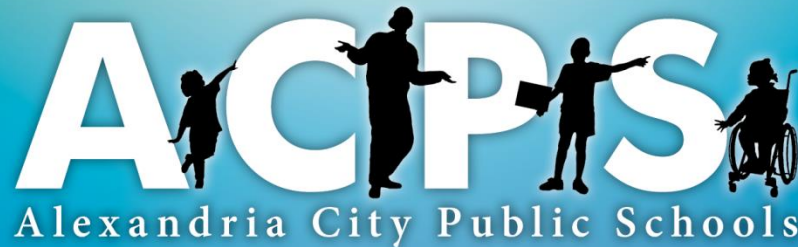


School Board Election Cycle, Terms and Composition

Background Information

School Board Work Session
June 10, 2019



EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS

School Board **Election Cycle & Terms:** Current Framework

- 3-year term begins January 1 following November election
- Board Members serve concurrent terms
- Board terms coincide with City Council terms
- 2012: Elections transitioned from May to November
- Next election: November 2021

School Board Election Cycle & Terms: Legal Basis

I. Code of Virginia

- Cities and counties have different legal standards.
- Elected vs. appointed School Boards have different legal standards.

§§ 22.1-57.3, 24.2-222, 24.2-223: Elected School Boards (Cities)

- Elections coincide with governing body's elections
- School Board term = governing body's term (1-4 years)
- School Board terms of office defined by City Charter
- Board Member terms staggered only if governing body's terms staggered

II. City of Alexandria Charter

§§ 3.01, 10.01, 15.10: Council and School Board Elections

- 3-year concurrent terms for Council Members and Mayor
- City Council elections held in November 2015; every 3 years thereafter
- School Board elections held every 3 years; coincide with Council elections

School Board Election Cycle & Terms: Comparison of Local Jurisdictions

School Board	Arlington County	Fairfax County	Falls Church City	ACPS
Term	4	4	4	3
Staggered/ Concurrent	Staggered	Concurrent	Staggered	Concurrent
Election Cycle:	1 st Year : 1 2 nd Year: 1 3 rd Year: 2 4 th Year: 1	Odd years preceding presidential elections	1 st Year: 4 3 rd Year: 3 (Every 2 years in odd years)	Every 3 years, beginning in Nov. 2012

- Statewide:**
- Approximately 2/3 of School Boards serve staggered terms.
 - Only 3 city School Boards in Virginia serve concurrent terms.
 - 121 School Boards serve 4-year terms.
 - 14 School Boards serve 3-year terms.
 - 1 School Board serves a 2-year term.

School Board Election Cycle & Terms: Transition Benefits

Benefits of Staggered and Extended Terms:

- Ensures retention of institutional knowledge as a continuing body by avoiding large-scale turnover
- Ensures **continuity of policy** instead of frequent changes in focus
- Members have more time to gain **experience** before running for reelection.
- Allows voters to **focus** on local issues/schools more frequently
- Increased voter **interest**: allows voters to focus on fewer candidates/election
- Members **better able to serve** public/constituents
- Good government practices: more **effective** and more **efficient**
- Non-partisan

School Board Election Cycle & Terms: Transition Drawbacks

Potential Drawbacks:

- Voters must **wait longer** to change direction of elected body's policies/priorities if desired
- May be easier for organized groups to **oppose** individual candidates

School Board Election Cycle & Terms: Transition Requirements

Requirements:

- Requests to stagger terms or change term length require City Charter amendment:
 - Initiated by Council
 - **Apply to both School Board and City Council**
 - Amendments to City Charter approved by General Assembly
- Majority of Board elected first cycle, remaining members elected subsequently
- General rule is to extend, not shorten terms during transition

School Board Election Cycle & Terms: Transition Process

Process:

