

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1624

As Passed Legislature

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

Brief Description: Administering educational service district elections.

Sponsors: Representatives Ybarra and Waters.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Education: 2/7/23, 2/14/23 [DP].

Floor Activity:

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

Passed Senate: 4/5/23, 47-1.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Modifies provisions governing the administration of Educational Service District board member elections by removing provisions requiring elections to be conducted only by mail.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Santos, Chair; Shavers, Vice Chair; Rude, Ranking Minority Member; Bergquist, Callan, Eslick, Harris, McClintock, Ortiz-Self, Pollet, Sandlin, Steele, Stonier and Timmons.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative McEntire, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Ethan Moreno (786-7386).

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Background:Washington State School Directors' Association.

The Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) is the state agency that provides advice and assistance to local school boards. The WSSDA is charged with coordinating policymaking, control, and management of the state's school districts, and is empowered to prepare and adopt materials for its own organization. The WSSDA also adopts model policies and procedures that school districts may adopt, often in response to legislative directives.

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. Among other responsibilities, the ESDs serve as a depository and distribution center for instructional materials, and they assist school districts in the preparation of their budgets. The ESDs are governed by 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 the OSPI to the WSSDA. Declarations of 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.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Legislation adopted in 2022 required ESD elections to be conducted by mail. This bill will permit the elections to be conducted electronically using an existing system of WSSDA.

The WSSDA has transformed the way it conducts its elections by using a secure, online system that has doubled voter turnout. When the election administration duties for ESD elections were transferred to WSSDA, the law retained provisions requiring ESD elections to be conducted only by mail.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Alex Ybarra, prime sponsor; and Tim Garchow, Washington State School Directors' Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.