

*Guidebook for Selection
of Personnel
Commissioners*

AN OVERVIEW OF MERIT SYSTEM PRINCIPLES, AND
REQUIREMENTS FOR RECRUITING AND APPOINTING
PERSONNEL COMMISSIONERS

Produced by
SPCA/NC

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Introduction

This guidebook was developed to assist school boards of trustees in recruiting and selecting their appointees to personnel commissions. The monograph provides an overview of the genesis of Merit Systems in California school districts and the principles under which they operate. It outlines the responsibilities and specific functions performed by personnel commissions and the eligibility requirements for candidates seeking appointment to a personnel commission. The document also includes applicable sections of the Education Code concerning appointment of personnel commissioners, as well as sample application materials and suggested interview questions that may be used in the selection process.

We believe this guidebook will also be useful to collective bargaining groups and personnel commissioners who, in districts that established merit systems after 1965, must also make appointments to personnel commissions.

History of the Merit System

The Merit System in California public education dates back to the 1930's during the Great Depression, when jobs were scarce. In particular, the origin can be traced to Los Angeles Unified School District, in which the political spoils system of trading votes for jobs had resulted in a wholesale turnover of jobholders as a result of a 1933 election. Over seven hundred non-teaching employees were turned out by a newly elected board which sought to give those jobs to their political supporters. In 1934 Dr. John Schuyler, who would later become business manager of L.A. Unified, sought to create a personnel system that would be free of such political spoils, in which employees would be hired on the basis of individual merit. The Board turned to some professors from USC to develop a quasi civil service system, which was adopted, but later disbanded. Further attempts were then made to pass State legislation that could secure a personnel system based on merit, which ultimately became California Assembly Bill 999, the so-called Civil Service Bill based upon the Pendleton Act that had established the civil service system on the federal level. Under the enabling legislation of AB999 the L.A. Unified Board adopted the Merit System in 1936.

The Merit System enabling legislation has remained largely intact ever since that time. And while the number of public school districts in California that have adopted the Merit System are in the minority, because of the fact that many of the larger school districts like Los Angeles Unified are Merit System districts, roughly seventy percent of the classified public school employees in California are under a Merit System. While some Districts have eliminated the Merit System, others have added it, and so the number of Merit System Districts remains relatively stable at around one hundred. Even after passage of the Rodda Act in 1976 that implemented collective bargaining in public education, today's Merit Systems co-exist by continuing to manage the recruitment and selection process of hiring based on merit through testing.

Thus, for almost seven decades Merit Systems have provided a personnel system for classified employees in those public school districts that adopted the Merit System akin to the Federal civil service system, insulating employment from politics and favoritism.

(Abstracted from material written by Anita Ford for the Personnel Commissioners Manual, 1999)

Philosophy of Merit

In our democracy, citizens have an expectation that governmental processes be conducted in a fair, efficient, and transparent manner, and that public institutions be accountable for representing the public interest. Merit system principles underscore these values and provide a personnel selection system that is open to all and free from political interference. As school districts continue to experience systemic change resulting from social, financial, and political pressures, it becomes increasingly important that school administrators incorporate merit system principles into every decision they make concerning employees.

School district personnel management should be implemented consistent with the following merit system principles:

1. Recruitment of job applicants should be from sources representing all segments of society, and selection and advancement should be determined solely on the basis of relative ability, knowledge and skills, after fair and open competition, which assures that all receive equal opportunity.
2. All employees and applicants for employment should receive fair and equitable treatment in all aspect of personnel management without regard to political affiliation, race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, age, disabling condition, or sexual orientation.
3. Equal pay should be provided for work of equal effort, skill, and responsibility.
4. School district employees should be managed and treated fairly and consistently and be engaged in work that serves the best interests of students.
5. Employees should be retained and promoted on the basis of merit as measured by the adequacy of their performance and professional achievement.
6. Employees should be protected from arbitrary employment actions and afforded due process rights consistent with applicable law.

Merit system employment procedures may not always be considered the most efficient means to hire employees but open competition for jobs and objective selection processes serve to meet legitimate democratic goals and stakeholder interests. All employment decisions should be examined to ensure that they are fair, consistent, and are based on sound reasoning. In the area of employment, use of Merit System procedures provides a fair and consistent means to recruit, qualify, and hire employees.

