

Combining a City/School Election

Any election may be combined *if* deadlines permit ([SDCL 12-2-6](#)). The combined election is subject to approval by all of the governing bodies involved in the combined election. Start conversations early.

- Set your date for the Election! Set your date by January 14. You have 3 election date options:
 - 2nd Tuesday in April
 - 1st Tuesday after the first Monday in June
 - 3rd Tuesday in June

If combining on a date other than the second Tuesday in April, all dates follow [SDCL 13-7](#), except if combining with a Primary election you would also follow [Title 12](#). Cities and schools who combine with primary elections will have 46 days of absentee voting instead of 15 days.

- Expenses of a combined election shall be shared in a manner agreed upon by the governing bodies of the municipality and the school district.
- Have a written agreement with contingencies if one jurisdiction doesn't have an election. Sample items to include in the agreement:
 - How will you split the costs?
 - Will both jurisdictions print in the same paper and who will be responsible for the publications?
 - Who will be responsible for getting the election workers?
 - Where will voting take place? Will you have ballots for everybody at both the city and the school or will each of you handle your own?

Q&A:

Do both jurisdictions conduct their own absentee voting? Yes.

- a. You each conduct your own with just your own ballot. Voters may find this frustrating to go to separate places to absentee vote in person.
- b. You each could conduct absentee voting but have both ballots available for voters. This would mean that each jurisdiction has the other jurisdiction's registration list and that each jurisdiction remain in constant contact when a voter comes in to vote to make sure that voter hasn't already voted.

Can we share election board workers? Yes, try and get a mixed board with members of both the districts in the election. Minimum of one superintendent and two precinct deputies.

Who publishes the notices? That is between the city finance officer and the school business manager to come up with a plan and have it in a written agreement.

What if we decide to combine but then I do not have an election? This is why we highly recommend the written agreement. You need to have a plan if this happens.

Can all the candidates be listed on the same ballot? No, you will each have your own ballot. One ballot will be white and the other a contrasting color but not yellow since that is the color of sample ballots. If you use optical scan ballots you can have the city and school races on one ballot, but you may need to have different ballot styles for a voter who resides and is registered to vote in the school district but not the city or vice versa.

Do we need our own ballot stamps? Yes, you both need your own ballot stamps. The language for ballot stamps may be found here: [5:02:05:00. Official stamp for ballots -- All elections.](#)

Do we have to have separate pollbooks? No, if you only have one election board you only need one pollbook. Your election board will need to make sure they note in the pollbook which ballot(s) the voter received.

Can all the ballots be put in one ballot box? Yes, since they will be printed on different colors your counting board will be able to separate the ballots after the polls close and before counting begins.