



# School Board Election Cycle, Terms and Composition

School Board Work Session  
February 9, 2023





# School Board Election Cycle & Terms: Current Framework

- 3-year term begins January 1 following November election
- 9 Board Members, 3 districts (A, B, C), each electing 3 members
- Board Members serve concurrent terms
- Board terms coincide with City Council terms
- 1994: First ACPS elected board. Previously appointed by Council.
- 2012: Elections transitioned from May to November
- Next election: November 2024



# 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~~
- ~~▪ Exceptions have been granted for several counties~~

## 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: Governance Changes

## Requirements:

- City Charter amendment with revised terms for the School Board:
  - Initiated by Council
  - **Applies to School Board, not the City Council**
  - Amendments to City Charter approved by General Assembly
- ~~▪ Code of Virginia amendment with staggered 4-year terms for the School Board:
  - ~~Initiated by Alexandria Representative~~
  - ~~**Applies to School Board, not the City Council**~~
  - ~~Amendments to the Code of Virginia approved by General Assembly~~~~



# School Board Election Cycle & Terms: Process

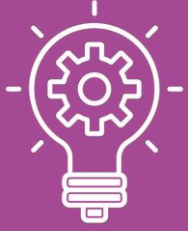
- ✓ Work Session – December 13, 2022
- ✓ Board Brief – January 28, 2023
  - Work Session – February 13, 2023
  - Survey – Late February or Early March 2023
  - Public Hearing – March 30, 2023
  - Work Session – March 30, 2023
  - Adopt Resolution – April 20, 2023
  - City Council drafts charter revisions – Summer, 2023
  - Public Hearing on draft charter – Sept/Oct 2023
  - Draft legislation – October 2023
  - Insert draft legislation into candidate packets – January 2024
  - State legislature approves charter revisions – 2024 Session
  - First Elections – November, 2024



# 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 <sup>st</sup> Year : 1 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year: 1 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year: 2 4 <sup>th</sup> Year: 1	Odd years preceding presidential elections	1 <sup>st</sup> Year: 4 3 <sup>rd</sup> 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.



INNOVATIVE

# ACPS School Board Election History and Change in Superintendency

Year	Term	New Members	Change in Superintendent During Term	Months between Inauguration and Change in Superintendency
1994	1994-1997	6	Yes	-23 (days)
1997	1997-2000	4	No	
2000	2000-2003	2	Yes	14.2
2003	2003-2006	5	No	
2006	2006-2009	8	Yes	10.7
2009	2009-2012	3	No	
2012	2013-2015	7	Yes	7.9
2015	2016-2018	5	Yes	16.4
2018	2019-2021	5	No	
2021	2022-2024	6	Yes	5.2



# School Board Election Cycle & Terms: Transition Benefits

## ACPS Data

- Since 1997, on average **five** (56%) School Board seats have changed each election cycle.
- In the 28-year period since switching to an elected School Board, ACPS has seen **six** Superintendents resign with interim Superintendents filling time in between.
- On average in ACPS, Superintendents resign **nine months** after a new School Board takes office (range = -23 days to 16 months).
- Since 1994, four of the five superintendents left when the School Board turnover was **five or more members**.
- On average, the tenure of a Superintendent since 1994 when Alexandria switched to elected School Boards is **5 years** (range = 3-7 years). This is a **2.75 year decline** from the tenure of ACPS Superintendents from 1963-1994 (range 3-14 years).





# 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
- Improved relationship with the Superintendent



# 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



# Key Questions and Factors

## Two Key Questions to inform the discussion

- Does the change improve Continuity of Operations?
- Does the change improve Resident Representation?

**Discussion: Are these correct?**

## Five Key Factors

- Three vs Four Year Terms
- Districts vs At-Large Representation
- Staggered Terms vs Whole Board Election
- Alignment with State and Federal Election Cycles
- Board Size



# Possible Models

## Model A

- 3 Year Terms
- 9 Board members, three from each district
- One district each year
- Example Transition: In 2024, 3 members are elected for 1-year terms, 3 for 2-year terms. Registrar randomly selects which districts will be up for reelection.

Year	District A	District B	District C	Total Turnover	Other Elections
2024	3	3	3	9	US President, US Senate, US House, City
2025	3	0	0	3	VA House, Governor
2026	0	3	0	3	US Senate, US House
2027	0	0	3	3	VA House, VA Senate, City
2028	3	0	0	3	US President, US House
2029	0	3	0	3	VA House, Governor
2030	0	0	3	3	US Senate, US House, City



# Possible Models

## Model B

- 3 Year Terms
- 9 Board members, three from each district
- One member from each district each year
- Example Transition: In 2024, person from each district with the lowest voter count is elected for a 1-year terms, person with 2<sup>nd</sup> highest voter count in each district is elected for a for 2-year term.

