

§ 115C-37. Election of board members.

(a) Method of Election. – The county boards of education shall be elected on a nonpartisan basis at the time of the primary election in 1970 and biennially thereafter. The names of the candidates shall be printed on the ballots without reference to any party affiliation and any qualified voter residing in the county shall be entitled to vote such ballots. Except as otherwise provided herein, the election shall be conducted according to the provisions of Chapter 163 of the General Statutes then governing primary elections.

The terms of office of the members shall be staggered so as nearly equal to one half as possible shall expire every two years.

(b) County Board of Elections to Provide for Elections. – The county board of elections under the direction of the State Board of Elections, shall make all necessary provisions for elections of county boards of education as are herein provided for. The county board of elections of each county shall file with the State Board of Elections a statement specifying the size and method of election of members of its county board of education.

(c) City Board of Education. – The board of education for any city administrative unit shall be appointed or elected as now provided by law. If no provision is now made by the law for the filling of vacancies in the membership of any city board of education, such vacancy may be filled by the governing body of the city or town embraced by said administrative unit. In the event that any such vacancy is not filled in this manner within 30 days, the State Board of Education may fill such vacancy.

(d) Members to Qualify. – Each county board of education shall hold a meeting in December following the election. At that meeting, newly elected members of the board of education shall qualify by taking the oath of office prescribed in Article VI, Sec. 7 of the Constitution.

This subsection shall not have the effect of repealing any local or special acts relating to boards of education of any particular counties whose membership to said boards is chosen by a vote of the people.

(e) Vacancies in Nominations for Membership on County Boards. – If any candidate nominated on a partisan basis shall die, resign, or for any reason become ineligible or disqualified between the date of his nomination and the time for the election, such vacancy caused thereby may be filled by the actions of the county executive committee of the political party of such candidate.

(f) Vacancies in Office. – All vacancies in the membership of the boards of education whose members are elected pursuant to the provisions of subsection (a) of this section by death, resignation, or other causes shall be filled by appointment by the remaining members of the board, of a person to serve until the next election of members of such board, at which time the remaining unexpired term of the office in which the vacancy occurs shall be filled by election.

(g) Eligibility for Board Membership; Holding Other Offices. – Any person possessing the qualifications for election to public office set forth in Article VI, Sec. 6 of the Constitution of North Carolina shall be eligible to serve as a member of a local board of education: Provided, however, that any person elected or appointed to a local board of education, and also employed by that board of education, shall resign his employment before taking office as a member of that board of education.

Membership on a board of education is hereby declared to be an office that, with the exceptions provided above, may be held concurrently with any appointive office, pursuant to Article VI, Sec. 9 of the Constitution, but any person holding an elective office shall not be eligible to serve as a member of a local board of education.

(h) Death or Disqualification of Candidate in Nonpartisan Election. – If a candidate dies or becomes disqualified after the filing period has closed and before the election, and the ballots have not been printed, the county board of elections shall immediately reopen the filing period

for five days so that additional candidates may file for election. If the ballots have been printed at the time the board of elections receives notice of the death or disqualification, the board shall reopen the filing period for three days if the board determines it will have time to reprint the ballots before the election.

In the event the board of elections determines that there is not time enough to reopen the filing period for three days and to reprint the ballots, then the ballots shall not be reprinted and the name of the deceased or disqualified candidate shall remain on the ballot. Votes cast for such candidate shall not be considered and the candidates receiving the highest number of votes equal to the number of positions to be filled shall be elected.

(i) The local board of education shall revise electoral district boundaries from time to time as provided by this subsection. If district boundaries are set by local act or court order and the act or order does not provide a method for revising them, the local board of education shall revise them only for the purpose of (i) accounting for territory annexed to or excluded from the school administrative unit, and (ii) correcting population imbalances among the districts shown by a new federal census or caused by exclusions or annexations. After the General Assembly has ratified an act establishing district boundaries, the local board of education shall not revise them again until a new federal census of population is taken or territory is annexed to or excluded from the school administrative unit, whichever event first occurs. After the local board of education has revised district boundaries in conformity with this act, the local board of education shall not revise them again until a new federal census of population is taken or territory is annexed to or excluded from the school administrative unit, whichever event occurs first, except that the board may make an earlier revision of district boundaries it has drawn if it must do so to comply with a court order or to gain approval of a district-revision plan by the U.S. Justice Department under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. In establishing district boundaries, the local board of education shall use data derived from the most recent federal census. (1955, c. 1372, art. 5, ss. 2-8; 1967, c. 972, ss. 2-6; 1969, c. 1301, s. 2; 1971, c. 704, s. 6; 1973, c. 1446, s. 1; 1977, c. 662; 1981, c. 423, s. 1; 1985, c. 404; c. 405, ss. 1, 2; 1985 (Reg. Sess., 1986), c. 975, s. 10; 1991, c. 400, s. 1; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, ss. 3.1(a), (b), 6.1.)