

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1624

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Early Learning & K-12 Education, March 15, 2023

Title: An act relating to administering educational service district elections.

Brief Description: Administering educational service district elections.

Sponsors: Representatives Ybarra and Waters.

Brief History: Passed House: 2/28/23, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Early Learning & K-12 Education: 3/09/23, 3/15/23 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Removes provisions requiring that declaration of candidacy forms be filed only in person or by mail for educational service district board member elections.
- Removes provisions requiring that all votes be cast by mail for educational service district board member elections.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Wellman, Chair; Nobles, Vice Chair; Wilson, C., Vice Chair; Hawkins, Ranking Member; Dozier, Hunt, McCune and Pedersen.

Staff: Alexandra Fairfortune (786-7416)

Background: Educational Service Districts. Washington has nine regionally based educational service districts (ESDs) that provide cooperative informational services to local school districts and assist the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the State Board of Education in the performance of their duties. The ESDs are governed by

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boards of seven or nine members elected by school directors within each of the ESDs.

Legislation adopted in 2022 transferred election administration duties for ESD board member elections, including duties related to candidate filing and voting, from OSPI to the Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA). Declarations for candidacy forms for these elections may only be filed in person or by mail, and all votes in these elections must be cast by mail.

Summary of Bill: Provisions governing the administration of ESD board member elections by the WSSDA are modified by:

- removing a provision requiring that declaration of candidacy forms be filed only in person or by mail; and
- removing provisions requiring that all votes for ESD board members be cast by mail and be postmarked by certain dates.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Last year the election responsibilities for ESDs were transferred to WSSDA. However, statute still reflects language indicating these elections must be done by mail. This bill eliminates that requirement so that WSSDA can do this electronically, since they already have the system in place to do so and run the system well. WSSDA has spend the last couple years revising their election system to an online system to increase access to information, filing processes, and voting processes. This has also increased participation and doubled the turnout at elections. This bill would allow WSSDA to use that simplified process for ESD elections.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Alex Ybarra, Prime Sponsor; Tim Garchow, Washington State School Directors' Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.