

TITLE: AAP Election Process: Principles and Rules

BOARD POLICY:

Principles

1. The ultimate purpose of the AAP is to promote the welfare of children and the pediatricians who care for them. Any election activity that is destructive to those ultimate goals should be forbidden.¹
2. In order to attract the best candidates possible, the structure of allowed campaign activities should be widely perceived by the membership to be fair and to not favor candidates with institutional or financial advantages either within or without the AAP.²
3. The AAP should encourage the development of new forums by which the electorate may seek the opinions of the candidates on relevant issues without over burdening the candidates with campaign activities. The electorate should be allowed to express their own positive opinions to other members of the electorate regarding the perceived virtues of one candidate or another.³
4. All national elections have more than one candidate for each office contested.⁴

¹ One of the virtues of the traditional “controlled campaigning only” rules has been to allow the elections to be conducted in a polite and constrained fashion that preserves harmony among the candidates and their supporters who generally are in positions of prominence and influence within the AAP. After the elections are over, while there may be a sense of personal disappointment, there have rarely been feelings of anger or bitterness that would be destructive to the overall health and functioning of the AAP. Many failed candidates have continued with the AAP and with their former opponents, in a collegial and positive attitude, working together for the betterment of the AAP and the children it serves.

The AAP must strive to preserve the ideal of not creating an atmosphere during the nominating or election process that will result in long-term negative feelings from one member or group within the AAP toward another member or group within the AAP. While natural groupings of support will exist within the AAP’s multiple membership categories, the AAP should not allow this natural grouping to become factious or divisive to the organization as a whole.

² In the past, some highly qualified people who would have been excellent candidates may have been dissuaded from running because they felt that they did not enjoy enough institutional support, either from within the AAP or without, to make such a candidacy viable. The election rules are designed to level the playing field somewhat and allow a candidate to be elected on his/her perceived merits by the membership.

³ The AAP wishes to do more to promote availability of candidates to the electorate and to arrange venues by which the candidates’ views on relevant issues may be debated. This will allow the electorate to assess personally the candidates’ qualities and qualifications for elected office. In the past, restricted availability of the candidates has been a practical recognition of the difficulty encountered by many candidates in devoting a great deal of time to the election process. Restricted availability has also served to tone down the “electioneering” aspects, which should be avoided, of the election.

⁴ The AAP should strive to follow the general principles of a democratic organization and therefore having more than one candidate for national office is desirable. Having two candidates for district office is also desirable but experience has shown that it is in the best interest of the AAP to allow the District Nominating Committees leeway in selecting either one or two candidates for each position.

Rules

I. Rules for Officers, Members, and Staff

- A. The National Nominating Committee shall always nominate two candidates for the office of President-elect of the AAP. The NNC is directed to select the best available qualified candidates.
- B. Members of the national Board of Directors, District Vice Chairpersons, National Nominating Committee, paid consultants (with a signed consulting agreement with the AAP), paid editors, and staff will not participate in any campaigning for candidates for the office of President-elect or for district offices (defined as district chairperson, District Vice Chairperson, Chapter Forum Management Committee representative, and National Nominating Committee representative).
- C. ***Campaign Rules:*** The goals of the campaign are to engage the electorate in fair and balanced ways.
- Because of the expense of mass mailings using standard mail, such mass mailings as well as production and distribution of posters, buttons, and placards is prohibited.
 - There will be a limit on personal campaign expenditures, the amount for which shall be determined by the National Nominating Committee.
 - Both candidates shall have fair and equal access to all AAP listservs.
 - Electronic communication is allowed, including use of listservs, Web sites, social media, blogs, and the like. Adhering to use of professional etiquette is required. Postings will not disparage any candidate.
 - Should a candidate establish a Web site, the cost will be borne by that candidate.
 - Candidate Web sites should include a link back to the AAP Web site.
 - The National AAP Election Center on the AAP Web site will include a link to the president-elect candidate's Web sites.
 - Official national, district, state, or chapter stationary or supplies shall not be used.
 - Chapter, section, and district officers may not use their AAP titles in personal correspondence to AAP members regarding the candidates, including those posted on listservs.
- D. Central, Washington, and Editorial Office supplies and facilities—except for those used in official AAP-sponsored campaign activities—will not be used in support of candidates during the campaign.

