

March 12, 2019

Re: SB7 on "Timing of Officer Elections for Local School Boards"

Chair Sutton, Vice Chair Carpenter, Ranking Member Parker and members of the House, Elections Committee, thank you for the opportunity to address your committee in support of Senate Bill 7. I was elected to serve on the Manhattan-Ogden USD 383 Board of Education in November of 2017, the first fall election for school board members. The transition period between the election and being seated was busy, but smooth for the three new members in our district as we met with department heads, took tours of various facilities and continued to attend regular board meetings.

I am now past the one-year mark- still considered a "new" member, but honored to be serving as our vice-president since July. The timing of board officer elections became a discussion topic for our board as we approached July and the appointed time for organizational decisions. As Senator Hawk noted, there are various ideas across boards about what timing works best for each entity. In our own board, there was appreciation for the fact that July officer elections allowed for new board members to gain the competence and confidence needed to step forward for a leadership role. Although nothing would have prevented me or my fellow new members from seeking leadership roles if the re-organization had been in January, I do not know that I would have felt prepared to do so. In our situation, the delayed timing allowed me to seek leadership *earlier* than I would have with January elections.

However, I can only speak for our board and my own experience. I and other 383 board members discussed this with other board members from our region and heard many other perspectives. What works for one board may not be right for another. We heard from members that would like to move their officer elections closer to when members are seated, while others prefer the summer re-structuring. As you are all aware, the culture, policies and practices of any group can change with who is at the table and with the passage of time and gaining of experience and insight. It is entirely possible that after several cycles of fall elections that most if not all boards will have moved to January officer elections. SB 7 allows for each board to make those adjustments in a manner and timing that is natural and positive for their board. For these reasons, having flexibility and local control in the election of officers would be beneficial to the institutional health of our organizations and I hope you will support this change.

Karla Hagemeister  
Manhattan-Ogden USD 383  
Board of Education Member

