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POCANTICO HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL

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May 29, 2020

Dear Pocantico Residents,

Thank you so much for your commitment to our school. During this budget process, I have greatly appreciated people asking me questions and providing me insights about our District and community. I have said loudly and proudly since my arrival on July 1st that the Pocantico Hills Central School District is a special place. The manner in which we have come together to support one another during this COVID-19 challenge is yet another representation of this mutual commitment. Several great community members called today to ask questions about the upcoming budget vote and board elections, so I thought that I would take this opportunity to provide some additional clarity to the process. It is important that everyone understand and feel comfortable with these new procedures.

With this in mind, if you have questions about any aspect of the June 9th vote please do not hesitate to reach out to me at rcalkins@pocanticohills.org or call 914-631-2440 ext. 702. Believe me when I say, that is not a blanket statement that they teach us in superintendents' school...I want to hear from you!

Question: When were the absentee ballots for the Pocantico Hills CSD Budget and Board Election mailed?
Answer: Ballots were mailed out to all registered voters on Thursday, May 21, 2020 via FIRST CLASS mail. If you have not received a ballot please contact our district clerk immediately at gdownes@pocanticohills.org.

Question: What does this process look like?
Answer: All registered voters will receive an absentee ballot for the June 9th Pocantico Hills Central School District Election. The mailing will include a folded confidential ballot (which has instructions on how to fill out the ballot and return), an oath envelope (this is where you put your ballot), and a postage-paid return envelope.

Question: When are ballots due back to the District?
Answer: Ballots must be received in the District Office by 5 pm on June 9th.

Question: Is there a ballot drop off option?
Answer: No. There is no drop off option. All ballots must be returned by mail by 5 pm on June 9th.

Question: How are absentee ballots processed?
Answer: This process is dictated by law and it is important to remember that voting by absentee ballots takes place every year. Once we receive the return envelope, it is opened and immediately discarded. The oath envelope is placed into a lockbox. If the oath envelope is unsigned it is immediately discarded. The address on the oath envelope is used to ensure that the voter is a qualified voter within the District. On vote night, the oath envelopes are removed from the lock box and the folded, confidential ballots are separated from the Oath Affirmation Envelopes and placed into separate piles for the vote tally, which is completed by independent election inspectors. There is no connection between the Oath Affirmation Envelopes and the folded ballots. In this fashion all votes remain confidential.

Question: Are the ballots really confidential?
Answer: Absolutely. Your folded ballot will remain confidential. As outlined above, our processes and procedures ensure complete separation of personal identifiers prior to the ballot being tallied.

Question: How long will the process take?
Answer: All ballots will be counted and tallied on June 9th. As this is a new process to us all, we do ask for patience as we complete this important task.

Question: What happens to the ballots and the oath affirmation envelopes?
Answer: They are securely stored in the District Office and kept in accordance with NYS Records Retention Law.

Question: Who do you employ as election inspectors?

Answer: We hire three certified county election inspectors to help us in this process. The district clerk orchestrates this process and provides direct oversight.

Question: When will the results be announced?

Answer: As soon as the process is completed.

Remember, don't wait to exercise your voting rights. Complete the ballot process and return to us ASAP. Only ballots received by 5pm, June 9th will be counted; and remember, please be sure to sign the oath envelope.

#POCOCOMMUNITYSTRONG

