Vice President, the 2nd Vice President shall assume the office of the President and shall arrange for new elections to take place within thirty (30) days.

7. In the case of resignation or absence of the President, the 1st Vice President, and the 2nd Vice President, the Secretary shall assume the office of the President and shall arrange for new elections to take place within thirty (30) days.

ARTICLE XII – REMOVAL OF OFFICERS

1. The members of the Board of Officers can submit a written petition of at least one-third (1/3) of the total Board of Officers, to the President to consider the removal of an elected officer for cause. This document will include the reason(s) for removal, and be shared with the Officer being considered for removal before the vote. If the President is the subject of the petition, the petition will be filed with the 1st Vice President.
2. In order to discuss and vote on the removal of an officer, either an emergency meeting of the Board of Officers will be called, or, when possible, the regular monthly meeting of the Board of Officers will be used, whichever is most timely. The President will preside over this meeting. If the office of the President is at issue, the 1st Vice President shall preside over the meeting.
3. The Officer in question shall have the right to be heard or to be represented or accompanied by another OTA member (but not a member of the Board of Officers who is voting on the removal) on his/her behalf following a timely notice of said meeting. This may be at the emergency meeting or regular monthly of the Board of Officers, or at a different time.
4. The Board of Officers may remove the elected officer from office by a roll-call vote requiring two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast.
5. The results of this vote will be shared with the Officer by the Secretary within 2 school days.
6. If any officer is removed from their office, the President will communicate this to the membership via email. If the President is removed, the 1st Vice President shall communicate this to the membership via email.

ARTICLE XIII – RATIFICATION OF THE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT/ MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT (CBA/MOA/Contract)

1. There will be at least one week's notice of the general membership meeting where details of the proposed MOA will be presented. When necessary, there will be an elementary and a secondary meeting.
2. At this meeting, members will sign in to ensure OTA membership and eligibility to vote. The negotiating team will present the details of the MOA, and answer questions.
3. The ratification vote of the newly negotiated MOA shall take place by paper ballot within a minimum of 2 and no more than 5 school days of the initial general membership meeting.

4. The Secretary will share the results of the ratification vote via email within 1 school day of the vote.

ARTICLE XIV – AMENDMENTS

1. Any member may propose an amendment to this constitution by informing their building representative. An amendment to this Constitution may be proposed at any Board of Officers meeting. Said amendments shall be voted upon within 2 monthly Board of Officers meetings.
2. If so moved by the Board of Officers, the Secretary will send a copy of the proposed amendment to the membership (active and on leave), via email, after which it shall be submitted to a vote of the entire membership by paper ballot.
3. A two-thirds (2/3) majority of the votes returned shall be required to adopt the proposed amendment.
4. The Secretary will announce the results within 2 school days of the vote.

ARTICLE XV – RECORDS

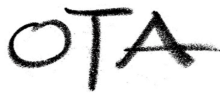
1. Accurate records of The OTA shall be kept.
 - a. The Executive Board Secretary shall keep notes of all Executive Board, Cabinet, and Board of Officers meetings.
 - b. The Building Representatives shall keep notes of all building-level meetings, meetings with their building administrators, as well as meetings with members.
2. Records relating to the functioning of The OTA shall be open to examination by any active member upon written request to the President, providing there is no breach of confidentiality.

ARTICLE XVI – RULES OF ORDER

Robert's Rules of Order shall be the authority on all questions of procedure not specifically stated in the Constitution.

ARTICLE XVII – BYLAWS

1. Bylaws to this Constitution are hereby authorized.
2. Such Bylaws will provide for those particulars, which are not specifically prohibited by this Constitution or its amendments.



Bylaws of the Ossining Teachers Association

Dated November 1995 at Ossining, New York

Amended June 2007 at Ossining, New York

Amended May 2024 at Ossining, New York

ARTICLE I – BUDGET AND DUES

1. The dues of The OTA shall be equal to the sum of the dues of The OTA plus those of NYSUT and its affiliates.
2. Dues shall be collected in a timely manner.

ARTICLE II – GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

1. The President shall have the authority, along with the consent of the Executive Board, to call a general meeting when warranted. The President shall also call a general meeting for a specific purpose upon the written request of fifteen (15) active members.
2. The President shall receive any proposal for agenda items from the Building Representatives for the general meeting three (3) days before such meeting.
3. A quorum for a general meeting shall consist of 10% of active and on leave members.

ARTICLE III – AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS

1. Any member may propose an amendment to this constitution by informing their building representative. An amendment to the Bylaws may be proposed at any Board of Officers meeting. Said amendments shall be voted upon within 2 monthly Board of Officers meetings.
2. If so moved by the Board of Officers, the Secretary will send a copy of the proposed amendment to the membership (active and on leave), via email, after which it shall be submitted to a vote of the entire membership by paper ballot.
3. A two-thirds (2/3) majority of the votes returned shall be required to adopt the proposed amendment.
4. The Secretary will announce the results within 2 school days of the vote.