The Personnel Commission

The Merit System is administered by an independent body known as the Personnel Commission. The Commission is comprised of three members appointed for three year terms with the term of one member expiring each year. One member is selected by the Board of Trustees, one member is selected by the employee organization representing the largest number of classified employees, and the third member selected by the other two Commissioners.

What are the Responsibilities of the Personnel Commission?

The Personnel Commission has three core responsibilities as defined in the California Education Code. These are as follows:

1. Oversee a personnel management program based on merit principles that ensure the selection and promotion of employees is based solely on qualifications through competitive examination.
2. Develop and administer policies governing employment matters to ensure the fair and equitable treatment of employees within the classified service.
3. Conduct appeal hearings on matters involving employee disciplinary action, employment examinations, and personnel policies and procedures.

What are the Duties performed by the Personnel Commission?

To execute its responsibilities, the Personnel Commission performs the following duties:

1. Establishes and maintains a position classification plan which includes creating job descriptions, setting minimum qualifications, and allocating classifications on salary schedules using standards that provide equal pay for equal work.
2. Adopts guidelines to analyze jobs and develop valid employment examinations.
3. Adopts rules and procedures to be followed concerning such employment subjects as applications, examinations, employment eligibility, hiring, promotions, transfers, layoffs, compensation, performance evaluation, discipline, and other rules necessary to carry out classified personnel administration.

What are the Requirements for serving as a Personnel Commissioner?

To be eligible for appointment to the Personnel Commission, a person shall:

1. Be a registered voter and resident within the territorial jurisdiction of the school district.
2. Be a known adherent to merit system principles as demonstrated by public or private service that indicates support for the concept of public employment, continuance in employment, and promotional opportunities on the basis of merit and fitness.
3. Not be a member of the Board of Education or an employee of same school district.
4. Not be an employee of the same school district.

What are the Desirable Qualifications of a Personnel Commissioner?

These include:

1. Volunteer or paid experience associated with working with community groups and organizations including public agencies.
2. Concern with the educational system in the school districts.
3. Familiarity with the merit system, its concepts and philosophy.
4. Ability to work effectively with members of the public, employees, administrators, Board members, other Commissioners and employee organization groups.
5. Some knowledge of labor relations and recent legislative developments in this area in the State of California.
6. The time to actively engage in Personnel Commission activities including attending meetings of the Personnel Commissioners and conferences dealing with the merit system and responsibilities of the Personnel Commission.

In addition, a successful Personnel Commissioner candidate will be able to demonstrate through the selection process that he/she:

1. Has the professional integrity to adhere to the Merit System laws and rules in carrying out the duties and responsibilities of a Personnel Commissioner.
2. Will conduct the business of the Personnel Commission publicly in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Open Meeting Act.
3. Has the ability to understand and analyze complex technical information relating to recruitment, selection, discipline, classification, salary administration, rules and regulations.
4. Can, along with other Commissioners, effectively select and evaluate a Director.
5. Can develop and apply a working knowledge of laws and procedures applicable to classified service.

Procedures for Board Appointment of Personnel Commissioner

Outlined below are the Education Code requirements the Board must use to fill its appointment to the Personnel Commission.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The Board may use any application process it deems appropriate. Here is one approach:

- a) Advertise the position via news releases published in county newspapers
- b) Applicants complete formal application (see Appendix B)

QUALIFICATIONS

Appointees to the Personnel Commission must meet qualifications as follows:

- a) Applicants must be registered voters and reside within the territorial jurisdiction of the school district; and
- b) Be a known adherent to the principle of the merit system (a person who by virtue of prior public or private service has given evidence of support to the merit system concept - i.e. the selection, retention, and promotion of individuals upon the basis of merit and fitness).
- c) The candidate shall not be a member of the governing board or of any other district governing board or county board of education, nor shall he/she be an employee of the district (relatives of employees of the district are acceptable).

Reference: Education Code Section 45244

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT - Intended Appointee

Once the qualified applicants have been given consideration by the Board, the Board must publicly announce the name of the individual they intend to appoint.

Reference: Education Code Section 45246 (b)(1)

PUBLIC HEARING

At a Board meeting to be held after 30 days and within 45 days of the Board's announcement of its intended appointee, the Governing Board is required to hold a public hearing. After the public hearing, the Board may make its appointment.

