



STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office of Governor Tim Pawlenty

130 State Capitol ♦ 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155

March 27, 2008

The Honorable Senator James Metzen
President of the Senate
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
322 State Capitol
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear President Metzen:

I have vetoed and am returning Senate File 457, Chapter 163. This bill mandates single-member school board election districts for the election of school board members for Bloomington Independent School District No. 271. This bill overrides current law which allows these decisions to be made at the local level.

This bill provides a legislative solution that was not requested by the Bloomington community or school board. It is also unnecessary because a petition process already exists in state law for community members to seek division of a school district into election districts. The existing petition process is not overly burdensome and provides a relatively simple means for local community members to pursue this option if this is how the community wants to elect school board members. This bill removes local control and authority from the hands of the Bloomington school district voters. I am also concerned that this bill is directed only at Bloomington and invites a piecemeal approach to legislation addressing school district elections.

This bill is opposed by a majority of the Bloomington school board. There is also little evidence that the changes imposed by this bill reflect the desires of the Bloomington voters. In fact, a public opinion poll conducted before the November 2007 school board election indicated strong support for the Bloomington school district and its school board.

Sen. James Metzen

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While I signed similar legislation for the Minneapolis Public Schools, this situation is different. Although two members of the Minneapolis Board of Education opposed the legislation, a majority of the Board did not take a position on the bill. The Minneapolis bill was also supported by the entire Minneapolis legislative delegation. In this case, some members of the Bloomington legislative delegation and a majority of the Bloomington school board members oppose this legislation.

This bill may also create unanticipated costs for the Bloomington school district. If a special election were to be required to fill board vacancies, as is possible under this bill, no additional funds are provided to the school district for this purpose. The Bloomington school district would be required to fund the costs of a special election from their existing general fund revenues.

Current law provides a process for Bloomington voters to choose to elect school board members from designated election districts. A state usurpation of this type of local decision is not warranted.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Pawlenty', written in a cursive style.

Tim Pawlenty
Governor

cc: Senator Lawrence J. Pogemiller, Majority Leader
Senator David Senjem, Minority Leader
Senator Dan Larson
Representative Margaret Anderson Kelliher, Speaker of the House
Representative Marty Seifert, Minority Leader
Representative Ann Lenczewski
Mr. Patrick E. Flahaven, Secretary of the Senate
Mr. Al Mathiowetz, Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives
Mr. Mark Ritchie, Secretary of State