- June 2018: *Resolution to Explore School Board Election Cycle and Composition Adjustments*
- School Board proposes specific City Charter amendments for Council consideration
 - Regular Order /Public Hearing prior to Resolution adoption
- City Council proposes Charter amendment for:
 - Regular Order /Public Hearing
 - Inclusion in Legislative Package for General Assembly Session
 - Possible Citywide Referendum
- Staff works with General Assembly delegation to draft and sponsor bills

City Council Election Cycle & Terms: Recent History

City Council Docket:

- **February 11, 1997**
 - Revision of City Council Member terms (length & staggered cycle)

City Council & School Board Election Process Committee:

- **March 2007 - Formed by Mayor to examine & make recommendations on:**
 - Moving City elections from May to November
 - Creating staggered terms for Council and the School Board
 - Revising Council and School Board compensation
 - Related issues (non-partisan Council elections; at-large vs. districts, etc.)
- **June 2007 Public Hearing re: issues examined by committee**

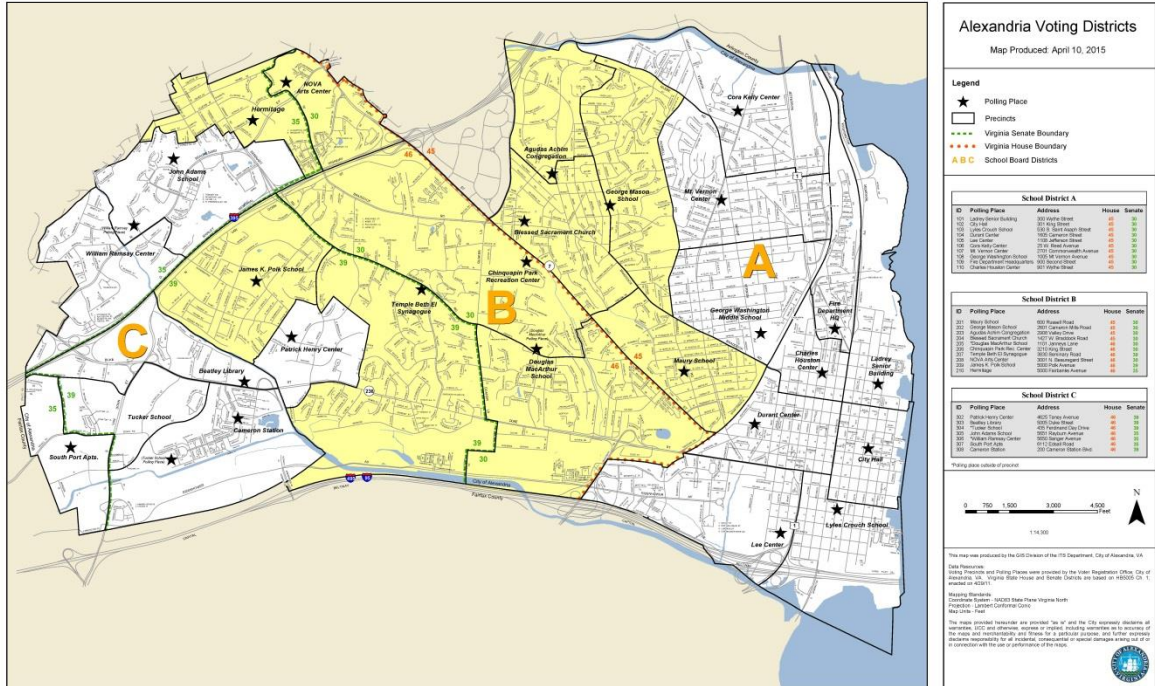
City Council Docket:

- **November 10, 2009**
 - City Charter Amendments re: Council Elections
- **June 2010**
 - City Council approved moving elections from May to November **2012**; Council terms extended 6 months during transition

School Board **Composition:** Current Framework

- 9 Board Members
- 1 Chair and 1 Vice Chair
 - Selected by Board at Organizational Meeting to serve 1-year term
- 3 Board Members Elected from Each Voting District:
 - A (Eastern Alexandria)
 - B (Central Alexandria)
 - C (Western Alexandria)
- Voting Districts Determined by City Council

School Board Voting Districts:



Redistricting:

- **Follows census every 10 years**
- **Voting district population variance: no more than $\pm 5\%$**
- **2011: Population of districts remained within acceptable variance; boundaries unchanged**

School Board **Composition:** Legal Basis

I. Code of Virginia

- Cities and counties have different legal standards.
- Elected vs. appointed School Boards have different legal standards.

