



This Bill Analysis reflects the contents of the bill as it was presented in committee.

# HOUSE BILL 66: Catawba/Newton-Conover/Hickory Bd of Ed Elect.

2023-2024 General Assembly

**Committee:** Senate Redistricting and Elections. If **Date:** May 10, 2023  
favorable, re-refer to Rules and Operations of  
the Senate

**Introduced by:** Reps. Adams, Setzer **Prepared by:** Jessica Sammons  
**Analysis of:** Third Edition Staff Attorney

**OVERVIEW:** House Bill 66 would change the election method for the Catawba County Board of Education, Hickory City Board of Education, and Newton-Conover City Board of Education (Board) from nonpartisan to partisan and alter the process for filling vacancies on these Boards, beginning in 2024.

[As introduced, this bill was identical to S72, as introduced by Sen. Proctor, which is currently in Senate Redistricting and Elections.]

### CURRENT LAW:

**Catawba County Board of Education:** The Catawba County Board of Education consists of seven members elected for staggered four-year terms. Members are elected at-large by Catawba County qualified voters residing outside the Hickory Administrative School Unit and the Newton-Conover Administrative School Unit boundaries. Elections are held in even-numbered years using the nonpartisan plurality method. G.S. 163-292. Elections are held on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November. G.S. 163-279. Members take office on the first Monday in December following their election. G.S. 115C-37(d).

Vacancies are filled by the remaining Catawba County Board of Education members, with the appointee serving until the next election of Board members, at which time the remaining unexpired term will be filled by election. G.S. 115C-37(f).

**Hickory City Board of Education:** The Hickory City Board of Education consists of seven members elected for staggered four-year terms. One member is elected from each of the six wards by qualified voters of the ward. One member is elected at-large by qualified voters of the entire Hickory Administrative School Unit. Elections are held in odd-numbered years using the nonpartisan plurality method. G.S. 163-292. Elections are held on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November. G.S. 163-279. Members take office on the first Monday in December following their election. G.S. 115C-37(d).

Vacancies are filled by the remaining Hickory City Board of Education members. If the vacancy occurs during the first two years of the term, the appointee serves until the next election of Board members, at which time the remaining unexpired term will be filled by election. If the vacancy occurs during the last two years of the term, the appointee serves for the remainder of the unexpired term.

**Newton-Conover City Board of Education:** The Newton-Conover City Board of Education consists of six members elected for staggered four-year terms. Three members are elected to represent the Newton district, and three members are elected to represent the Conover district. Elections are held in odd-numbered years using the nonpartisan plurality method. G.S. 163-292. Elections are held on the

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Tuesday after the first Monday in November. G.S. 163-279. Members take office on the first Monday in December following their election. G.S. 115C-37(d).

Vacancies are filled by the remaining Newton-Conover City Board of Education members.

**BILL ANALYSIS and EFFECTIVE DATE:** The bill would do the following:

- Beginning in 2024, provide that members of the Catawba County Board of Education, the Hickory City Board of Education, and the Newton-Conover City Board of Education would be elected on a partisan basis.
- Beginning in 2024, provide that members of the Hickory City Board of Education and the Newton-Conover City Board of Education would be elected in even-numbered years. Candidates would be nominated and elected at the same time and in the same manner as other county officers. To implement the change to even-numbered year elections, the terms of all current members on the Hickory City Board of Education and the Newton-Conover City Board of Education would be extended by one year. Elections for members on these Boards would next occur in 2024, rather than in 2023.
- Beginning in 2024, provide that vacancies for positions on the Catawba County Board of Education, the Hickory City Board of Education, and the Newton-Conover City Board of Education elected on a partisan basis would be filled by the remaining Board members, provided the Board consults the relevant political party's local executive committee before filling a vacancy and appoints the local executive committee's nominee, if both of the following apply:
  - The recommendation is made within 30 days after the seat becomes vacant.
  - The county executive committee restricts voting to committee members who represent precincts wholly or partly within the appropriate territory.