

2022 Redistricting Instructions for School Districts

Prepared by the Office of the Iowa Secretary of State

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<https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/redistrictandrepincinct.html>

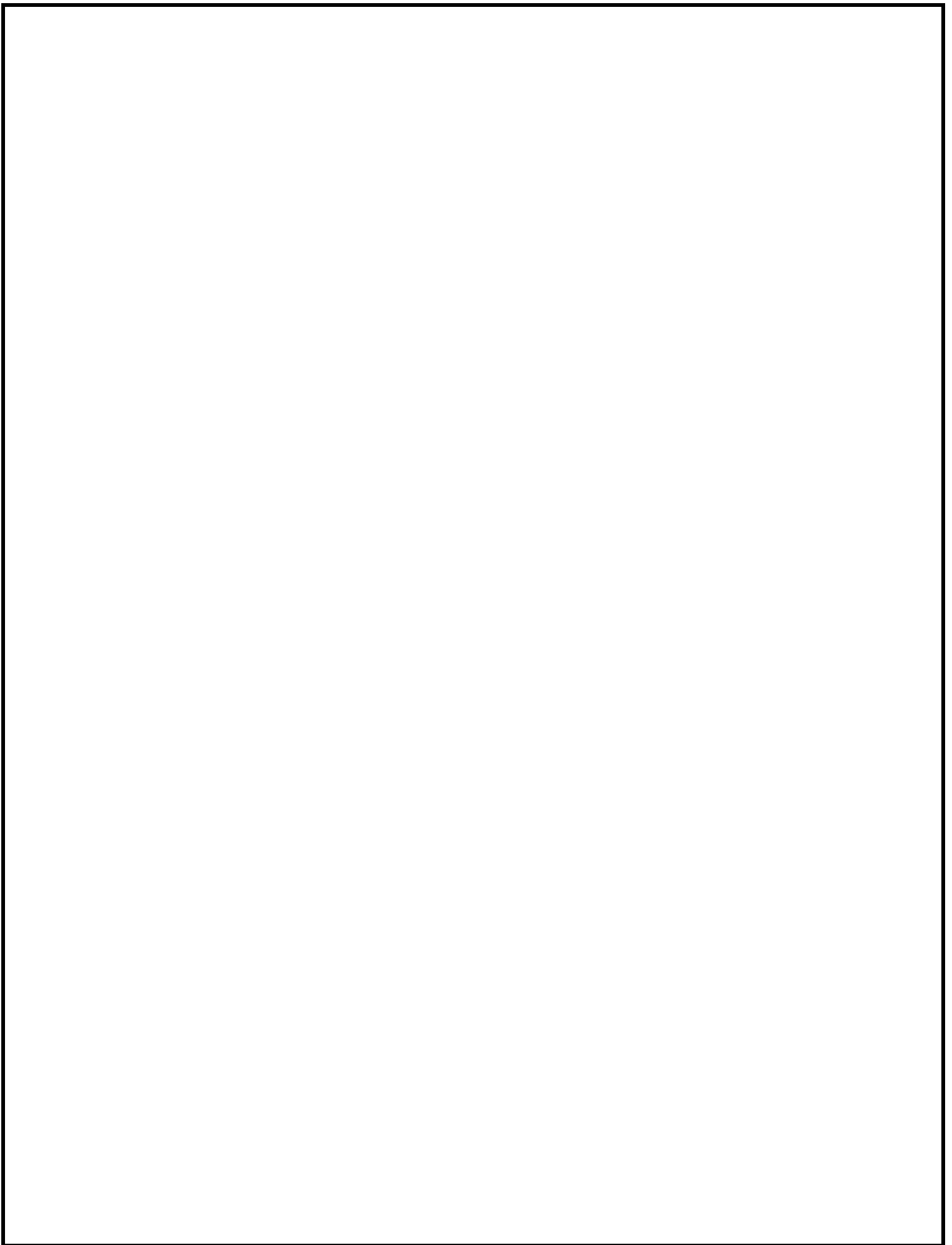
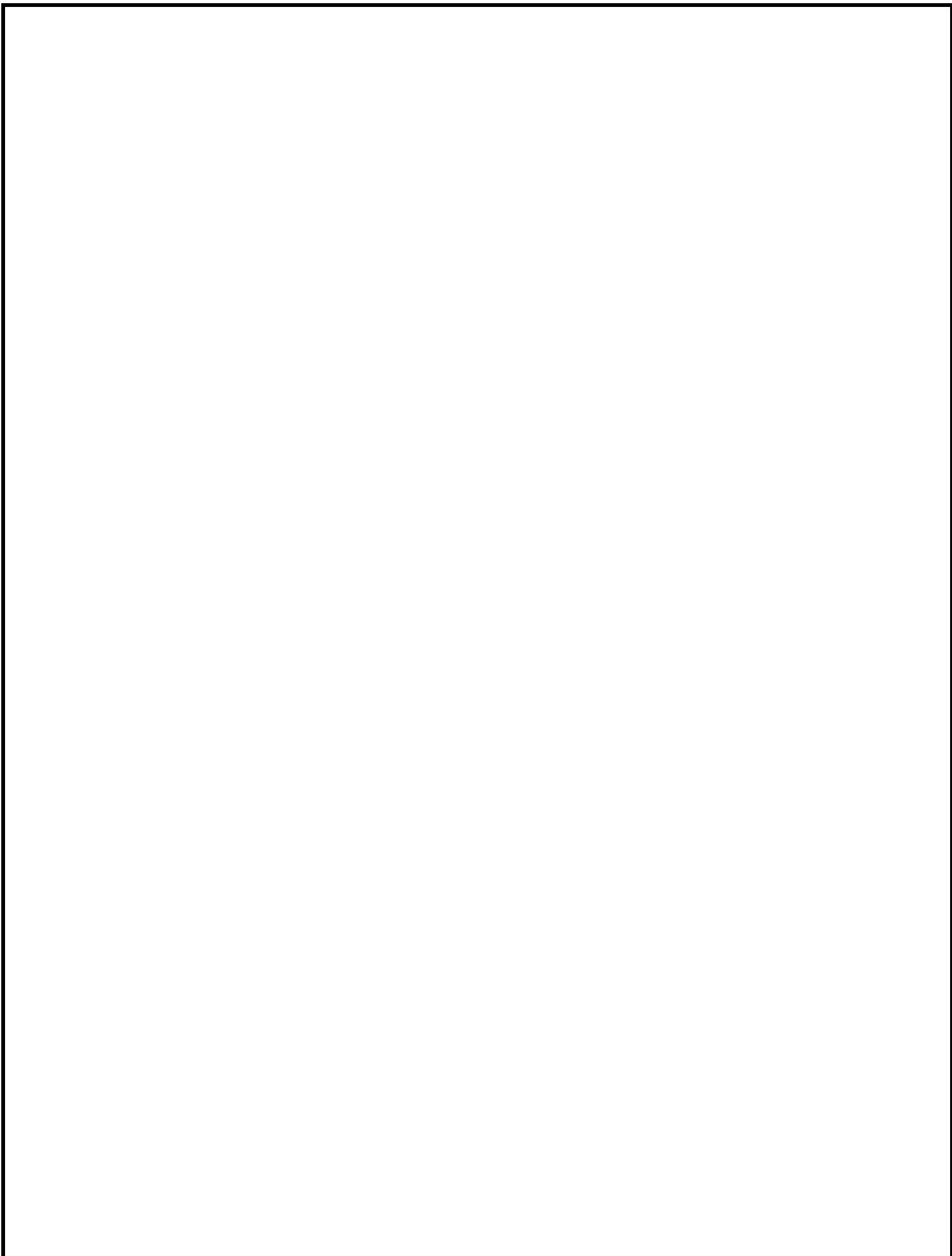


