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To Minnesota Legislators,

Thank you for supporting public education. You are all familiar with running successful campaigns, and I would like to share with you the perspective of school district administrators who are responsible for organizing, funding and carrying out the School Board election process.

If a school board member moves out of the district or resigns before their term is up, the School Board needs to replace that position outside of the regular election cycle. School Board are allowed to appoint a qualified replacement, but then must run a special election within a year to fill the vacancy. In order to do so, the following steps must be completed:

1. Adopt a school board resolution calling for the special election
2. Notify the county and the commissioner of education 74 days prior to the election
3. Work with the county on the creation of the ballots and make sure absentee ballots are available 46 days prior to the election
4. Adopt a school board resolution appointing election judges 25 days prior to the election
5. Publish in the official school district newspaper, the notice of the special election two weeks prior to the special election
6. Publish in the official school district newspaper, the notice of the polling locations and where the ballots will be counted one week prior to the election
7. Publish in the official school district newspaper, the notice of the testing of the optical scan systems used 2 days prior to the election
8. Adopt a school board resolution canvassing the results
9. And notify the Commissioner of Education within 15 days after the results are canvassed.

All of these steps come with about a \$10,000 price tag.

In Columbia Heights Public Schools, we just went through this process in 2023, and since we were the only item on the ballot, we footed the entire bill. The appointed candidate won their seat with an overwhelming majority. That vacancy will now expire in 2024, so the Board member will need to run again- two years in a row. In 2015 we had two special school board elections in one year.

Public schools stretch every dollar in order to provide high quality education and supports to our students. We have a responsibility to our local communities to be fiscally responsible. House File 4287, authored by Representative Virnig, makes good sense. I encourage this committee to advance the bill.

Thank you for working toward fully funding public education.

Sincerely,

Zena Stenvik, Superintendent