

2011 Redistricting Instructions for School Districts

Prepared by the Office of the Iowa Secretary of State

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[sos.iowa.gov /elections/redistrictreprecinct/index.html](http://sos.iowa.gov/elections/redistrictreprecinct/index.html)



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Overview

Reprecincting and redistricting take place after every federal census. Each governing body has individual requirements which impacts other governing bodies.

School District Responsibilities

After each federal decennial census, school boards of districts divided into director districts must review the district boundaries to see whether the current boundaries comply with existing laws. School boards should use the *Iowa Code* to determine whether changes to district boundaries are necessary. In addition, school boards are authorized to change the method of election for directors or change the number of school board directors after each federal decennial census.

Each school district with director districts must file with the Secretary of State the following, even if the school board does not make any changes to the method of election and/or director district boundaries:

- School district worksheet prescribed by the Secretary of State's Office
- Director district maps
- Certification of the population of each director district
- Resolution adopting director district boundaries

[§275.23A]

Census Data

Census block data (TIGER files) can be obtained at www.census.gov.

1. On the website, next to "Geography," select TIGER. Click on "2010 TIGERLine Shapefiles Main Page."
2. Under "Download," choose "Web Interface."
3. Under "Select a layer type," choose "Blocks," then select "Submit."
4. From the "Block (2010)" drop-down menu, choose "Iowa" as the "State," then select "Submit."

Select the appropriate county and then select "Download." Save the files to your computer

Population data by census block can be obtained at the State Data Center of Iowa's website: <http://www.iowadatecenter.org/2010-block-data/2010-block-data-by-county>.

Resources

The following websites have information that will be useful in this process:

- Secretary of State's Office: www.sos.state.ia.us/elections/redistrictreprecinct/index.html
- U.S. Census Bureau: www.census.gov
- American Fact Finder: www.factfinder.census.gov
- State Data Center of Iowa: www.iowadatacenter.org
- Iowa Legislative Services Agency:
www.legis.iowa.gov/resources/redist/redistricting.aspx

Changing the Method of Election or Number of Directors

The board may adopt a resolution to change the method of election of its directors, the number of directors, and the director district boundaries (if any). The resolution must be adopted no earlier than November 15, 2011, and no later than May 15, 2012.

[§275.23A(2)]

Method of Election

School boards may choose from five different methods of election for directors:

1. All directors elected at-large by entire school district.
2. School district is divided into single director or multi-director districts. Directors are elected at-large but directors must live in the single or multi-director districts.
3. School district is divided into single director or multi-director districts. No more than one-half of the directors are elected at-large; remaining directors are elected at-large but must live in the single or multi-director district.
4. School district is divided into single director or multi-director districts. Directors are elected by director district and directors must live in the director district.
5. School district has seven directors. Three directors are elected at-large, with no more than two elected at each regular school election. Four directors must live in the director district and are elected by director district, with no more than two elected at each regular school election.

The board must adopt the method of election by resolution after holding a public hearing.

[§275.12(2), 275.23A(2)]

Number of Board Directors

School boards may change the number of directors to either five or seven. The board must adopt the change by resolution after holding a public hearing.

If the board decides to reduce the number of directors to five, the resolution must include a plan for reducing the number of directors. See §275.37A for details about how the reduction must occur.

If the board decides to increase the number of directors to seven, the change will be effective at the 2013 regular school election where two additional directors will be elected. One of the new directors will receive a two year term and the other director will receive a four year term. Details about how that decision is made appear on the next page.

[§275.23A(2)]

- Directors elected at-large

At its first regular meeting after the canvass of votes for the 2013 regular school election, the board must assign either one or two of the newly elected directors who received the fewest votes at the election a two-year term so at least one-half of the board will be elected biennially.

- Directors elected by district

At its first regular meeting after the canvass of votes for the 2013 regular school election, the board must assign terms that will be appropriate for the method of election used by the district.

[§275.37]

Petitioning for a Special Election

If the board changed the method of election and/or the number of directors, eligible electors of the school district may petition for a special election to approve or disapprove of the board's actions. The petition must be filed with the board's secretary and meet the following requirements:

- Filed by the 28th day following the board's action
- Contain a minimum of 30 percent of the total number of voters at the last regular school election or 100, whichever is greater

When a petition is filed, the board may either rescind its action or direct the county auditor to submit the question at a special election held on one of the dates listed in §39.2(4).

If a petition is not filed, the board must certify its action to the Department of Management and may continue its plan to change the method of election and/or number of directors.

[§275.23A(2)]

Approval at Special Election

If the plan is approved at a special election, the board must certify the election results to the Department of Management. The board must also draw the director district boundaries (if applicable) within 40 days of the date of the election. See page 5 for director district boundary requirements.

Disapproval at Special Election

If the voters do not approve the plan at the special election, the board cannot change the method of election and/or the number of directors.

[§275.23A(2)]

Drawing Director District Boundaries

Director District Requirements

All director districts in school districts must meet the following standards:

- Follow census block boundaries [§275.23A(1)(a)]
- Follow precinct boundaries [§275.23A(1)(a)]
- Meet ideal director district population standard

District populations must be as close as possible to the ideal population of a district. To find the ideal population, divide the total population of the school district by the number director districts.

Where the deviation from the ideal population is absolutely necessary, the maximum allowable variation between districts is ten percent. Plans with variations exceeding that limit must include a justification that deviation is necessary to comply with the other legal requirements set forth in §275.23A and are highly likely to be rejected by the Secretary of State.

