

February 12, 2024

To: School District Clerks and/or Town Clerks
From: Vermont Secretary of State, Vermont School Boards Association, and Vermont Superintendents Association
Re: Memo for School District Clerks/Town Clerks related to the changes proposed in H.850 (An act relating to transitioning education financing to the new system for pupil weighting)

Dear School District Clerks/Town Clerks,

We understand that you already have printed, live, and/or voted ballots. If your school districts vote to move the vote on its budget article(s) or the entire meeting, please follow this guidance:

1. If you have already sent ballots to some of the voters:

- a. *And your district only canceled the budget article(s):*
 - i. Ignore the budget vote article as you process the results for those ballots; and,
 - ii. Do not report those results.

You do not need to reprint ballots that omit the canceled budget article.

- b. *And if your district canceled its entire meeting, including the budget-related article(s):*
 - i. You should not process the ballot when it is returned; and,
 - ii. Do not report any results.

You will need to reprint ballots when you receive the new date and Warning.

2. If your ballots have been printed, but not sent to voters:

- a. *And your district only canceled the budget article(s):*
 - i. You can manually edit the ballot to omit the budget article(s), or you can reprint the ballots.
 - 1. If you manually edit:
 - a. We suggest blacking out/striking through the budget article language and including the word “postponed.”
 - b. Be very careful NOT to mark within the oval. This could lead to ballots being rejected for an ambiguous mark.
 - c. Include, if possible, a notice that the vote on the budget article has been canceled and will be rescheduled later in the spring and include the new date if you have it.

- d. If those ballots are returned with the budget article voted, despite being crossed out, you simply ignore those votes on the budget article when processing results, as stated above.
 - e. The process is the same for hand count towns and tabulator towns.
 - 2. ***If you choose to reprint ballots:***
 - a. If you use a tabulator you may need to reprogram the tabulator.
 - b. In the case of a reprint, all costs associated with doing so will be covered by the reimbursement process.
 - b. *And your district canceled the entire meeting:*
 - i. You will not send out a ballot for the school district.
 - ii. Consider talking to your district about what notice could be included in your mailing of other ballots to voters.
- 3. **If your ballots have not yet been printed:** simply omit the budget article before printing the ballots. When you receive the new warning, prepare the ballot, and all costs associated with doing so will be covered.
- 4. **For any ballots you intend to use for in-person voting at the polling place that have already been printed:**
 - a. Either striking out/blacking out the budget article with an indication it has been postponed, or having those ballots reprinted with the budget article omitted.
 - b. We recommend that all voters receive the same form of ballot; therefore, how you treat early ballots (manually editing or reprinting) is the same way ballots at the polling place should be treated.
- 5. **Mandatory mailing of ballots to voters who requested them for the March 5th meeting:** H.850 directs that any voter who requested an early/absentee ballot for the March 5 annual meeting of the school district should be sent a ballot for the rescheduled vote on the budget article, without making an additional request.
- 6. **Floor votes:** If your community holds a floor vote on the school budget, that could be moved to another date. The Warning would be revised by your school board to reflect the cancellation of the budget-related article(s) or the entire meeting. A new Warning would be issued by the school district with a new date for a floor vote. If your district wants to change the budget itself on the floor at the annual meeting, that change can be done without moving the date of the annual meeting.

Thank you. If you have questions related to the guidance, please contact the Secretary of State's Office.