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BILL ANALYSIS



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Senate Bill 427 (as introduced 6-9-11)
House Bill 4005 (as passed by the House)
Sponsor: Senator Patrick J. Colbeck (S.B. 427)
Representative Kurt Heise (H.B. 4005)
House Committee: Redistricting and Elections (H.B. 4005)
Senate Committee: Local Government and Elections

Date Completed: 9-28-11

CONTENT

House Bill 4005 would amend the Michigan Election Law to require school board elections to be held at the general election in November of even-numbered years.

Senate Bill 427 would amend the Revised School Code to reflect the changes proposed by House Bill 4005, by revising references to sections of the Michigan Election Law.

Senate Bill 427 is tie-barred to House Bill 4005. The bills would take effect on January 1, 2012. House Bill 4005 is described below in further detail.

Under the Michigan Election Law, except as otherwise provided, as of September 1, 2004, a school district must hold its regular election for the office of school board member at the odd year general election. ("Odd year general election" means the election held on the November regular election date in an odd-numbered year. The Law specifies the following four "regular election" dates:

- The fourth Tuesday in February.
- The first Tuesday after the first Monday in May.
- The first Tuesday after the first Monday in August.
- The first Tuesday after the first Monday in November.)

If, as of September 1, 2004, a school district held its regular election at other than the odd year general election, by adopting a resolution the school board could choose to hold its regular election on one of the following dates: the odd year May regular election date, the November regular election date in both even and odd years, or the May regular election date in both even and odd years.

Under the bill, beginning January 1, 2012, a school district would have to hold its regular election for the office of school board member at the general November election (i.e., the election held on the November regular election date in an even-numbered year).

Currently, a school board member's term begins on one of the following dates:

- If elected at an election held on a November regular election date, January 1 immediately following the election.
- If elected at an election held on a May regular election date, July 1 immediately following the election.

The bill would eliminate the reference to a board member elected at a May election. Under the bill, all members' terms would begin on January 1 immediately following the election.

MCL 380.4 et al. (S.B. 427)
168.302 et al. (H.B. 4005)

Legislative Analyst: Julie Cassidy

FISCAL IMPACT

The average cost per precinct for a stand-alone election is estimated at \$2,000, which was estimated when the Secretary of State's office made reimbursements to local units of government for the costs of operating the last presidential primary. Each school district has differing numbers of precincts, but if the \$2,000 average cost per precinct is multiplied by the number of precincts in each district, the statewide average cost of a stand-alone election is about \$25,000 per school district. However, there are many school districts with only one precinct (and an estimated cost of \$2,000), while the largest district (Detroit) has 529 precincts (with an estimated cost over \$1.0 million to run a stand-alone election). These figures do not assume that a school district consolidates precincts for a stand-alone election, but they often do. To the extent school districts consolidate precincts, the costs decline.

The costs to a school district for running an election at the same time as an election already occurring for another local unit are fairly negligible. The only costs to a school district for "piggybacking" onto another local election are for the additional printing of school district-specific information on the ballot; therefore, these minimal costs would be the only costs to a school district when running a school board election during the even-year general November election as proposed under the bills.

According to recent data, a total of 52 school districts operated only an even-year November election, meaning the other 94% of districts would be required to change to the even-year November election under the proposed legislation. (Since 110 districts operate an annual November election, these districts would see savings for the odd-year November elections that would no longer be allowed.) An estimate of total local savings (summing up the estimated individual districts' savings) would range between \$7.0 million and \$8.0 million over the life-cycle of elections (in other words, between the odd-year May, odd-year November, and even-year May elections).

Fiscal Analyst: Kathryn Summers

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.