

§ 163-22. Powers and duties of State Board of Elections.

(a) The State Board shall have general supervision over the primaries and elections in the State, and it shall have authority to make such reasonable rules and regulations with respect to the conduct of primaries and elections as it may deem advisable so long as they do not conflict with any provisions of this Chapter.

(b) From time to time, the State Board shall publish and furnish to the county boards of elections and other election officials a sufficient number of indexed copies of all election laws and State Board rules and regulations then in force. It shall also publish, issue, and distribute to the electorate such materials explanatory of primary and election laws and procedures as the State Board shall deem necessary.

(c) The State Board shall advise the county boards of elections as to the proper methods of conducting primaries and elections. The State Board shall require all reports from the county boards of elections and election officers as provided by law, or as are deemed necessary by the State Board, and shall compel observance of the requirements of the election laws by county boards of elections and other election officers. In performing these duties, the State Board shall have the right to hear and act on complaints arising by petition or otherwise, on the failure or neglect of a county board of elections to comply with any part of the election laws imposing duties upon a county board of elections. The State Board shall have power to remove from office any member of a county board of elections for incompetency, neglect or failure to perform duties, fraud, or for any other satisfactory cause. Before exercising this power, the State Board shall notify the county board of elections member affected and give that member an opportunity to be heard.

(d) The State Board shall investigate when necessary or advisable, the administration of election laws, frauds and irregularities in elections in any county and municipality and special district, and shall report violations of the election laws to the State Bureau of Investigation for further investigation and prosecution.

(e) The State Board shall determine, in the manner provided by law, the form and content of ballots, instruction sheets, pollbooks, tally sheets, abstract and return forms, certificates of election, and other forms to be used in primaries and elections. The State Board shall furnish to the county boards of elections the registration application forms required pursuant to G.S. 163-82.3. The State Board shall direct the county boards of elections to purchase a sufficient quantity of all forms attendant to the registration and elections process. In addition, the State Board shall provide a source of supply from which the county boards of elections may purchase the quantity of pollbooks needed for the execution of its responsibilities. In the preparation of ballots, pollbooks, abstract and return forms, and all other forms, the State Board may call to its aid the Attorney General of the State, and it shall be the duty of the Attorney General to advise and aid in the preparation of these books, ballots and forms.

(f) The State Board shall prepare, print, and distribute to the county boards of elections all ballots for use in any primary or election held in the State which the law provides shall be printed and furnished by the State to the counties. The State Board shall instruct the county boards of elections as to the printing of county and local ballots.

(g) The State Board shall certify to the appropriate county boards of elections the names of candidates for district offices who have filed notice of candidacy with the State Board and whose names are required to be printed on county ballots.

(h) The State Board shall tabulate the primary and election returns, declare the results, and prepare abstracts of the votes cast in each county in the State for offices which, according to law, shall be tabulated by the State Board.

(i) The State Board shall make recommendations to the legislature relative to the conduct and administration of the primaries and elections in the State as it may deem advisable.

(j) Notwithstanding the provisions of any other section of this Chapter, the State Board shall have access to any ballot boxes and their contents, any voting machines and its contents, any registration records, pollbooks, voter authorization cards or voter lists, any lists of absentee voters, any lists of presidential registrants under the Voting Rights Act of 1965 as amended, and any other voting equipment or similar records, books or lists in any precinct, county, municipality or electoral district over whose elections it has jurisdiction or for whose elections it has responsibility.

(j1) Notwithstanding G.S. 153A-98 or any other provision of law, all officers, employees, and agents of a county board of elections shall give the State Board, upon request, all information, documents, and data within their possession, or ascertainable from its records, including any internal investigation or personnel documentation and shall make available, upon request pursuant to an investigation under subsection (d) of this section, any county board of elections employee for interview and produce any equipment, hardware, or software for inspection. These requirements are mandatory and shall be timely complied with as specified in a request made by any five members of the State Board.

(k) Notwithstanding the provisions contained in Article 20 or Article 21A of this Chapter, the State Board shall be authorized, by resolution adopted prior to the printing of the primary ballots, to reduce the time by which absentee ballots are required to be printed and distributed for the primary election from 50 days to 45 days. This authority shall not be authorized for absentee ballots to be voted in the general election, except if the law requires ballots to be available for mailing 60 days before the general election, and the absentee ballots are not ready by that date, the State Board shall allow the counties to mail absentee ballots out as soon as the absentee ballots are available.

(l) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, in order to obtain judicial review of any decision of the State Board rendered in the performance of its duties or in the exercise of its powers under this Chapter, the person seeking review must file a petition in the Superior Court of Wake County.

(m) The State Board shall provide specific training to county boards of elections regarding rules for registering students.

(n) The State Board shall promulgate minimum requirements for the number of pollbooks, voting machines and curbside ballots to be available at each precinct, such that more will be available at general elections and a sufficient number will be available to allow voting without excessive delay. The State Board shall provide for a training and screening program for chief judges and judges. The State Board shall provide additional testing of voting machines to ensure that they operate properly even with complicated ballots.

(o) The State Board shall require counties with voting systems to have sufficient personnel available on election day with technical expertise to repair equipment, to investigate election day problems, and to assist in curbside voting.

(o1) The State Board shall include in all forms prepared by the State Board a prominent statement that submitting fraudulently or falsely completed declarations is a Class I felony under this Chapter.

(p) Except as provided in G.S. 163-27, the State Board may assign responsibility for enumerated administrative matters to the Executive Director by resolution, if that resolution provides a process for the State Board to review any administrative decision made by the Executive Director.

(q) Nothing in this Chapter shall grant authority to the State Board to alter, amend, correct, impose, or substitute any plan apportioning or redistricting State legislative or congressional districts other than a plan imposed by a court under G.S. 120-2.4 or a plan enacted by the General Assembly.

(r) Nothing in this Chapter shall grant authority to the State Board to alter, amend, correct, impose, or substitute any plan apportioning or redistricting districts for a unit of local government other than a plan imposed by a court, a plan enacted by the General Assembly, or a plan adopted by the appropriate unit of local government under statutory or local act authority.

(s) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the State Board shall ensure voted ballots, election results tapes, and executed ballot applications are retained and preserved for a period of 22 months after the corresponding election or as otherwise specified in federal law, whichever is greater.

(t) The State Board shall not accept private monetary donations or in-kind contributions, directly or indirectly, for conducting elections or employing individuals on a temporary basis. (1901, c. 89, ss. 7, 11; Rev., ss. 4302, 4305; 1913, c. 138; C.S., ss. 5923, 5926; 1921, c. 181, s. 1; 1923, c. 196; 1933, c. 165, ss. 1, 2; 1945, c. 982; 1953, c. 410, s. 2; 1967, c. 775, s. 1; 1973, c. 47, s. 2; c. 793, s. 2; 1975, c. 19, s. 65; 1977, c. 661, s. 6; 1979, c. 411, s. 1; 1981, c. 556; 1985 (Reg. Sess., 1986), c. 986, ss. 2, 3; 1987, c. 485, ss. 2, 5; c. 509, s. 9; c. 642, s. 3; 1989, c. 635, s. 5; 1991, c. 727, ss. 5.2, 7; 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 762, s. 12; 1995, c. 509, s. 114; 1999-424, s. 7(a); 2001-398, s. 4; 2009-537, s. 10; 2009-541, s. 1; 2011-31, s. 15; 2011-182, s. 3; 2016-125, 4th Ex. Sess., s. 20(b); 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-13, s. 3.2(a), (b); 2018-144, s. 1.4A; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b); 2023-139, s. 2.3; 2023-140, ss. 2, 39(b).)