



HOUSE BILL 174: W-S/Forsyth Bd. of Ed./Rural Hall Even-Year.

2023-2024 General Assembly

Committee: Senate Rules and Operations of the Senate	Date: June 1, 2023
Introduced by: Rep. Lambeth	Prepared by: Jessica Sammons
Analysis of: Fourth Edition	Staff Attorney

OVERVIEW: *House Bill 174 would do the following:*

- *Create staggered terms of office for members of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth Board of Education, beginning with the election held in 2026.*
- *Changes the regular municipal election cycle from odd-numbered years to even-numbered years for the Town of Rural Hall, with the election conducted using the nonpartisan primary and election method, beginning in 2026.*

Section 1 – Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Board of Education:

CURRENT LAW: The Winston-Salem/Forsyth Board of Education (Board) consists of nine members, elected to four-year terms of office on a partisan basis in even-numbered years from a combination of electoral districts and at-large seats. Two members are elected from District 1, four members are elected from District 2, and three members are elected from the county at-large. For the district seats, only qualified voters of the district are eligible to be candidates and only qualified voters of the district are eligible to vote. For the at-large seats, any qualified voter of the county is eligible to be a candidate and all qualified voters of the county are eligible to vote.

All members of the Board are elected in the same election at the time of the general election of other county officers. Vacancies are filled by the remaining members of the Board, with the appointee serving for the unexpired term of the vacating member. Members of the Board were last elected in 2022, with terms expiring in 2026.

BILL ANALYSIS: The bill would create staggered terms of office for members of the Board, beginning with the 2026 election, as follows:

- District 1: Two members would be elected in 2026. The person receiving the highest number of votes would serve a four-year term of office. The person receiving the next highest number of votes would serve a two-year term of office.
- District 2: Four members would be elected in 2026. The two persons receiving the first and second highest number of votes would serve a four-year term of office. The two persons receiving the third and fourth highest number of votes would serve a two-year term of office.
- At-large: Three members would be elected in 2026. The two persons receiving the first and second highest number of votes would serve a four-year term of office. The person receiving the third highest number of votes would serve a two-year term of office.

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In subsequent elections, all members would be elected to a four-year term of office. The bill would not affect the terms of office for those elected in 2022 or appointed to fill a vacancy for a term beginning in 2022.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Effective when it becomes law and applies to elections held in 2026 and thereafter.

Section 2 – Town of Rural Hall Municipal Elections:

CURRENT LAW: Generally, municipal elections are held in odd-numbered years. The Town of Rural Hall conducts municipal elections in odd-numbered years, held on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November. Elections are conducted using the nonpartisan plurality method. G.S. 163-279(a)(1) and G.S. 163-292.

The Charter of the Town of Rural Hall provides that officers for the Town consist of a mayor and four council members, elected by the Town at-large for staggered four-year terms. Terms of office for both the mayor and council members begin on the first Monday in December following their election.

BILL ANALYSIS: The bill would amend the Charter of the Town of Rural Hall to provide for regular municipal elections to be held in even-numbered years, beginning in 2026. Elections held in 2026 and thereafter would be conducted using the nonpartisan primary and election method. G.S. 163-294.

To implement the change to municipal elections held in even-numbered years, town officers elected in municipal elections held in 2023 and 2025 would serve for a three-year term of office.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Effective when it becomes law and applies to elections held on or after that date.