Year	District A	District B	District C	Total Turnover	Other Elections
2024	3	3	3	9	US President, US Senate, US House, City
2025	1	1	1	3	VA House, Governor
2026	1	1	1	3	US Senate, US House
2027	1	1	1	3	VA House, VA Senate, City
2028	1	1	1	3	US President, US House
2029	1	1	1	3	VA House, Governor
2030	1	1	1	3	US Senate, US House, City



# Possible Models

## Model C

- 4 Year Terms
- 9 Board members, three from each district
- One district each year
- Example Transition: In 2024, one district elects for 2-year terms, one for 3-year terms, and one for 4-year terms. Registrar randomly selects which districts will be up for reelection.

Year	District A	District B	District C	Total Turnover	Other Elections
2024	3	3	3	9	US President, US Senate, US House, City
2025	0	0	0	0	VA House, Governor
2026	3	0	0	3	US Senate, US House
2027	0	3	0	3	VA House, VA Senate, City
2028	0	0	3	3	US President, US House
2029	0	0	0	0	VA House, Governor
2030	3	0	0	3	US Senate, US House, City



# Possible Models

## Model D

- 4 Year Terms
- 9 Board members, three from each district
- Elections on even years
- Example Transition: In 2024, 4 members are elected for 2-year terms, 5 for 4-year terms. Registrar randomly selects which elections will be for which initial terms.

Year	District A	District B	District C	Total Turnover	Other Elections
2024	3	3	3	9	US President, US Senate, US House, City
2025	0	0	0	0	VA House, Governor
2026	1 or 2	1 or 2	1 or 2	4	US Senate, US House
2027	0	0	0	0	VA House, VA Senate, City
2028	1 or 2	1 or 2	1 or 2	5	US President, US House
2029	0	0	0	0	VA House, Governor
2030	1 or 2	1 or 2	1 or 2	4	US Senate, US House, City



# Possible Models

## Model E

- 4 Year Terms
- 7 Board members, two from each district and one at-large
- Elections on even years
- Example Transition: In 2024, two elected from each district and one at large. One district elects for a 1-year term, one for a 2-year term, and one for a 3-year term. At-large is a 4-year term. Registrar randomly selects which elections will be for which initial terms.

Year	District A	District B	District C	At Large	Total Turnover	Other Elections
2024	2	2	2	1	7	US President, US Senate, US House, City
2025	2	0	0	0	2	VA House, Governor
2026	0	2	0	0	2	US Senate, US House
2027	0	0	2	0	2	VA House, VA Senate, City
2028	0	0	0	1	1	US President, US House
2029	2	0	0	0	2	VA House, Governor
2030	0	2	0	0	2	US Senate, US House, City





# Possible Models

## Model F

- 4 Year Terms
- 9 Board members, two from each district and three at-large
- Elections on even years
- Example Transition: In 2024, two elected from each district and three at large. One district elects for a 1-year term, one for a 2-year term, and one for a 3-year term. At-large are a 4-year term. Registrar randomly selects which elections will be for which initial terms.

Year	District A	District B	District C	At Large	Total Turnover	Other Elections
2024	2	2	2	3	9	US President, US Senate, US House, City
2025	2	0	0	0	2	VA House, Governor
2026	0	2	0	0	2	US Senate, US House
2027	0	0	2	0	2	VA House, VA Senate, City
2028	0	0	0	3	3	US President, US House
2029	2	0	0	0	2	VA House, Governor
2030	0	2	0	0	2	US Senate, US House, City



# Possible Models

## Model G

- 4 Year Terms
- 9 Board members, all at-large
- Elections on even years
- Example Transition: In 2024, nine board members are elected. Four for 2-year terms, five for 4-year terms. Registrar randomly selects which elections will be for which initial terms.

Year	At Large	Total Turnover	Other Elections
2024	9	9	US President, US Senate, US House, City
2025	0	0	VA House, Governor
2026	4	4	US Senate, US House
2027	0	0	VA House, VA Senate, City
2028	5	5	US President, US House
2029	0	0	VA House, Governor
2030	4	4	US Senate, US House, City



# Next Steps

- Stakeholder Survey
  - Late Feb / Early March 2023
- Public Hearing
  - March 30, 2023
- Work Session
  - March 30, 2023



# Questions?

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