§§ 22.1-50, 22.1-57.3: Appointed & Elected School Boards (Cities)

- 3 Board Members per voting district (appointed)
- When School Board transitions from appointed to elected, first elected board must consist of same number of Members as appointed Board it replaced
- Board Members shall be elected from the same voting districts they were previously appointed from.

II. City of Alexandria Charter

§§ 3.01, 3.05 15.10,: City Council & School Board Composition

- 6 Council Members and 1 Mayor elected at-large
- Vice-Mayor is a Council Member; elected by majority vote of full Council
- City of Alexandria is single school division
- 9 School Board Members; elected from districts determined by Council

School Board **Composition:** Comparison of Local Jurisdictions

School Board	Arlington County	Fairfax County	Falls Church City	ACPS
Composition	5 (At-large)	12 (1/District plus 3 At-large)	7 (At-large)	9 (3/District)
Student Enrollment	Approx. 25,700	Approx. 189,000	Approx. 2,700	Approx. 15,500
City/County Population	Approx. 234,000	Approx. 1.138 million	Approx. 14,000	Approx. 160,000
Board Member: Student Ratio	1 : 5,000	1 : 15,500	1 : 385	1 : 1,700
Voting Districts	-	9	-	3

- Statewide:**
- 67 School Boards have 5 members
 - 41 School Boards have 7 members
 - 10 School Boards have 9 members
 - 9 School Boards have 6 members
 - 5 School Boards have 8 members
 - 1 School Board each: 12, 11, 4, or 3 members

School Board **Composition:** Transition Benefits

Benefits of Smaller School Board

- **Creates Efficiencies** - Eases difficulty of aligning 9 schedules for:
 - Regular, Special Called & Closed Board Meetings
 - Work Sessions and Retreats
 - Professional Development Opportunities
- **Increased Voter Interest** - Allows voters to focus on fewer candidates/election
- 2 Board Members/district would **allow Members from the same district to meet together with constituent groups** more frequently.
- At-large Board Member(s) could **focus on Citywide issues**.
- Good government practices: more **effective** and more **efficient**

School Board **Composition:** Transition Drawbacks

Potential Drawbacks:

- May be **easier** for organized groups **to oppose** individual candidates
- **Decreases diversity** of perspectives/experience/approaches to issues
- Fewer Board Members addressing each district's **unique needs**
- Fewer Board Members to serve as **liaisons**

School Board **Composition:** Transition Requirements

Requirements:

- Requests to change the number of School Board Members or their constituencies require City Charter amendment:
 - Initiated by Council
 - **Does not impact composition of City Council**
 - Amendments to City Charter approved by General Assembly
- Majority of Board elected first cycle; remaining members elected subsequently

School Board **Composition:** Transition Process

Process:

- June 2018: *Resolution to Explore School Board Election Cycle and Composition Adjustments*
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School Board Election Cycle, Terms & Composition: Transition Considerations

Cost:

- Negligible impact; elections already held in Alexandria each year; schools already closed on Election Day (Bd. of Elections)
- Negligible increased costs (Bd. of Elections)
- Negligible increased staff time (Bd. of Elections)

