

CHAPTER 275

REORGANIZATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Referred to in §257.18, 257.29, 257.31, 257.33, 274.3, 279.15, 298.2, 300.2

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SUBCHAPTER II

DISSOLUTION OF DISTRICTS

SUBCHAPTER I

GENERAL PROVISIONS

275.1 Definitions — declaration of policy — surveys.

1. As used in [this chapter](#), unless the context otherwise requires:
 - a. “*Eligible elector*” means eligible elector as defined in [section 39.3, subsection 6](#).
 - b. “*Initial board*” means the board of a newly reorganized district that is selected pursuant to [section 275.25](#) or [275.41](#) and functions until the organizational meeting following the second regular school election held after the effective date of the reorganization.
 - c. “*Joint districts*” means districts that lie in two or more adjacent area education agencies.
 - d. “*Marginally adjacent district*” or “*marginally adjacent territory*” means a district or territory which is separated from a second district or territory by property which is part of a third school district which completely surrounds one of the two districts.
 - e. “*Registered voter*” means registered voter as defined in [section 39.3, subsection 11](#).
 - f. “*Regular board*” means the board of a reorganized district that begins to function at the

organizational meeting following the second regular school election held after the effective date of the school reorganization, and is comprised of members who were elected to the current terms or were appointed to replace members who were elected.

g. “*School districts affected*” means the school districts named in the reorganization petition whether a school district is affected in whole or in part.

2. It is the policy of the state to encourage economical and efficient school districts which will ensure an equal educational opportunity to all children of the state. All areas of the state shall be in school districts maintaining kindergarten and twelve grades. If a school district ceases to maintain kindergarten and twelve grades except as otherwise provided in [section 28E.9](#), [256.13](#), [280.15](#), [282.7](#), [subsection 1 or 3](#), or [section 282.8](#), it shall reorganize within six months or the state board shall attach the school district not maintaining kindergarten and twelve grades to one or more adjacent districts. Voluntary reorganizations under [this chapter](#) shall be commenced only if the affected school districts are contiguous or marginally adjacent to one another. A reorganized district shall meet the requirements of [section 275.3](#).

3. If a district is attached, division of assets and liabilities shall be made as provided in [sections 275.29 through 275.31](#). The area education agency boards shall develop detailed studies and surveys of the school districts within the area education agency and all adjacent territory for the purpose of providing for reorganization of school districts in order to effect more economical operation and the attainment of higher standards of education in the schools. The plans shall be revised periodically to reflect reorganizations which may have taken place in the area education agency and adjacent territory.

[C97, §2798; SS15, §2794-a; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §4152, 4154; C46, 50, §274.37, 275.1, 276.1; C54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.1; [82 Acts, ch 1113, §1](#)]

[83 Acts, ch 31, §2](#); [84 Acts, ch 1078, §1](#); [85 Acts, ch 212, §7](#); [88 Acts, ch 1263, §2](#); [92 Acts, ch 1246, §41, 42](#); [93 Acts, ch 160, §3](#); [94 Acts, ch 1023, §100](#); [94 Acts, ch 1169, §65](#); [2008 Acts, ch 1115, §11, 21](#); [2010 Acts, ch 1069, §75](#); [2013 Acts, ch 90, §67](#); [2016 Acts, ch 1073, §91](#); [2016 Acts, ch 1121, §7](#)

Referred to in [§257.3](#), [257.4](#), [275.9](#), [280.15](#), [282.7](#), [594A.6](#), [594A.8](#)

275.2 Scope of surveys.

1. The scope of the studies and surveys shall include all of the following matters in the various districts in the area education agency and all districts adjacent to the area education agency:

- a. The adequacy of the educational program.
- b. Pupil enrollment.
- c. Property valuations.
- d. Existing buildings and equipment.
- e. Natural community areas.
- f. Road conditions.
- g. Transportation.
- h. Economic factors.
- i. Individual attention given to the needs of students.
- j. The opportunity of students to participate in a wide variety of activities related to the total development of the student.
- k. Other matters that may bear on educational programs meeting minimum standards required by law.