Reference: Education Code Section 45246 (d)

Procedures for Appointing a Personnel Commissioner in Districts that adopted the Merit System prior to 9/17/65

Please note: School districts that adopted the Merit System prior to 9/17/1965 may now adopt a locally controlled selection process for Personnel Commissioners. This process requires that the classified collective bargaining group with the largest number of employees petition the governing board to hold an election and vote to have Personnel Commissioners selected locally. The procedures for enacting this option are included in Appendix C.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that districts use the nominating procedures outlined below if they choose to continue filling Personnel Commissioner vacancies in accordance with Education Code section 45249 (c) and (d).

APPLICATION PROCESS

- a) Advertise position vacancies via press releases published in county papers; announcements sent to community organizations and libraries; bulletins posted at school districts; and through Board of Trustee and Commission agendas.
- b) Applicants complete formal application (see Appendix B).
- c) **Please Note:** If a well-qualified Personnel Commissioner is available for reappointment, and the governing board wishes to recommend reappointment, the open recruitment process need not be initiated. In this case, the Board should make a public announcement of the intention to reappoint the Commissioner at a board meeting held no later than September 30. Unless contested, the recommendation for reappointment should be forwarded to the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) by November 1. If the nomination is contested, the process as outlined in the nominations section below should be followed.

QUALIFICATIONS

Appointees to the Personnel Commission must meet qualifications as follows:

- a) Applicants must be registered voters and reside within the territorial jurisdiction of the school district; and
- b) Be a known adherent to the principle of the merit system (a person who by virtue of prior public or private service has given evidence of support to the merit system concept - i.e. the selection, retention, and promotion of individuals upon the basis of merit and fitness).
- c) The candidate shall not be a member of the governing board or of any other district governing board or county board of education, nor shall he/she be an employee of the district (relatives of employees of the district are acceptable).

Reference: Education Code Section 45244

NOMINATIONS

The Board of Education may use any nomination process it deems appropriate. Here is one approach:

- a) The Board of Education and the leaders of the classified bargaining units should jointly interview qualified candidates.
- b) Upon concluding the interviews, the Board and bargaining group representatives should deliberate and attempt to reach consensus on a desired candidate.
- c) If the parties fail to reach consensus on a nominee, each party should request that the school district superintendent submit to the SPI the name of their chosen candidate along with the individual's application materials.

APPOINTMENT PROCEDURES

After receiving recommendations from the classified employees and the governing board of a district, the SPI shall appoint a personnel commissioner in the manner prescribed in this section.

- a) In those instances where the governing board and the classified employees recommend the same nominee (except when the SPI finds that exceptional circumstances exist), the SPI shall appoint the jointly recommended nominee.
- b) In those instances where the governing board and the classified employees do not recommend the same nominee, the SPI shall review the qualifications of the nominees and the recommendations of the classified employees, governing board, and other interested parties. After this review, the SPI shall take one of the following actions (except when the SPI finds that exceptional circumstances exist):
 1. If the SPI determines that one nominee is significantly more qualified than other nominees, the SPI shall appoint the nominee.
 2. If the SPI determines that the qualifications of the top nominees of both the governing board and the classified employees are relatively equivalent, the SPI will alternate appointments between the nominee of the classified employees and the nominee of the governing board beginning with the nominee of the classified employees for the first instance.
 3. If the SPI is unable to determine the qualifications of one or more nominees based on the submitted information, the SPI shall undertake steps to gather additional information. These steps may include an interview of the nominee.

APPENDIX A

Applicable Education Code Sections

California Education Code

45244 Qualifications for Membership on Personnel Commission

To be eligible for appointment or reappointment to the commission a person shall (a) be a registered voter and resident within the territorial jurisdiction of the school district and (b) be a known adherent to the principle of the merit system. No member of the governing board of any school district or a county board of education shall be eligible for appointment, reappointment, or continuance as a member of the commission. During his or her term of service, a member of the commission shall not be an employee of the school district.

