

APPROVAL VOTING

A consensus-building approach to elections

Approval Voting is a voting process which ensures the winner of the election is the candidate of whom most people **approve**. Rather than forcing voters to choose their one favorite candidate, voters will vote for all the candidates who they would be comfortable to see winning the election. The winner of the election is the candidate with the most total votes.

Electing ASB President

Let's consider an election for ASB President. There are three candidates: **Dylan, Nate, and Tyler**. About 60% of the school would be happy with Dylan winning, 50% would be happy with Nate winning, and 30% would be happy with Tyler winning. The total is more than 100% because Dylan and Nate are really kind people and a lot of the school believes they would do a great job creating an inclusive community as ASB President. In a traditional election, each student would choose only one candidate; the fans of Dylan and Nate would have to vote for only one of the two. Since Tyler belongs to a pretty exclusive friend group, almost everyone who would be happy to see him win would *only* want him to win and would not have a hard time deciding for whom they should vote.

In a traditional election, the final count might have Dylan with 30% of the votes, Nate with another 30% , and Tyler with the final 40% . Tyler would win the election, even though a survey of students would find Dylan was a much more favored candidate than he. In an approval voting election, the final count would have Dylan with 60% , Nate would have 50% , and Tyler would have 40% ; Dylan would win the election and would have 60% of the school supporting him.

How it All Works Out

With approval voting, voters can choose to vote for between *X* and *N* amount of candidates.

- X is the number of “spots” we need to fill.
For most elections, this is just one, but in some cases, more than one winner is desired—for example, when two students will hold a “co-president” position.
- To find N...
 1. Take the total number of candidates running
 2. Subtract one

This is to prevent wasted ballots. If every candidate is voted for, then the ballot makes no difference in total.

When tallying ballots, count each time a candidate is selected as one full vote—so if one voter checks the boxes for two different candidates, each candidate gets a full tally added to their name. The candidate with the most tallies wins.



	Dylan	Nate	Tyler
Who favors them as President	60%	50%	40%
Traditional Voting Results	30%	30%	40%
Approval Voting Results	60%	50%	40%

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Created by the student leaders of the California Association of Student Leaders
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