2. The plans shall also include suggested alternate plans that incorporate the school districts in the area education agency into reorganized districts that meet the enrollment standards specified in [section 275.3](#) and may include alternate plans proposed by school districts for sharing programs under [section 28E.9](#), [256.13](#), [280.15](#), [282.7](#), or [282.10](#) as an alternative to school reorganization.

[C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.2]

[84 Acts, ch 1078, §2](#); [93 Acts, ch 160, §4](#); [2018 Acts, ch 1041, §74](#)

Referred to in [§275.9](#)

275.3 Minimum size.

No new school district shall be planned by an area education agency board nor shall any proposal for creation or enlargement of any school district be approved by an area education agency board or submitted to electors unless there reside within the proposed limits of such district at least three hundred persons of school age who were enrolled in public schools in the preceding school year. Provided, however, that the director of the department of education shall have authority to grant permission to an area education agency board to approve the formation or enlargement of a school district containing a lower school enrollment than required in [this section](#) on the written request of such area education agency board if such request is accompanied by evidence tending to show that sparsity of population, natural barriers or other good reason makes it impracticable to meet the school enrollment requirement.

[R60, §2105; C73, §1800, 1801; C97, §2794; SS15, §2794, 2794-a; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §4143, 4161, 4173; C46, 50, §274.25, 275.3, 276.8, 276.20; C54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.3]

[85 Acts, ch 212, §21](#)

Referred to in [§275.1](#), [275.2](#), [275.9](#)

275.4 Studies, surveys, and plans.

1. *a.* In developing studies and surveys, the area education agency board shall consult with the officials of school districts in the area and other citizens, shall from time to time hold public hearings, and may employ such research and other assistance as it may determine reasonably necessary in order to properly carry on its survey and prepare definite plans of reorganization.

b. In addition, the area education agency board shall consult with the director of the department of education in the development of surveys and plans. The director of the department of education shall provide assistance to the area education agency boards as requested and shall advise the area education agency boards concerning plans of contiguous area education agencies and the reorganization policies adopted by the state board of education.

2. Completed plans shall be transmitted by the area education agency board to the director of the department of education.

[C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §4158; C46, 50, §275.1 – 275.3, 276.5; C54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.4]

[84 Acts, ch 1078, §3](#); [85 Acts, ch 212, §21](#); [92 Acts, ch 1246, §43](#); [2017 Acts, ch 54, §40](#); [2018 Acts, ch 1026, §90](#)

Referred to in [§275.5](#), [275.9](#), [275.15](#)

275.5 Proposals for merger or consolidation.

A proposal for merger, consolidation, or boundary change of local school districts shall first be submitted to the area education agency board following the procedure prescribed in [this chapter](#). Following receipt of a petition pursuant to [section 275.12](#), the area education agency board shall review its plans and determine whether the petition complies with the plans which had been adopted by the board. If the petition does not comply with the plans which had been adopted by the board, the board shall conduct further surveys pursuant to [section 275.4](#) prior to the date set for the hearing upon the petition. If further surveys have been conducted by the board, the board shall present the results of the further surveys at the hearing upon the petition.

[C97, §2793; S13, §2793; SS15, §2794-a; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §4133, 4173; C46, 50, §274.16, 274.20, 275.1, 275.3, 275.4; C54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.5]

[84 Acts, ch 1078, §4](#)

Referred to in [§275.9](#)

275.6 Progressive program.

It is the intent of [this chapter](#) that the area education agency board shall carry on the program of reorganization progressively and shall, insofar as is possible, authorize submission of proposals to the electors as they are developed and approved.

[R60, §2097, 2105; C73, §1800, 1801; S13, §2820-e, -f; SS15, §2794-a; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §4141, 4188; C46, 50, §274.23, 275.8, 276.35; C54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.6]

Referred to in [§275.9](#)

275.7 Budget.

The area education agency board shall include in the budget submitted each year such sums as it deems necessary to carry on its reorganization work under [this chapter](#).