As used in this section, "known adherent to the principle of the merit system," with respect to a new appointee, shall mean a person who by the nature of his or her prior public or private service has given evidence that he or she supports the concept of employment, continuance in employment, in-service promotional opportunities, and other related matters on the basis of merit and fitness. As used in this section, "known adherent to the principle of the merit system," with respect to a candidate for reappointment, shall mean a commissioner who has clearly demonstrated through meeting attendance and actions that he or she does, in fact, support the merit system and its operation.

Amended 1985 Laws, Ch.723 Effective 1-1-86

45245 Appointment of Members of Personnel Commission

In any school district, which has a three-member personnel commission, one member of the commission shall be appointed by the governing board of the district and one member, nominated by the classified employees of the district, shall be appointed by the governing board of the district. Those two members, shall, in turn, appoint the third member.

In any school district, which has a five-member personnel commission, two members of the commission shall be appointed by the governing board of the district and two members, nominated by the classified employees of the district, shall be appointed by the governing board of the district. Those four members of the personnel commission shall, in turn, appoint the fifth member to the commission.

As used in this section, "classified employees" shall mean an exclusive representative that represents the largest number of noncertificated employees in a unit or units within the district. If there is no such exclusive representative within the district, the governing board shall, by written rule, prescribe the method by which the recommendation is to be made by its classified employees.

Amended 1985 Laws, Ch.723 Effective 1-1-86

45246 Announcement of Recommended Appointees; Public Meeting of Governing Board

(a) Within 30 days after adoption of the system, the governing board shall publicly announce its intended appointee or appointees, as appropriate, and the appointee or appointees, as appropriate, nominated by its classified employees. As soon after their appointment as practicable but within 30 days, the appointed members shall announce their intended appointee for the third or fifth member, as appropriate. They may consider the recommendations of the governing board, the classified employees, or other concerned citizens. If these members do not announce their intended appointee within the 30-day period, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall make the appointment.

“Adoption of the system” means, in the case of Section 45221, the day on which a successful election is certified to the governing board or, in the case of Section 45224, the day the governing board approves a motion, order, or resolution to adopt the system regardless of the date specified for operational commencement of the system.

(b) Where a system is already in existence and a vacancy will exist on December 1, by not later than September 30:

1. The governing board shall publicly announce the name of the person it intends to appoint or reappoint, if the vacancy is its appointee.
2. The appointee or appointees, as appropriate, of the governing board and the appointee or appointees of the classified employees shall publicly announce the name of the person they intend to appoint, if the vacancy is their appointee.

If the governing board and the classified employees of the district are unable to agree upon a nomination by September 30, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall make the appointment within 30 days.

(c) Where a system is already in existence and a vacancy in a position nominated by the classified employees will occur, the classified employees shall submit the name of its nominee to the governing board at least 30 days prior to the date on which the vacancy will occur and the governing board shall appoint that nominee to be effective on the date on which the vacancy would occur.

(d) At a board meeting to be held after 30 and within 45 days of the dates specified in subdivision (a) and paragraph (1) of subdivision (b), as the case may be, the governing board in open hearing shall provide the public and employees and employee organizations the opportunity to express their views on the qualifications of those persons recommended by the governing board for appointment.

The board at the time may make its appointment or may make a substitute appointment or recommendation without further notification or public hearing.

In the case of the nominees of the classified employees, the board shall appoint the nominee, unless the classified employees voluntarily withdraw the name of the nominee and submit the name of a new nominee. In the latter case, the board then shall appoint the new nominees.

(e) In the event a vacancy exists because of a failure of the classified employees to agree on a nominee, the board may make an emergency appointment as authorized in subdivision (b) of Section 45248. If there is no personnel director, the board nevertheless may make an emergency interim appointment under this subdivision.

(f) At the next regularly scheduled personnel commission meeting to be held after 30 days from adoption of the system, as specified in subdivision (a) or at the next regularly scheduled personnel commission meeting to be held after 30 days from the day the intended appointee is announced, as specified in paragraph (2) of subdivision (b), as the case may be, the appointee or appointees of the governing board and the appointee or appointees nominated by the classified employees shall, in an open hearing, provide the public and employees and employee organizations the opportunity to express their views on the qualifications of each candidate recommended for the vacancy. Each candidate shall be invited to this meeting.

The appointee or appointees of the governing board and the appointee or appointees nominated by the classified employees may make their appointment or may make a substitute appointment or recommendation without further notification or public hearing.