II. Rules for National and District Candidates

- A. Campaign expenditures are limited to personal resources, the amount for which shall be established by the NNC. No institutional or corporate financial resources may be utilized.
- B. Prohibited activities viewed as electioneering are defined in Sections I.C.
- C. Appropriate campaign activities include participation at district meetings. The rules for candidate presentations include:
- Candidate presentations should be limited to 15 minutes
 - The presentations should be scheduled early on the district meeting agenda

- Both candidates shall be informed of the mechanisms being employed for each other's presentations (eg, if handouts, slides, or overheads are being used)
 - The allocation of time for questions and answers may vary depending on the meeting but must be equal for both candidates.
- D. Candidates may accept speaking engagements on the basis of scientific, professional, or Academy business. Speaking engagements should not be for the primary purpose of electioneering or campaigning. Candidates should provide a list of speaking engagements to the National Nominating Committee for its information.

III. Election Oversight

- A. The following process shall be implemented relative to alleged campaign violations:
- Allegations of campaign violations or complaints about campaign practices of or for a particular candidate may originate from any AAP member. Significant concerns should be submitted in writing to the district-appropriate NNC representative.
 - All such written complaints should be forwarded to the NNC chairperson and the other NNC members with copies to NNC support staff.
 - If the NNC concurs, by majority vote, that a significant violation occurred, the violation shall be reported to the Executive Committee with or without a recommendation for action.
- B. Any violation reported to the Executive Committee by the NNC shall be discussed by the Executive Committee and/or Board of Directors and a vote taken within 14 days. The Board shall separately determine what action to take. Such action is within the sole discretion of the Board. Possible actions available to the Board may include, but are not limited to, the following:
- No action required
 - Letters of reprimand to individuals
 - Require candidates to withdraw from the election
 - Prohibition of future appointment of Board-controlled vacancies on AAP committees, etc.
 - Voiding the election and/or results and rescheduling an election with different or same candidates
 - Publication of the circumstances of the violation in official AAP publications prior to the time of the election ballots being mailed
 - Other sanctions that the Board chooses to impose.
- C. Because it may be required to adjudicate alleged campaign violations, it is considered inappropriate for the Board to discuss such allegations among itself prior to receipt of the National Nominating Committee report.
- D. Election results should not be announced until pending allegations concerning violations of the election process have been resolved.

IV. Logistics of the Election

- A. There will be a moratorium on any and all campaign activities until the ALF.

- B. The Election Rules will be distributed by the candidates to those who approach them offering support.
- C. The Election Rules will be published in *AAP News*. When the NNC meets with the candidates for President-elect, the candidates will be advised of the election rules.
- D. District Nominating Committees may elect to adhere to the rules governing the campaign for President-elect, or may establish their own rules to govern campaigning for district positions.
- E. Candidates for President-elect will prepare the following information for publication in five sequential issues of *AAP News*:

- Biographical information (not more than 250 words, written in the 3rd person and which will also accompany the ballot)
- Position statement (not more than 250 words)
- Answers to three (3) policy questions (not more than 350 words each)

Candidates for district office will each prepare a 250-word biography, written in the 3rd person, for publication in *AAP News*. Candidates for district chairperson shall also prepare a 250-word position statement to be published concurrently with the biographical information in *AAP News*. All candidate and national and district election information will also be published on the National AAP Election Center on the Member Center of the AAP Web site.

- E. The use of any pediatric publication carrying the logo of the American Academy of Pediatrics or sponsored by a state chapter of the AAP shall present a balanced view of each candidate and shall only publish information either authored or approved in advance by each candidate for the office of President-elect and for district offices. Such articles shall be published simultaneously and be of nearly equal length in word count and column length and be placed within the publication to give equal exposure to the candidates.

Oversight: Executive Committee

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