

Municipal Electoral Officer Directives for the Employment of High School Students in an Election

(Municipal Elections Act, SNB 1979, c. M-21.01 ss.22(1), and 22(2.1))



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Background

Elections NB has been given an enhanced mandate from government to promote knowledge about democratic institutions and practices in the province and to provide greater public awareness about elections, particularly among young New Brunswickers.

Allowing students to work in elections will benefit Elections NB by expanding its access to a larger pool of workers with more advanced language and technical skills than many of their elders. It will also benefit the students who work and the education system by encouraging students to:

- Apply theoretical knowledge with practical knowledge in coming face to face with the reality of the democratic process in Canada;
- Become active citizens;
- Gain a better understanding and awareness of the democratic process and the issues, and the workings of the basic infrastructure of democracy that is our electoral system.

Elections NB believes stronger and more informed youth will make stronger communities. It also develops a sense of accomplishment and purpose, and youth gain a better understanding of and sensitivity towards their own community issues. Young people who volunteer as election officials during Advance Polling Days and on Election Day will not only be applying their theoretical knowledge from the classroom but acquiring the practical knowledge within their own community. This is the hallmark of participatory learning and a great example of community service.

In addition, students are helping to meet vital community needs which are some of the hallmarks of responsible and engaged citizens in our society. Citizenship education, in part, requires learning how democratic and governmental institutions work, our collective responsibility and commitment to keep them working, as well as learning about our rights and freedoms.

Elections NB offers high school youth the opportunity to become actively involved during election periods by selecting students who meet the required criteria set out in this directive.

Procedure:

In municipal general elections, the Municipal Electoral Officer (MEO) will request that the Deputy Ministers from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development communicate their support for the program to each district superintendent.

District superintendents will be asked to communicate the program information to the various high school principals in their districts.

Elections NB will notify Municipal Returning Officers (MRO) by e-mail, and attach a list of high schools by school district and of the MRO or MRO's within the respective school district.

It will then become the responsibility of the MRO to contact particular high schools. If there is more than one MRO in that particular school district, then it becomes the responsibility of these MRO's to arrange with each other who will be responsible for contacting a particular high school.

The MRO arranges to meet with the principals and provides all relevant information: a list of positions open to students during the election period, a description of the job duties, skills required for the positions, other related information and their contact information. The principal will circulate this material to the teaching staff.

Interested teachers will be responsible for communicating to their students the details of this opportunity offered by Elections NB. The teacher will also communicate to the students the opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge with practical knowledge by becoming involved in the election. The teacher will outline the academic requirements for participating and the necessary permissions.

Before a student applies to work during the election, they will first need written permission indicating they are academically able to miss the regular class time. This permission is to be obtained in writing from ALL of their subject teachers. Once this approval is given from their teachers, they must obtain permission in writing from their parents/guardians using the C 02 621, *High School Student Permission Slip*. This written permission is then submitted by the student to the teacher supporting their application to participate.

When the teacher receives the completed C 02 621, *High School Student Permission Slip* from the student, it will then become the responsibility of the student to submit their resume along with a copy of the permission slip to the returning office. This can be done in person, by fax or by mail.

The MRO will review the applications ensuring each one has the permission slip attached, and forward any student applications to other MRO's by courier, should the student want to be considered for work in another electoral region (they may attend school in one region but live in another).

The MRO will interview only those applicants who appear suitable for the open positions. If a student is selected, the MRO will contact the teacher identified on the permission slip to inform them the student was selected.

The MRO will contact the student directly to let them know they have been selected and confirm their availability. Once this is confirmed, the MRO will make the necessary arrangements for their training and employment.

The MRO will then inform the appropriate teacher of the dates that the student will be absent from school and the student will be responsible for informing ALL of their other subject teachers of the dates the student will not be in class.

The MRO and/or designate will be responsible for supervising the student and completing the C 02 622, *High School Student Evaluation Sheet* on the student during employment. The MRO will be responsible for sending the original evaluation on the student to the appropriate teacher.

For students who require accommodations, Elections New Brunswick will provide the ones necessary for the student to work.

Eligibility of Students to work as an Election Officer:

Under subsection 22(2.1) of the *Municipal Elections Act*, a student may work as an election officer if they:

- Are a Canadian citizen;
- Are 16 years of age or older; and
- Have been or will have been an ordinarily resident in the Province for 40 days immediately preceding the date of the election.

In addition, a student must:

- Have permission from ALL of their subject teachers to participate and permission from their parent(s)/guardian(s)/ward; and
- Have the skills required as outlined in the job descriptions.