(g) A commissioner whose term has expired may continue to discharge the duties of the office until a successor is appointed, but for no more than 90 calendar days.

Amended 1993 Laws, Ch.112 Effective 1-1-94

45247 Terms of Office

Appointees to a commission in a district which has newly adopted the system shall take office upon receipt of notification of appointment but the term of office shall run from noon of the first day of December next succeeding.

In school districts with a three-member personnel commission, the initial appointee of the governing board shall serve a three-year term, and the term of the appointee recommended by classified employees, and the third member selected by the two other members shall be for two years and one year respectively.

In school districts which have elected to establish a five-member personnel commission, one of the initial appointees of the governing board, and one of the initial appointees nominated by the classified employees shall serve three-year terms. The term of the other initial appointee of the governing board, and the other initial appointee nominated by the classified employees of the district, shall be for two years, and the term of the appointee selected by the other members of the commission shall be for one year.

Subsequent terms shall be for three years commencing at noon the first day of December.

A three-member commission may perform any act authorized or required by law when two members have been appointed.

A five-member commission may perform any act authorized or required by law when three members have been appointed.

Amended 1985 Laws, Ch. 723. Effective 1-1-86

45248 Vacancies

- (a) Appointment to vacancies occurring subsequent to the initial appointment shall be made by the original appointing authority either for a new full term or to fill an unexpired term. The procedure required in Sections 45245 and 45246 shall be followed in the appointment and recommendation for appointment to fill vacancies occurring subsequent to the initial appointments.
- (b) Notwithstanding subsection (a) the governing board at the request of the personnel director shall declare that an emergency exists and shall make an interim appointment to fill a vacancy or vacancies to insure the continuance of the functions of the personnel commission. An interim appointment shall terminate on the date the notification of permanent appointment is received by the appointee.
- (c) An interim appointee must meet the requirements of Section 45244 and be free of the restrictions contained therein.

APPENDIX B

Sample Application Materials

PERSONNEL COMMISSIONER SAMPLE APPLICATION FORM

Personal Information

Name: _____

Residential Address: _____

Business Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Business Phone: _____

Requirements

Are you a registered voter in [County]? Yes No

Describe your beliefs regarding the merit system concept of awarding jobs based on qualifications through competitive examination:

Community or Professional Activities

Experience

Please describe your most relevant experience (paid or unpaid) that would enhance your ability to serve on the Personnel Commission:

Education

Please summarize your educational background:

Note: You will be subject to the Conflict of Interest provisions of the California Constitution and the Government Code. An oath of office pledge will be required.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PERSONNEL COMMISSIONER

1. What prompted you to apply for the vacancy on our Personnel Commission?
2. The Merit System principles provide for hiring and promoting employees on the basis of ability through a competitive examination process. Describe those areas in your training, experience, or community service, which demonstrate your support and advocacy of the merit principles.
3. The Personnel Commission sets policy and makes decisions in an environment of competing interests of unions, management, the board of education and the superintendent of schools. How would you characterize the challenges of operating in this environment, and what would be your approach to dealing with conflicts that may arise from time to time?
4. Please describe an example from your previous experience where you have exercised a leadership role on a service group, committee, project, or in your employment.
5. Hypothetical Situation:

The district makes it a practice to hire people at the first step of the salary range. Gradual step increases are given until the person reaches the top of the range in 3-1/2 years. Because of recruitment difficulties in a particular class, the Personnel Commission staff has recommended that persons in this class be hired at Step 2 or higher. The union questions the fairness of this practice to the employees previously hired at the first step.

How might you respond to this issue? What might you recommend, and what factors would you take into consideration.

SAMPLE VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The [name] Board of Education is seeking interested applicants to complete the remaining term [date] of its appointee to the [District Name] Commission. Interested [name of County] residents should submit a letter of interest no later than [time, date] to [Superintendent name and address]. Candidates will be interviewed by the Board of Education, and the appointment will be made by [date].

The Personnel Commission is a non-partisan public body responsible for the administration of a "merit system" for the selection, retention, and promotion of classified (non-teaching) employees in the [district name]. By law, the Commission is composed of three members - one member appointed by the Board of Education, one member nominated by the classified employees and appointed by the Board, and the third member appointed by the other two members. Commissioners are appointed for three-year terms, with the term of one member expiring each year.

