



Meeting Date: 3/26/2024

Title: School Board Election Resolution - Even Years

Type: Discussion

Presenter(s): City-School District Liaisons, Erica Allenburg and Michael Birdman

Background Information: In an effort to avoid any alignment with partisan politics, Minnesota historically held school board elections in the Springtime. In the 1980's the Minnesota legislature required that school board elections be held on election day in November, but allowed districts to hold board elections on off-years over the continued concerns of having partisan influences in school board races.

Since the 1980's, the City of Edina and Edina School District have had a division of labor resolution where the City of Edina will perform the election duties for the Edina School District so they may hold their elections on off-cycle election years. This system was developed in an effort to avoid partisanship in school board elections, capitalize upon the integrity of elections conducted by the city and to utilize the city's superior elections systems.

Below are some examples of these: security of students and staff in school buildings, election integrity, workload distribution, cost and a continued effort to respect the non-partisan nature of school board races and safety.

In April 2022, the City of Edina expressed a desire to discontinue managing school board elections due to the complexity, time and resources election management is causing the city. Since then, Edina School District has been analyzing current school board election processes, options and the impacts of varying process changes.

At the board's 1/23/24 and 1/24/24 board retreat, the Edina School Board had a general overview of the impact of the school board election and moving elections from odd to even years. At this retreat it was explained that the board, with input and updates from the city, needed to make a decision regarding its election processes this spring due to certain legal, date-dependent requirements the state has when announcing board elections.

After consulting with the Minnesota School Board Association and district legal counsel, the board has three options:

1. Continue to hold board elections on odd years and transition board elections to be in the control of the school district.
2. Transition the board to even years by extending the terms of current board members by one year in order to get the board on an even election cycle. State law does not allow board members to vote to limit/shorten terms; boards can only vote to extend terms.
3. Transition the board to even years by electing holding two consecutive three-year term elections for a cycle of eight years in order to get the entire board on an even year cycle.

Given the budgetary constraints the district is in (facing over a \$3.5 million budgetary shortfall), at the February 20th board work session, the board expressed interest in moving forward with aligning board elections with even years in order to save the district the expenses associated with the odd year elections. In order to accomplish this, the board expressed interest in extending the terms of existing members, as this would allow the board to move to even years as simply, quickly and efficiently as possible.

This resolution impacts board elections only; it does not affect bond or levy elections. The resolution is based on a recommended resolution from the MSBA and has been reviewed by both administration and district legal counsel.

Recommendation: Discuss and bring questions regarding proposed resolution.

Attachment(s): Edina School Board Election Resolution - Even Years