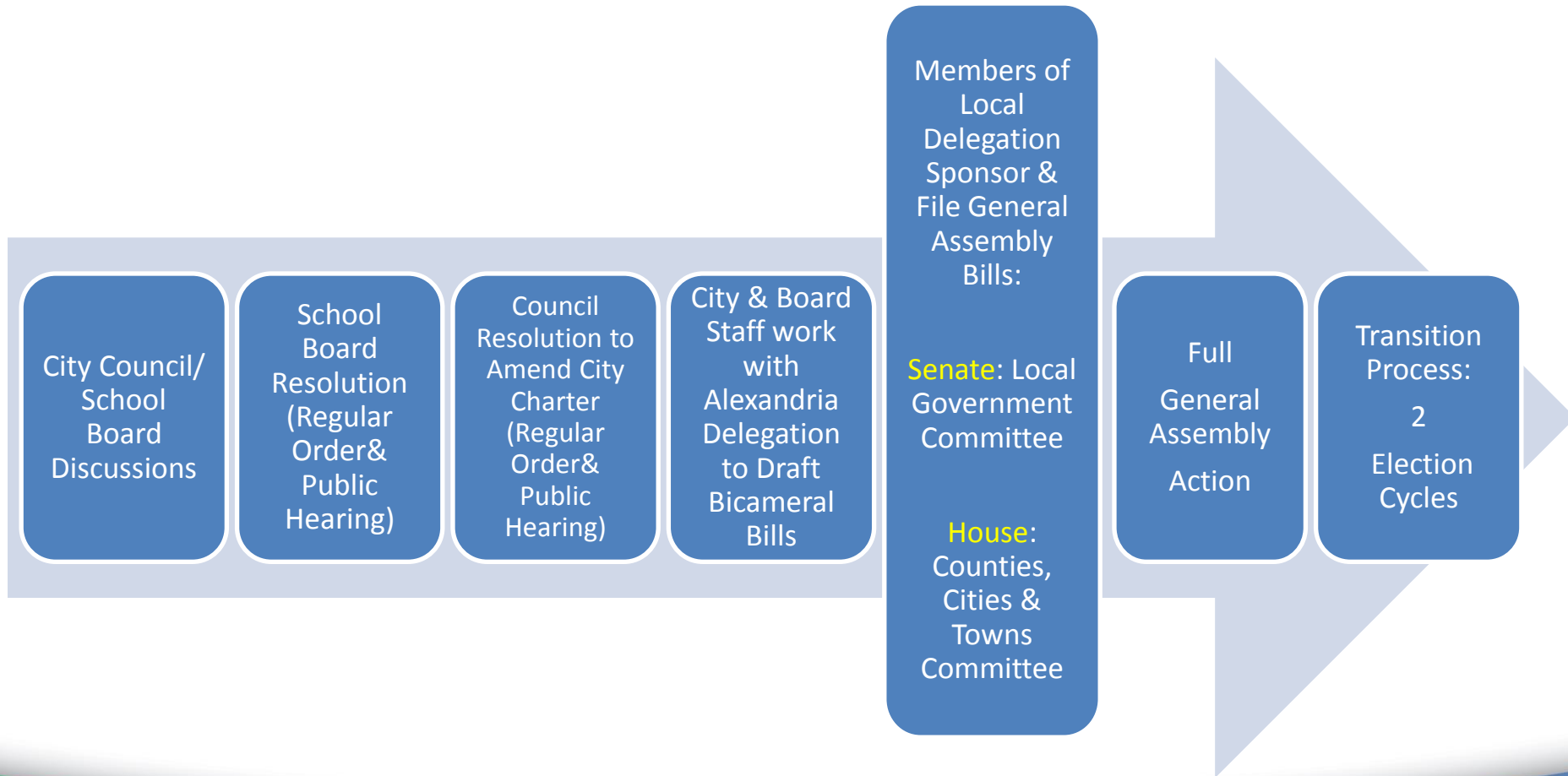
Timing:

- Examination of scenarios that would avoid election cycle coinciding with presidential elections:
 - Local issues would not be overshadowed by national issues
 - Avoids straight-ticket voting
- If 3-year terms maintained, first possible staggered election: 2021
- If terms changed to 4 years, first possible staggered election: 2022

Voter Turnout:

- No anticipated increase in voter turnout (Bd. of Elections)

City Charter: Amendment Process



Questions and Discussion

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