To be eligible for appointment or reappointment to the Personnel Commission, a person must be a registered voter, a resident of San Mateo County, and must be a known adherent to the principle of the merit system (a person who by virtue of prior public or private service has given evidence of support to the merit system concept, i.e. the selection, retention, and promotion of individuals upon the basis of merit and fitness.) Appointees cannot be employees of the [district name] or members of the governing board of the school district.

APPENDIX C

Pre-1965 Personnel Commission Procedures (Revised August 7, 2002)

Pre-1965 Personnel Commission Procedures (Revised August 7, 2002)

I. LEGAL BASIS

Education Code Section 45249 assigns responsibility for the appointment of commissioners to personnel commissions established prior to September 17, 1965 as follows:

- a) 1. After January 1, 2001, the classified employees of any school district that has already adopted this article on September 17, 1965, may, in accordance with this article, petition the governing board to request that the process to determine how personnel commission members are appointed be determined by a majority vote of the classified employees entitled to vote. That petition shall read substantially as follows:

"We, the undersigned classified employees of the (name of the school district), constituting 15 percent or more of the classified personnel entitled to vote, request the governing board to submit to an election the question of how personnel commission members shall be appointed."

Name _____ Position Classification _____

2. "Classified employee," as used in this section, shall be construed to include all personnel who are part of the classified services as defined in Section 45103.

- b) 1. Within 90 days after receipt of a petition pursuant to subdivision (a), the governing board shall conduct an election by secret ballot of its classified personnel to determine the following question and the ballot shall read:

"Shall personnel commission members in the (name of school district) be appointed as follows:

- A. One member by the governing board of the district.*
B. One Member by the classified employees of the district.
C. Those two members shall, in turn, appoint the third member.

_____ Yes

_____ No"

2. Although the ballot conducted pursuant to paragraph (1) shall not require the employees' signature or other personal identifying requirements, the governing board shall devise an identification system to ensure against fraud in the balloting process.

3. The governing board shall appoint a three-to-five person tabulating committee. At least one member of the committee shall be a member of the governing

board, to canvass the ballots and present the results to the governing board, and one member shall be a classified employee nominated by the exclusive representative of the classified employees of the district. If a simple majority votes in favor of the process for appointing personnel commission members, that process shall become applicable in the district as follows:

- A. The first vacancy on the commission shall be filled by a person nominated by the classified employees of the district.
 - B. The second vacancy on the commission shall be filled by a person appointed by the governing board of the district.
 - C. The third vacancy of the commission shall be appointed by the first two members.
- c) 1. Subject to subdivision (a) and (b), in a school district that has already adopted the provisions of this article on September 17, 1965, members of the personnel commission shall continue to be appointed by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, who shall consider the recommendation of the governing board and other interested parties. Subsequent appointments shall be made in accordance with the provisions of this section.
2. No later than 90 days prior to making the appointment, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall notify the classified employees and the governing board, in writing, of the vacancy on the personnel commission and provide them with guidelines and procedures for making a recommendation and challenging a nomination. If a vacancy occurs during the term of a member of the personnel commission, the Superintendent may appoint a new member after providing the foregoing notice no later than 30 days prior to making the appointment. A commissioner whose term has expired may continue to discharge the duties of the office until a successor is appointed but for no more than 90 calendar days.
- d) As used in this section, "classified employees" means an organization of classified employees that represents the greatest number of classified employees of the district as determined by the board. If no such organization exists within the district, the governing board, by written rule, shall prescribe the method by which the recommendation is to be made by its classified employees.

II. OVERVIEW OF NOMINATING AND APPOINTMENT PROCEDURES
(For personnel commission appointments pursuant to Education Code
Section 45249 (c) and (d) only)

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) wants to ensure that all appointments reflect district needs, interests, and priorities; and equally important, that nominations be arrived at through an open logical process. Those most closely involved in local operations are in the best positions to nominate personnel commissioners.

Because the SPI strongly supports local control of the process to nominate and appoint personnel commissioners, the classified employees and governing board of each district are encouraged to pursue the petition and election process described in Section I. A successful petition and election process gives the authority to nominate and appoint personnel commissioners to the governing board and classified employees in each district.