

May 17, 2017

Dear Representatives Fenton, O'Driscoll and Senator Kiffmeyer,

As you work towards a compromise on elections legislation, the organizations representing public school districts, school boards, superintendents and school business officials wish to bring to your attention four issues of importance to effectively and efficiently conduct school district special elections. School districts conduct special elections primarily to fill open school board seats as per statute, and to conduct school facility bond referendums and operating referendums.

1. Selecting specific dates for these special elections in February, April, May, August and November will bring ease and clarity to available dates rather than the current "blackout" provisions. We support this and wish to have both August and June dates rather than just moving with the state primary. Six dates spread through the year will allow districts to conduct special elections as needed throughout the year.
2. SF 514 creates a significant inefficiency for school district by preventing districts from consolidating polling places for special elections and requiring counties to conduct all elections. In a small sample of Regional Center Minnesota school districts, election costs increase a factor of two to six times to use all precinct polling places within a school district. Details are in the table below.

One superintendent was dismayed that special elections would be at the expense of one teacher for a year should the district lose the ability to consolidate polling places.

Greater MN Regional Center School Districts	Consolidated Polling Places Expenditures	County Estimate to Open all Polling Places	Increase in Expenditures
Cambridge-Isanti	\$22,000	\$38,000	\$16,000
Fergus Falls	\$11,528	\$23,688	\$12,160
Moorhead	\$25,031	\$49,540	\$24,509
Wilmar	\$8,000	\$50,000	\$42,000*

\*Difference between one and twenty-five polling places

Another superintendent questioned the need to open all polling places with the significant increase in early voting due to "no excuses" absentee voting.

For these reasons, we ask school districts be allowed to continue to consolidate polling places for special elections.

We also oppose the ballot language changes that were included in the vetoed tax bill and request that you don't include those provisions in any final elections bill.

Thank you for your attention to these considerations. We are available to provide more information on these issues as you work towards a conference report.

Respectfully,

**Association of Metropolitan School Districts**  
**Minnesota Association of School Administrators**  
**Minnesota Association of School Business Officials**  
**Minnesota Rural Education Association**  
**Minnesota School Boards Association**  
**Schools for Equity in Education**