Table of Contents

Overview	1
School District Responsibilities.....	1
Census Data	2
Resources.....	2
Changing the Method of Election or Number of Directors	3
Method of Election.....	3
Number of Board Directors	3
Petitioning for a Special Election	4
Approval at Special Election	4
Disapproval at Special Election.....	4
Drawing Director District Boundaries.....	5
Director District Requirements.....	5
Adopted by Resolution.....	6
Director District Population Certification.....	6
Final Plan Submission	7
Submission Deadline.....	7
What to Send	7
Where to Send	8
After Approval	8
Important Dates	9



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 current laws. Use the *Iowa Code* to determine whether changes are necessary. Applicable code sections are listed throughout these instructions. Additionally, 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 the following information with the Secretary of State (SOS) even if the school board does not make any changes to the method of election and/or director district boundaries:

- Director District Map as GIS shapefile or block equivalency file
- School Redistricting Worksheet
- Certification of the population of each director district (included as part of the Worksheet)
- Resolution describing director district boundaries

[\[§275.23A\]](#)

Upon receipt of a school's submission, the SOS will review it for compliance and contact the Point of Contact designated by the school on the redistricting worksheet to communicate approval or changes required.

Throughout the redistricting timeline, please email your questions and assistance requests to precinct.plan@sos.iowa.gov. It is imperative that you use that email address.

The SOS purchased the ESRI Redistricting Solution and is providing it at no cost to schools, counties, and cities. If your school chooses to use it:

- Your school will be set up as a separate group.
- The Point of Contact (POC) you provide will receive an initial email from redistricting@esri.com with their username and password.
- Users will access this Solution at <https://redistricting.iowa.gov/redistricting/>.
- Esri training materials are available on the SOS website at <https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/redistrictandprecinct.html>. **No live training is provided.**

Census Data

If you are using the Redistricting Solution provided by SOS, you do not need to worry about loading census block data. 2020 census block data already has been loaded into the Solution.

If you are using another mapping solution and need to load census block data, the TIGER files can be obtained at www.census.gov.

1. On the website, under “Browse By Topic” select “Geography”. Click on “TIGER/Line Shapefiles”.
2. Under “Download,” choose “Web Interface.”
3. Under “Select a layer type,” choose “Blocks,” then select “Submit.”
4. From the “Block (2020)” drop-down menu, choose “Iowa” as the “State” and then select “Download.”

Resources

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

- Secretary of State <https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/redistrictandprecinct.html>
- U.S. Census Bureau www.census.gov <https://data.census.gov/>
- State Data Center of Iowa www.iowadatacenter.org
- Legislative Services Agency <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/redistricting>

Changing the Method of Election or Number of Directors

The school 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, 2022, and no later than May 15, 2023.

[\[§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 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 are elected by director district and must live in the 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 2023 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 2023 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 2023 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 school board's secretary and meet the following requirements:

- Filed by the 28th day following the board's action
- Signed by a minimum of 100 eligible electors or 30 percent of the total number of voters at the last regular school election, 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\(4\)\(c\)](#).

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 also must draw the director district boundaries (if applicable) within 40 days of the date of the election. See page 5 for director district boundary requirements.

[\[§§ 275.23A\(2\), 275.35, 275.36\]](#)

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, wherever possible [\[§275.23A\(1\)\(a\)\]](#)
- 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 shall not be divided into two or more director districts unless the population of that portion of the city within the school district is greater than the ideal size of a director district. Cities shall be divided into the smallest possible number of director districts.

[\[§275.23A\(1\)\(e\)\]](#)

- Ideal Director District Population

District populations must be as close as possible to the ideal population of a district unless it is necessary to deviate in order to comply with other standards in [§275.23A](#).

Divide the total population of the school district by the number of director districts.

- Maximum Allowable Variation

The Maximum Allowable Variation is the largest variation allowed between the population of director districts and the Ideal District Population.

Multiply the Ideal District Population by 0.10.

Important Note: Where the deviation from the Ideal Director District Population is necessary, the **Maximum** Allowable Variation between districts is ten percent (10%). 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 SOS.

[\[§275.23A\(1\)\(b\), IAC 721—21.31\(275\)\]](#)

Best Practice: Use the School Redistricting Worksheet to calculate the numbers above.

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

- Addresses of incumbent officeholders
- Political affiliations of registered voters
- Previous election results
- Demographic information other than population head counts

[\[§275.23A\(1\)\(d\)\]](#)

Adopted by Resolution

The board must define and describe the director district boundaries by resolution. The resolution must be adopted no earlier than November 15, 2022, and no later than May 15, 2023.