Hours of Work:

Polling hours are set by legislation, from 10:00 am to 8:00 pm. Most high school students will be engaged to work during the entire “Advance Polling days” and/or “Election Day.” However, some positions may be available for a partial polling day as determined by the MRO and/or the high school. Like all election officers, students will be required to setup and tear down the polling station. As a result, the hours of work are as follows:

Advance Poll Days: 9:00 am to approximately 8:30 pm Saturday, 9 days before Election Day, and 9:00 am to approximately 8:30 pm Monday, 7 days before Election Day. In municipal by-elections, a second day of advance polls does not normally occur.

Election Day: 9:00 am to approximately 9:00 pm. Some positions may only be required from 4:00 pm to approximately 9:00 pm to assist with peak voting hours.

Pay Schedule and Method:

Poll workers are paid under a Tariff of Fees, \$15.00 per hour to a maximum of \$150 per day worked, plus \$35 for attending a one- to three-hour training session. These positions are not considered regular government employment and no T4 is issued. Students may only be paid for time worked outside of their regular school hours as per the *Education Act*.

Returning office staff positions are paid on an hourly basis at the rate of \$15.00 per hour. These positions are considered “casual” government employment and will only be offered to students during

non-class time (except Technical Support Officers on polling days). A T4 is issued only if the employee is put on the regular payroll.

Confidentiality

Many election officials are required to work with personal information concerning electors, which may only be used for election purposes. All election officers are required to sign an M 02 201, *Oath or Affirmation of Election Officers*, prior to working with Elections NB, which is done at the training session.

Election Officers:

High school students are able to work as any election officer except that of a Poll Supervisor during municipal elections. High school students are eligible for the following jobs:

- Constable

The Constable is the first person an elector will meet when entering a polling place. As such, the person must be, among other things, friendly and courteous. While not required to be bilingual, the Constable must greet and direct electors in both official languages with an active offer of service (e.g. "Hello-Bonjour"). The Constable then directs the elector to the next appropriate election officer by whom the elector will be served in their language of choice.

- Voters List Officer

The Voters List Officer is responsible for finding the elector's name on the List of Electors for the polling station. Electors whose names are on the list are struck off the List of Electors. They are then directed to a Ballot Issuing Officer. Those whose names are not on the list are directed to the Poll Revision Officer.

- Poll Revision Officer

The Poll Revision Officer is responsible for correcting or adding an elector's name to the List of Electors. The Poll Revision Officer is also responsible for collecting information on other electors that another elector may have (e.g. electors who have moved or passed away). They also perform all of the functions of the Voters List Officer (e.g. striking off the names of electors and directing them to a Ballot Issuing Officer).

- Ballot Issuing Officer

The Ballot Issuing Officer is responsible for issuing a ballot, explaining to each elector how to mark it, processing spoiled ballots, and, if requested, assisting electors with voting.

- Tabulation Machine Officer

Tabulation Machine Officers are responsible to setup and supervise the tabulation machines and ballot boxes used in polling stations to collect elector’s ballots. They assist electors in depositing ballots properly, and must be able to respond to error messages using specific procedures to ensure each elector’s ballot will be counted as the elector intends.

- Ballot Counting Officer

Ballot Counting Officers always work in pairs and are responsible for counting each ballot box (or more than one, as the case may be). One Ballot Counting Officer is appointed to handle the ballots, and one Ballot Counting Officer is appointed to tabulate the votes.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Elections NB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MEO will request that the Deputy Ministers from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development communicate their support for the program to each District Superintendent.
District Superintendent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each District Superintendent will be asked by the Deputy Minister to communicate the program information to the various high school principals in their districts.
Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews the material received by the MRO and if they are in agreement will consult with the teachers on this material.
Sponsoring Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If principal is in agreement with the directive, then interested teachers contact the MRO to discuss. • The teacher then communicates to the students their opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge with the practical knowledge by becoming involved during the Election. • Communicates to the students the requirements for participating, process for applying and the availability of positions and time-frames. • Acts as the liaison between the students hired and the MRO or Designate.
MRO (or designate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consults with high school principals and teachers once permission obtained and provides all relevant information. • Reviews student applications. • Forwards any student applications to other MRO’s by courier should the student want to be considered for work in another electoral region. • Interviews & hires students and retains the completed C 02 621, <i>High School Student Permission Slip</i>. • Trains and assigns work to the students. • Supervises the students and is responsible for filling out the C 02 622, <i>High School Student Evaluation Sheet</i>. • The original is to be sent to the attention of the student’s applicable teacher.
Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtains permission from ALL of their subject teachers and permission from their parent/guardian. • Student submits application to MRO by fax, e-mail or in person and includes a copy of the permission slip. • Once the student is hired, they will sign the M 02 201, <i>Oath or Affirmation of Election Officers</i> provided at training. • Works as assigned by the MRO or designate.