

# Transition to Even Year Elections

Last Updated 11/23/20

## Miscellaneous Information:

- Minnesota was on an odd year election cycle until the 1970's
- When Minnesota moved to even years, the City of Duluth did not
- Duluth Public Schools is 'tied' to the City of Duluth election cycle via HF 1467, which was passed in 1973
  - The District can only change from odd to even year election cycle by:
    - Requesting legislation be passed that 'unties' us from the City of Duluth (HF 1467) OR
    - The City of Duluth moving to even year elections
      - Election transition conversations stalled in 2018
      - Duluth is charter city and requires a unanimous vote to approve such a change to the city charter
- In 2015, the Duluth School Board voted 4-2 to move to even year elections; however, this resolution was subsequently rescinded when we were reminded of the 1973 law
  - Resolution B-5-15-3270 approved in May 2015 by a 4-2 vote:
    - Yay: Harala, Loeffler-Kemp, Miernicki, Westholm
    - Nay: Johnston, Welty
    - Missed the vote (left early): Seliga-Punyko
  - Resolution B-5-15-3270 rescinded in June 2015 (unanimously)
- 31 Districts, including Duluth, remain on odd year (out of 336 total):

.Duluth	.Fridley	.Edina
.Hinkley-Finlayson	.Mounds View	.Eden Prairie
.Rush City	.White Bear Lake	.Richfield
.Ogilvie	.Roseville	.St. Paul
.Barnesville	.Orono	.W. St. Paul-Mendota
.Rothsay	.Westonka	Hts-Eagan
.St. Peter	.Minnetonka	.S. Washington Cnty
.Canby	.Wayzata	.Rosemount-Apple
.Anoka-Hennepin	.St. Louis Park	Valley-Eagan
.Bloomington	.Hopkins	.Central
.Spring Lake Park	.Hastings	

- MSBA and Minnesota Secretary of State both strongly recommend moving to even year elections and would support our efforts

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## Pros for the District to move to even year elections:

- Potential to save \$40,000 – \$70,000 per election
- Increased voter turnout with better representation of voters
  - Odd year turnout: 28-30%
  - Even year turnout: 72-80%
- Reduced election fatigue

## Cons for the District if we moved to even year elections:

- Odd year special elections, not held in conjunction with the City of Duluth, would cost the District
- Passing a referendum could be more difficult

## Candidate concerns if we moved to even year elections:

- Ballot fatigue
  - This is a valid concern, and does occur, but boosted turnout in even years overcomes this concern
- Less funding for candidates (same amount of money but now more candidates to split amongst)

## Board action needed to support a move to even year elections:

- Support legislation
- Decide on how to move to even year election cycle:
  - Pass a resolution by July that adds one year to all Board member terms
    - Most commonly used method
    - No cost to the District
  - Pass a resolution by July that amends the next two school board elections to three-year terms (vs. four-year terms)
    - Rarely used
    - Would require two more odd year election cycles at a cost of \$80,000 - \$140,000 to the District
- Update Policy 9115 – School District Elections
  - One sentence policy that would need a few word changes
- Notify the county auditor
  - Simple letter sent by the school board election clerk