[\[§275.23A\(2\)\]](#)

Director District Population Certification

Complete the Director District Population Certification on the School Redistricting Worksheet after the director district boundaries have been drawn. **The certification must be signed by the school board president. Send the original with wet ink signature to the SOS.** See page 7 for the complete list of items that must be sent to SOS.

[\[§275.23A\(3\)\]](#)

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 U.S. Census Bureau.

Final Plan Submission

Submission Deadline

Finalized district boundary plans must be submitted electronically as either a GIS shapefile or block equivalency file to SOS no later than May 15, 2023.

[\[§275.23A\(2\), 275.23A\(3\)\]](#)

SOS Review

School districts are encouraged to submit plans early allowing time to make corrections if necessary. Any plans that are not approved by May 15, 2023, that are determined to need corrections will be corrected by SOS, 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 SOS even if the method of election and/or director districts did not change:

- A map showing the district boundaries (if applicable).

The map must be submitted as a GIS shapefile or block equivalency file.

- Original School Redistricting Worksheet

This includes the Director District Population Certification and must be signed by the school board president. **Original with wet ink signature is required to be submitted.**

- Resolution describing
 - method of election (if changed)
 - number of directors (if changed)
 - director district boundaries—even if no changes

The resolution must include the date it was adopted and the district names or numbers. Descriptions of the district boundaries should name specific landmarks such as roads and city or county boundaries. Do not use township range or section numbers of housing subdivision names in the descriptions.

Best Practice: Retain a copy of the materials you submit to SOS for your own records.

If the SOS determines a school board failed to make the required changes by May 15, 2023, the SOS 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

Map

District boundary maps must be submitted as a GIS shapefile or block equivalency file.

- If you are using the Redistricting Solution provided by SOS, you'll submit your map through that application. Use the follow naming convention:

The word "School"_School Name_Type of Map

Example: School_Interstate 35_Director District Map ← if director districts

Example: School_Interstate 35_District Map ← if all at-large

- If you are using other mapping software, email map files to precinct.plan@sos.iowa.gov. In the subject header, include your school district name and which file is being sent.
Example: Interstate 35_Director District Map ← if director districts
Example: Interstate 35_District Map ← if all at-large

Director District Worksheet

Since the original Director District Population Certification with wet ink signature must be submitted, mail the School Redistricting Worksheet to:

Elections Division—Redistricting
Iowa Secretary of State
Lucas Building, First Floor
321 E. 12th Street
Des Moines, IA 50319

The remaining required documents may be emailed to precinct.plan@sos.iowa.gov. Alternatively, you may mail them with the School Redistricting Worksheet to the above address.

After Approval

Send a copy of your approved map and resolution to the county auditor's office. If the school district lies in more than one county, send copies to the county auditor in each county.

Any director district boundary changes made will take effect July 1, 2023.

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 2023 regular school election, and that seat will need to appear on the ballot in 2023.

[\[§§275.23A\(2\), 275.23A\(3\)\]](#)

Important Dates

Date	Event	Code Cite
April 1, 2021	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(1)(a)
May 15, 2021	Temporary County Redistricting Commission Established Deadline to establish a temporary county redistricting commission in counties that have Plan 2 or Plan 3 supervisor representation plans.	§331.210A(1)(a)
September 1, 2021	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.	§49.7(2)(a)
	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 date.	Iowa Constitution Article III Sec. 35
October 15, 2021	County Precinct 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 districts have become law or by October 15, whichever is later.	§49.7(2)(b)
January 15, 2022	City and County Precinct Boundaries Effective City and county precinct boundaries are effective for elections held after this date.	§49.7(5)
October 9, 2022	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(2)
November 15, 2022	Adoption of School Director District Plans Begins First day school boards may adopt resolution redrawing director district boundaries.	§275.23A(2)
May 15, 2023	Adoption Deadline for School Director District Plans Deadline for school boards to adopt resolution redrawing director district boundaries.	§275.23A(2)
July 1, 2023	School Director District Boundaries Effective School director district boundaries are effective for elections held after this date.	§275.23A(5)
August 1, 2023	Community College Director District Boundary Changes Completed Community college boards must complete any changes to director district boundaries no later than August 1, 2023.	§260C.13(1)