

INFORMATION ON RESOLUTION TO COMBINE POLLING PLACES

A new election law from the 2017 Legislative Session ([205A.11](#)) gave school districts the authority to establish combined polling places for those elections in which no other election is being held within the school district (for example, this resolution would *not* apply to general elections or city elections). This resolution must be passed annually by December. The board must designate the combined polling place (or places) they would use in the future calendar year should there be a stand-alone special school board election. The school district must also notify the county auditor by sending them a copy of the resolution. The district currently has no plans to call a stand-alone school district special election; this resolution is a preemptive in case one is needed in the 2019 calendar year.

Criteria for selection of combined polling places include: (1) polling place must be a designated polling place used by the county or municipality, (2) geographical distribution, (3) population distribution and (4) one combined polling place per district.

If the Board passes the resolution with combined polling places, it appears the Board may elect later to NOT combine polling places should a special election occur (the law is silent but verbiage in the law suggests it is okay. MSBA suggests checking with our attorneys). However, if the Board passes the resolution to combine polling places, the district may not further restrict polling places down to a lower number (like 4) or to a higher number (like 10) during that year. Once the resolution and number of combined polling places are determined and approved/passed, the resolution stands and cannot be changed for the year. However, it sounds like it could be ignored should the district elect to use all polling places if a special election occurs.

If the Board does not pass this resolution, and a special school board election is needed (not held in conjunction with city or state elections), the district would be required to pay for all costs related to this election. This would include, but not limited to, election judge hiring, training and wages, voting machine usage, printing of ballots, staff time, etc. Currently, when a 'regular' school board election occurs, it is coordinated with the City of Duluth's election cycle (odd numbered years). The school board elections are tied to the Duluth's elections as a result of a law passed in 1974. Because the city also has offices up for election, regulations mandate that the city 'run' the election with input from the election clerk from the school district. The bulk of the work completed is performed by the city. Election costs between the city and school district are divided using a state mandated cost sharing formula. This means the school district does not shoulder the entire cost of the election. If this resolution is not passed, all costs for the special election would be incurred by the district, as well as considerable staff time to conduct the election. Attached is a listing of costs paid by the school district and the city for the 2015 and 2017 election cycles.

The savings by passing this resolution would be substantial. Without a resolution:

- At-large election would have 39 polling places that would need to be operated, staffed with judges and supplies, and all ballot expenses. This would all be coordinated and paid for by the school district. With a resolution, the polling places could be combined down to 5 (or whatever number is chosen) centrally located ones.
- 1st District has 13 polling places which could be combined down to 2 with this resolution.
- 2nd District has 8 polling places which could be combined down to 1 centrally located one with this resolution.
- 3rd District has 10 polling places which could be combined down to 1 centrally located one with this resolution.
- 4th District has 9 polling places which could be combined down to 1 centrally located one with this resolution. As an FYI, Precinct 30, even though is in the city of Duluth, does not vote for ISD 709 as their students go to Proctor.