

Item Title: Memorandum of Understanding Regarding the Use of Schools as Voting Sites

Specific Action Requested:

That the Board of Commissioners approves the Memorandum of Understanding Between Wake County and the Wake County Public School System for the use of schools as voting sites.

Item Summary:

Purpose: The Board of Commissioners approves all Memoranda of Understanding with other governmental entities. In this case, staff are recommending approval of a MOU between Wake County government and the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS).

Background: State statutes charge the Wake County Board of Elections (BOE) with the responsibility to conduct all elections within the County. The BOE is a part of County government but independently administers elections with guidance from the State Board of Elections. The Board of Commissioners is charged with funding the BOE's operations.

A constant element of running elections is finding polling sites. The BOE and WCPSS have a long partnership identifying and using school facilities for election day polling. Though, specific administrative details, such as fees charged and accessibility times, have varied from school to school. Staff from both organizations concluded that a formal agreement would be beneficial. Staff have jointly drafted this MOU to clarify roles and responsibilities, access granted to BOE, fees charged, and other logistical elements of election administration. County staff recommend approval.

Strategic Plan: This action supports standard County operations.

Fiscal Impact: This action has no specific financial impact. The MOU establishes a consistent fee structure to be paid to WCPSS when a school is used. Staff estimate no substantive change in overall cost.

Additional Information:

During the 2024 general election, 88 school facilities were used for polling. BOE staff expect to use roughly the same number in the 2026 primary.

To date, school facilities have only been used for Election Day polling. Schools have not been used for early voting. While State statute authorizes counties to use school facilities for all election and voting needs, this agreement does not address logistical or financial aspects related to early voting. Staff from both organizations have agreed to address that at a later date should the BOE make such a future request.

Attachments:

1. Memorandum of Understanding