[§275.23A(1)(b), IAC 721—21.31(275)]

Best Practice: Use the “School Redistricting Worksheet” to calculate the ideal director district population.

- Composed of contiguous territory and be drawn as compact as possible

Exception: If the district is composed of marginally adjacent territory, the districts must be composed of contiguous territory to the extent practicable.

[§275.23A(1)(c)]

- Cannot divide cities

A city cannot be divided into director districts unless the population of the portion of the city that is within the school district is greater than the ideal district population. If so, the city must be divided into the smallest number of districts as possible.

[§275.23A(1)(e)]

The following items cannot be taken into consideration when drawing district boundaries:

- Addresses of incumbents
- Political affiliations of registered voters
- Past election results
- Other demographic information beyond census head counts

[§275.23A(1)(d)]

Adopted by Resolution

The board must define the director district boundaries by resolution. The resolution must be adopted no earlier than November 15, 2011, and no later than May 15, 2012.

[§275.23A(2)]

Director District Population Certification

Complete the director district population certification in the “School Redistricting Worksheet” after the director district boundaries have been drawn. The certification must be signed by the school board president. Send the certification to the Secretary of State. For the list of items that must be sent to the Secretary of State, see page 7.

Important Note: The total population of all districts included in your certification must be the same as the population of the school district listed by the census bureau.

Final Plan Submission

Submission Deadline

The school board must submit the final director district boundary plan (if applicable) to the Secretary of State's Office for approval no earlier than November 15, 2011, and no later than May 15, 2012. The plan may be submitted by mail or electronically.

[§275.23A(2), 275.23A(3)]

SOS Review

The Secretary of State's Office will make every effort to review plans within two weeks after submission. School districts are encouraged to submit their plans early, allowing time to make corrections to the plans if necessary. Any plans that are not approved on or before May 15, 2012 that are determined to need corrections will be corrected by the Secretary of State's Office and school districts will be assessed the costs of making those corrections.

[§275.23A(3)]

What to Send

All school boards must send the following to the Secretary of State's Office, even if the method of election and/or director districts did not change:

- Original "School Redistricting Worksheet"
 - This includes the director district population certification (if applicable). The certification must be signed by the school board president.
- Map showing the director district boundaries (if applicable)
- Legal description of director district boundaries (if applicable)
- Resolution describing the method of election (if changed), number of directors (if changed), and director district boundaries (if changed)

The resolution must include the date it was adopted.

Best Practice: Keep a copy of the materials submitted to the Secretary of State for your own records.

If the Secretary of State's Office determines a school board failed to make the required changes by May 15, 2012, the Secretary of State's Office must make or ensure the necessary changes are made. The school district will be assessed the cost to make the changes.

[§275.23A(3)]

Where to Send

Electronic files may be submitted. Please revisit the Secretary of State's website at www.sos.state.ia.us for an electronic submission link beginning no later than July 1, 2011.

If mailing hard copies, send all materials to the following address:

Elections Division- Reprecincting
Iowa Secretary of State's Office
Lucas Building, First Floor
321 E. 12th Street
Des Moines, IA 50319

After Approval

Once approved by the Secretary of State, a copy of the plan must also be filed with the county auditor and the area education agency administrator.

Any director district boundary changes made will take effect July 1, 2012.

If more than one incumbent director resides in a redrawn director district, the terms of office for those directors will expire at the first regular meeting of the board after the canvass of votes for the 2013 regular school election and that seat will need to appear on the ballot in 2013.

[§275.23A(2), 275.23A(3)]

Important Dates

Date	Event	Code Cite
April 1, 2011	Congressional and Legislative Redistricting Plan Delivered. Deadline for the Legislative Services Agency (LSA) to deliver its first plan for congressional and legislative redistricting to the secretary of the senate and chief clerk of the house.	§42.3
May 15, 2011	Temporary County Redistricting Commission Established. Deadline to establish a temporary county redistricting commission in counties that have plan two or plan three supervisor representation plans.	§331.210A
September 1, 2011	City Precinct Boundary Changes Completed. City councils must complete any changes in precinct and ward boundaries no later than 60 days after legislative districts have become law or by September 1, whichever is later. Deadline for General Assembly to Pass Congressional and Legislative Boundaries. The General Assembly must pass plan establishing new congressional and legislative district boundaries by this day.	§49.7 Iowa Constitution, Article III, Sec. 35
October 15, 2011	County Precinct Boundary and Supervisor District Boundary Changes Completed. County boards of supervisors or temporary county redistricting commissions must complete any changes in precinct and supervisor district boundaries no later than 90 days after legislative district have become law or by October 15, whichever is later.	§49.7
November 15, 2011	Adoption of School Director District Plans Begins. First day school board may adopt resolution redrawing director district boundaries.	§275.23A
January 15, 2012	City and County Precinct Boundaries Effective. City and county precinct boundaries are effective for elections held after this date.	§49.7
May 15, 2012	Adoption Deadline for School Director District Plans. Deadline for school board to adopt resolutions redrawing director district boundaries.	§275.23A
July 1, 2012	School Director District Boundaries Effective. School director district boundaries are effective for elections held after this date.	§275.23A(5)
October 7, 2012	Precinct Boundary Publication Deadline. Last day to publish the third in a series of notices of changes in precinct boundaries. Publication is not required if no changes were made.	§49.11(a)
June 1, 2013	Community College Director District Boundary Changes Completed. Community college board must complete any changes to director district boundaries no later than June 1, 2013.	§260C.13