



SIMPLIFY THE DATE. INCREASE THE VOTE.

Senate Bill 962

Let's increase school board election turnout.

Summary

This bill makes school board elections more accessible to parents/guardians by moving them to occur on the same date as general elections. For example, school board general elections would be moved from April to the November date that also includes elections for Congress, governor and other offices.

Why We Need It

Right now, school board elections aren't on dates consistent with other elections, leading to extremely low voter participation – often less than 5% of registered voters. Holding school board elections apart from other elections makes it difficult for many parents and guardians to take the extra time or take another day off work to vote for school board candidates. This schedule is also confusing to voters and engaged parents who find themselves wanting to run for office.

When parents aren't able to participate in school board elections, they lose the opportunity to provide critical input on their child's education. School board members make far-reaching decisions for children at the school and are intended to represent the needs of all parents in the community – but right now, low parent input means that isn't the case.

The Solution

We need to simplify school board election dates. Moving the election dates to align with the general election will make it easier for people to vote for school boards along with other local positions. This will increase voter turnout and make it easier for parents/guardians to actively select the leadership who will help shape their child's education. It will also save taxpayer money by eliminating the need for an extra election date.

Why This Matters

Every parent/guardian should be able to be an active participant in their child's education – that includes the community-led selection of their district's leadership. School board leaders make a difference in a student's education and their leadership should be reflective of and accountable to parents and the school community.

Whether by voting or by participating in the race as a candidate, it's critical to make engagement with the school board accessible for parents. Ultimately, this will help contribute to a high quality education for Oklahoma's children.

Bill Details

- The general election of members of the board of education of every local school district will be conducted on the second Tuesday of November of each odd-numbered year, and on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November in each even-numbered year
- The primary election of members of the board of education of every district, if necessary, will be conducted on the second Tuesday in September of each odd-numbered year and on the fourth Tuesday of August in each even-numbered year
- School board primaries will be conducted if more than two eligible candidates qualify for the general election ballot
- School board candidates shall file declarations of candidacy at the same place and with the same officials as candidates for county office
- The bill will become effective January 1, 2023