[SS15, §2794-a; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §4139, 4177; C46, 50, §274.21, 275.9, 276.24; C54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.7]

Referred to in [§275.9](#)

275.8 Cooperation of department of education — planning joint districts.

1. For purposes of [this chapter](#) the planning of joint districts is defined to include all of the following acts:

a. Preparation of a written joint plan in which contiguous territory in two or more area education agencies is considered as a part of a potential school district in the area education agency on behalf of which such plan is filed with the department of education by the area education agency board.

b. Adoption of the written joint plan at a joint session of the several area education agency boards in whose areas the territory is situated. A quorum of each of the boards is necessary to transact business. Votes shall be taken in the manner prescribed in [section 275.16](#).

c. Filing said plan with the department of education.

2. For purposes of [subsection 1](#), paragraph “a”, joint planning shall be evidenced by filing the following items with the department of education:

a. A plat of the entire area of such potential district.

b. A statement of the number of pupils residing within the area of said potential district enrolled in public schools in the preceding school year.

c. A statement of the assessed valuation of taxable property located within such potential district.

d. An affidavit signed on behalf of each of said boards of directors of area education agencies by a member of such board stating the boundaries as shown on such plat have been agreed upon by the respective boards as a part of the overall plan of school district reorganization of each such school.

3. Planning of joint districts shall be conducted in the same manner as planning for single districts, except as provided in [this section](#). Studies and surveys relating to the planning of joint districts shall be filed with the area education agency in which one of the districts is located which has the greatest taxable property base. In the case of controversy over the planning of joint districts, the matter shall be submitted to the director of the department of education. Judicial review of the director’s decision may be sought in accordance with the terms of the Iowa administrative procedure Act, [chapter 17A](#). Notwithstanding the terms of that Act, petitions for judicial review must be filed within thirty days after the decision of the director.

[C46, 50, §275.10, 276.4; C54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.8]

[84 Acts, ch 1078, §5](#); [86 Acts, ch 1245, §1462](#); [2001 Acts, ch 24, §43, 44](#); [2010 Acts, ch 1069, §76](#)

Referred to in [§275.9, 275.16](#)

275.9 Methods of effectuating reorganization plans.

1. When any school district is enlarged, reorganized, or changes its boundaries pursuant to the plans provided for under [sections 275.2 through 275.8](#), such enlargement, reorganization, or boundary change shall be accomplished by the method provided in [this subchapter](#).

2. The provisions of [sections 275.1 through 275.5](#), relating to studies, surveys, hearings

and adoption of plans shall constitute a mandatory prerequisite to the effectuation of any proposal for district boundary change. It shall be the mandatory duty of the area education agency board to dismiss the petition if the above provisions are not complied with fully.

[C46, 50, §275.11; C54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.9]

[2018 Acts, ch 1026, §91](#); [2019 Acts, ch 59, §81](#)

Referred to in [§275.23A](#)

275.10 Reserved.

275.11 Proposals involving two or more districts.

Subject to the approval of the area education agency board, contiguous or marginally adjacent territory located in two or more school districts may be united into a single district in the manner provided in [sections 275.12 through 275.18, 275.20, and 275.22](#).

[SS15, §2794-a; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §4166; C46, 50, §276.13; C54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.11]

[92 Acts, ch 1246, §44](#); [2021 Acts, ch 80, §145](#)

275.12 Petition — method of election.

1. A petition describing the boundaries, or accurately describing the area included therein by legal descriptions, of the proposed district, which boundaries or area described shall conform to plans developed or the petition shall request change of the plan, shall be filed with the area education agency administrator of the area education agency in which the greatest number of registered voters reside. However, the area education agency administrator shall not accept a petition if any of the school districts affected have approved the issuance of general obligation bonds at an election pursuant to [section 296.6](#) during the preceding six-month period. The petition shall be signed by eligible electors residing in each existing school district or portion affected equal in number to at least twenty percent of the number of registered voters in the school district or portion affected, or four hundred eligible electors, whichever is the smaller number.

