

House Bill No. 559

An act relating to the Pinellas County School District; providing for a seven-member district school board, with four members elected from single-member districts and three members elected from the county at large, notwithstanding the provisions of s. 230.061, s. 230.10, or s. 230.105, F.S.; providing for implementation at specified elections; providing that school board members shall continue to be elected on a nonpartisan basis and shall be elected in conjunction with the first primary and general election; providing qualifying and other applicable election procedures; providing for future reapportionment of the single-member districts; providing for a referendum; providing effective dates.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Notwithstanding section 230.061, section 230.10, or section 230.105, Florida Statutes, the supervisor of elections of Pinellas County shall place a referendum on the ballot at the general election to be held on November 5, 2002, which poses the question of whether the district school board of Pinellas County shall consist of seven nonpartisan members, four of whom are to be elected each from a single-member district by electors residing in the single-member district only and three of whom are to be elected from the county at large.

Section 2. (1) If the electors approve the referendum required by section 1 of this act, the first election to begin implementing the transition to single-member representation on the district school board shall be the election of district school board members held in conjunction with the first primary election in the year 2004 and with the runoff, if any, held during the general election of that year. The change to single-member representation shall be fully implemented with the elections for district school board members held in conjunction with the first primary and general elections in the year 2006. In the year 2004, school board members from districts 1 and 3 and the at-large seat for which the election is to be held in 2004, designated as district 7, shall be elected; in the year 2006, school board members from districts 2 and 4, and the at-large seats for which election was held in 2002, designated as districts 5 and 6, shall be elected. Thereafter, the governing body of the district school board shall consist of seven members, with four members from single-member districts and three members from the county at large, as provided in this act. All elections for district school board members shall be nonpartisan and held at the same time as the first primary and general elections as provided by law, and all school board members shall be elected to appropriately staggered terms of 4 years each. Each candidate for election to the district school board must be a qualified elector of the county and, if seeking election to a single-member district, a registered voter of that district at the time of qualifying. Each person elected to the district school board from a single-member district shall be elected only by the electors residing in the single-member district for which he or she qualified. Each

person elected to the district school board shall take office 2 weeks after the general election at which he or she was elected.

(2) The three seats to be filled from the county at large shall be designated district 5, district 6, and district 7, respectively. The four seats to be filled from single-member districts shall be designated district 1, district 2, district 3, and district 4, respectively, and shall be the same as the school board districts in effect at the time the first primary election in the year 2004 is held. Thereafter, the single-member districts shall be reapportioned by the school board, in consultation with the supervisor of elections, as soon after each decennial census as practicable.

(3) Candidates for election to the district school board shall qualify in accordance with general law in the same manner as candidates for the nonpartisan office of county court judge qualify under chapter 105, Florida Statutes. Accordingly, the amount of the qualifying fee for candidates for school board members shall be calculated using the percentages set forth in section 105.031, Florida Statutes, based upon the annual salary for the office of school board member. Candidates may qualify without paying the qualifying fee using the procedures for the alternative method of qualifying set forth in section 105.035, Florida Statutes, for the nonpartisan office of county court judge. A candidate qualifying by the alternative method for a single-member district shall obtain the signatures of a number of qualified voters equal to at least 3 percent of the total number of registered voters within the geographical boundaries of the district for which he or she intends to qualify, and a candidate qualifying by the alternative method for an at-large seat shall obtain the signatures of a number of qualified voters equal to at least 1 percent of the total number of registered voters in Pinellas County. Any person who is seeking election as a write-in candidate shall file his or her qualifying papers during the qualifying period, and space shall be made available on the general election ballot to write in the name of the write-in candidate who has so qualified.

(4) The appearance of the name of a candidate for the office of district school board member on a ballot and the determination of election to such office shall be in accordance with the provisions applicable to candidates for the nonpartisan office of county court judge.

Section 3. The school board shall conduct its elections through the office of the supervisor of elections of Pinellas County consistent with the Florida Election Code and this act.

Section 4. In accordance with the requirements of section 101.161, Florida Statutes, and section 1 of this act, the supervisor of elections of Pinellas County shall place the title and substance of the referendum on the ballot as follows:

ELECTION OF PINELLAS COUNTY
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS
TO PROVIDE FOR SINGLE-MEMBER REPRESENTATION

Shall the membership of the Pinellas County School Board be changed to consist of seven members, with four members elected from single-member

districts rather than countywide, and three members elected from the county at large, all elected in nonpartisan elections held in conjunction with the first primary and general elections beginning with those elections held in the year 2004 and being fully implemented with those elections held in the year 2006?

Yes
No

Section 5. This act shall take effect only upon its approval by a majority vote of those qualified electors of Pinellas County voting in a referendum to be held in conjunction with the general election on November 5, 2002, in accordance with the provisions of law relating to elections currently in force, except that this section and section 1 of this act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Approved by the Governor May 29, 2001.

Filed in Office Secretary of State May 29, 2001.