

COLOGNE ACADEMY  
NOMINATING AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

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DEFINITION OF ELIGIBLE VOTERS

***Background***

The Minnesota Charter School Statute states the following:

*All parents of children enrolled in the school may participate in elections to the Board of Directors.*

The Cologne Academy Charter School Bylaws state:

*Members.* Any person who is listed as a parent or guardian of a child(ren) on admission forms shall be a member of the corporation concurrently with the enrollment of his or her child(ren) in grades K-8 of the school under its current admission policies. Voting members shall be limited to two (2) voting members per enrolled family – one (1) vote per each parent or legal guardian. Voting members will be specifically indicated on the Cologne Academy registration forms. School faculty and staff shall also be members of the corporation concurrently with employment and shall be entitled to one (1) vote so long as the school faculty or staff member is employed by the school operated by the corporation at the time of the election. The Board of Directors shall also be members of the corporation and shall be entitled to one (1) vote so long as a position is held on the Board of Directors at the time of the election. An employee who is the parent/legal guardian of a student enrolled in the Academy shall be considered an employee for purposes of this Article. All members shall be of one class and have equal voting rights. The membership shall commence on the date the student is officially enrolled in the school. A membership shall be automatically terminated at such a time as a person is no longer eligible for membership as provided above. There shall be no limit on the number of members and there shall be no membership dues.

COLOGNE ACADEMY  
BOARD ELECTION PROTOCOLS

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**Assumptions:**

1. The election must be public, open, fair and transparent to the Cologne Academy community.
2. Cologne Academy is responsible for providing all eligible voters with access to ballots and with a means of returning completed ballots.

**Eligible Voters**

1. Each parent with one or more students enrolled at Cologne Academy receives one vote.
2. "Parent" is defined as a legal guardian of a student whose address has been given to Cologne Academy as the address of record where all school communications should be sent.
3. Each Cologne Academy faculty and staff member receives one vote.
4. Faculty and staff of the school who are also parents may only vote once.
5. Each voting board member who is not a parent or an employee receives one vote.
6. For absentee voting, each ballot envelope (not the ballot) must be signed by the voter on the signature label in order to be valid. Ballot envelopes that are unsigned will not be counted. Identification on the ballot envelope is required to ensure that each eligible voter votes only once; information is required on the envelope rather than on the ballot to preserve anonymity of the voter.
7. Anyone voting in person on Election Day must sign on the line adjacent to their name on the master list of eligible voters and deposit their ballot in the ballot box.

**Ballot Distribution for Absentee Voting**

1. One full week prior to Election Day, applications for absentee voting and absentee voting packets will be sent home to all eligible voters of Cologne Academy. Ballots will also be available in the Cologne Academy office.
2. The envelope will contain the following items:
  - a) Instructions on completing the ballot
  - b) The ballot listing the candidates for election
  - c) A secrecy envelope for the completed ballot
  - d) An envelope with the printed name of the voter and the voter's signature label.
  - e) Correct postage will be the responsibility of the voter, if the ballot is returned via mail.

**Absentee Ballot Receipt**

1. The deadline for returning ballots by mail will be Election Day at the time of the normal Cologne Academy mail delivery. A locked ballot box for absentee ballots will be placed in the Cologne Academy office safe under the supervision of the office manager.
2. Ballots received by mail will be dropped into the locked ballot box for absentee ballots by the office manager. The ballots will remain sealed and unopened.
3. Those who return their absentee ballots in person prior to Election Day may deposit them into the locked ballot box themselves, or may give them to the office manager, who will follow the same instructions as are used for ballots received by mail.
4. The locked ballot box will be secured in the locked safe when the Cologne Academy office is closed.

**Election Day Voting**

1. Persons voting on Election Day will place their signature on the line adjacent to their name on the master list of eligible voters, fill out their ballot and place it in the ballot box.

### ***Ballot Counting***

1. Ballots will be counted on Election Day at 4:05 PM or after the last voter has completed his/her ballot. The last voter will be determined by the last person in line at 4:00 PM. A "last voter in line card" may be used to track the last voter if necessary.
2. The ballot-counting will take place in the same location as the election is held and the results will be brought into the board meeting upon completion.
3. The board chair, or his/her appointee, will run the election and appoint election judges to assist in the running of the election. There will be no less than two election judges during the day between the hours of 7:30 AM and 4:00 PM to assist with voting.
4. A neutral third party, who was hired by the board of directors, will tally the votes in the presence of at least two election judges, after the close of voting.

