

School Board Membership Proportionality

“One person, one vote.” The Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment guarantees proportional representation in voting. This right extends to the election of local school officials who exercise general governmental powers.

3 Types of Proportional Representation

Proportional-by-Town Model

- Proportionality is achieved at the town level by ensuring the number of seats apportioned to each town is closely proportional to the town’s population
- Apportionment: Articles of Agreement set out a specific number of board seats for each town within the union school district, based on the most recent decennial census.
 - Votes can be weighted to achieve proportionality
- Residence: Board Member must reside in town to which seat is apportioned
- Nominating Petition: Only voters of town to which seat is apportioned can sign
- Election: Only voters of town can vote on candidates for their town’s apportioned seats

Modified At-Large Model

- Proportionality is achieved by voting at the district-level
- Apportionment: Articles of Agreement apportion a specified number of board seats to each town within the union school district, based on any agreed upon method
- Residence: Board Member must reside in town to which seat is apportioned
- Nominating Petition: Petition can be signed by either 1) voters of town to which the seat is apportioned OR 2) Articles of Agreement can provide otherwise
- Election: ALL voters in the district vote on all seats

At-Large Model

- Proportionality is achieved by voting at the district-level
- Apportionment: No seats are apportioned to specific towns within the district
- Residence: Board Members can reside anywhere within the district
- Nominating Petition: Petition can be signed by any voter in the district
- Election: ALL voters in the district vote on all seats