### ***Ballot counting process***

- Each absentee ballot envelope will be taken out of the ballot box. Any ballot not in a sealed envelope will be placed into an envelope marked "discarded ballot." Each envelope will be checked to see that it has been signed. Any unsigned ballot envelopes will be placed in the "discarded ballot" envelope.
  - Each absentee ballot envelope will be opened and the ballot will be removed. All ballot envelopes will be placed in an envelope marked "ballot envelopes."
  - Once the absentee ballots are checked the election judge will print the name of the voter on the master list adjacent to the voters name and print the letters "AB" in red ink. This will ensure that there is the only ballot submitted for that voter.
  - If multiple ballots are cast by the same voter only the first ballot will be counted. Any other ballots will be placed in an envelope marked "over votes."
  - All absentee ballots will be inserted into the Election Day ballot box to be counted with all of the ballots at the end of the election.
  - All ballots will be taken from the Election Day ballot box, unfolded and placed in a stack to be read and tallied.
  - As each ballot is read, a hatch mark will be placed next to those candidates' names on the master tally sheet. This sheet will contain all candidates' names and will be tallied by the neutral third party and no less than two election judges.
  - If a ballot has more candidates selected than the number of board member positions available, it will be considered an "over-vote" and the ballot will not be counted. The ballot with an over-vote will be placed in an envelope marked "over-voted ballots."
  - No votes for write-in candidates will be counted.
  - If a ballot is illegible; it will be at the discretion of the election judges to determine voter intent. If the ballot judges are unable to determine the intent or eligibility of the voter the ballot will be declared spoiled, not counted and placed in an envelope marked "spoiled ballot."
5. After all votes have been counted; the ballots, absentee voter signed envelopes, master voter address list and the tally sheet will be maintained in a secure location for one year or until the next election, whichever comes first.
  6. In the event of a tie, a runoff election between the tied candidates will be held within two weeks.

### ***Announcement of Winning Candidates***

Although it will be obvious from the master tally sheet which candidates have received the most votes, the formal announcement will be brought into the board meeting and handed to the school's director to announce to the board.

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**INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING YOUR ABSENTEE BALLOT**

Instructions for all eligible voters to participate in the Board of Directors election; eligible voters include parents, staff, and board members. To be sure that your absentee ballot is completed properly, please follow these instructions.

1. On the ballot, read over your choices. As you will see, you may vote for 2 parent and/or teacher candidates and 1 community member candidate.
2. On the ballot, place a check mark next to the candidates of your choice.
3. Fold the ballot and place it inside the **secrecy envelope**.
4. Place the sealed secrecy envelope inside the **ballot envelope**.
5. Please sign your name on the ballot envelope.

**YOUR BALLOT WILL NOT BE COUNTED IF THE SIGNATURE LABEL ON THE BALLOT ENVELOPE IS NOT SIGNED.**

You may return your ballot in any of the following ways:

- Place the sealed ballot envelope inside another envelope and mail your ballot to 1221 S. Village Parkway, Cologne, MN 55322.
- Send your ballot to school with your child(ren).
- You may vote in person. If you hand-carry your ballot to COLOGNE ACADEMY, be sure to place it in the locked ballot box for absentee ballots located in the office or give it to the office manager to place in the locked ballot box for you. In person voting will be during the hours of 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM on April 17<sup>th</sup>, Election Day.

**Your ballot must arrive by the deadline of April 17, 2015 at the time of mail delivery for that day.**

For more detailed information of election protocol and the ballot counting process, please visit our website at [www.cologneacademy.org](http://www.cologneacademy.org). The votes will be tallied at Cologne Academy on Election Day starting at 4:05 p.m. Everyone in the Cologne Academy community is welcome to come and observe. The meeting of the board will begin at 5:00 pm. The board will officially approve the election results at this meeting.

Thank you very much for participating in Cologne Academy's Board of Director's election.