2. The petition filed under [subsection 1](#) shall also state the name of the proposed school district and the number of directors which may be either five or seven and the method of election of the school directors of the proposed district. The method of election of the directors shall be one of the following optional plans:

a. Election at large from the entire district by the electors of the entire district.

b. Division of the entire school district into designated geographical single director or multi-director subdistricts on the basis of population for each director, to be known as director districts, each of which shall be represented on the school board by one or more directors who shall be residents of the director district but who shall be elected by the vote of the electors of the entire school district. The boundaries of the director districts and the area and population included within each district shall be such as justice, equity, and the interests of the people may require. Changes in the boundaries of director districts shall not be made during a period commencing sixty days prior to the date of the regular school election. As far as practicable, the boundaries of the districts shall follow established political or natural geographical divisions.

c. Election of not more than one-half of the total number of school directors at large from the entire district and the remaining directors from and as residents of designated single-member or multimember director districts into which the entire school district shall be divided on the basis of population for each director. In such case, all directors shall be elected by the electors of the entire school district. Changes in the boundaries of director districts shall not be made during a period commencing sixty days prior to the date of the regular school election.

d. Division of the entire school district into designated geographical single director or multi-director subdistricts on the basis of population for each director, to be known as director districts, each of which shall be represented on the school board by one or more directors who shall be residents of the director district and who shall be elected by the voters of the director district. Place of voting in the director districts shall be designated by the commissioner of

elections. Changes in the boundaries of director districts shall not be made during a period commencing sixty days prior to the date of the regular school election.

e. In districts having seven directors, election of three directors at large by the electors of the entire district, no more than two at each regular school election, and election of the remaining directors as residents of and by the electors of individual geographic subdistricts established on the basis of population and identified as director districts, no more than two at each regular school election. Boundaries of the subdistricts shall follow precinct boundaries, as far as practicable, and shall not be changed less than sixty days prior to the regular school election.

3. If the petition proposes the division of the school district into director districts, the boundaries of the proposed director districts shall not be drawn until the question is approved by the voters. If the question is approved by the voters, the directors of the new school district shall draw the boundaries of the director districts according to the standards described in [section 275.23A, subsection 1](#). Following adoption by the school board, the plan shall be submitted to the state commissioner of elections for approval.

4. The area education agency board in reviewing the petition as provided in [sections 275.15 and 275.16](#) shall review the proposed method of election of school directors and may change or amend the plan in any manner, including to specify a different method of electing school directors as may be required by law, justice, equity, and the interest of the people. In the action, the area education agency board shall follow the same procedure as is required by [sections 275.15 and 275.16](#) for other action on the petition by the area education agency board.

5. a. The area education agency board in reviewing a petition as provided in [sections 275.15 and 275.16](#) that is not subject to the division of assets and liabilities provisions in [sections 275.29 through 275.31](#) shall review the proposal for dividing liability for payment of outstanding bonds issued under [section 423E.5*](#) or [423F.4](#), required to be included under [section 275.28](#), and may change or amend the proposal in any manner, including to specify a different division for the reorganized districts or a different method of payment or retirement of the bonds as may be required by law, justice, equity, and the interest of the people. The review conducted by the area education agency, including any resulting change to the proposal, shall ensure that the reorganized district's estimated revenue under [section 423F.2](#) is sufficient for the payment of principal and interest on the outstanding bonds required to be paid in the budget year following the reorganization.

b. For bonds issued under [section 423E.5*](#) or [423F.4](#), the approval of the reorganization at election creates a lien on the revenues from the secure an advanced vision for education fund received by the reorganized district designated in the proposal approved by the area education agency, subject to the same priority as provided by the affected school district that issued the bonds.

6. The petition may include a provision that the voter-approved physical plant and equipment levy provided in [section 298.2](#) will be voted upon at the election conducted under [section 275.18](#). The petition may also include a provision that the revenue purpose statement provided in [section 423F.3](#) will be voted upon at the election conducted under [section 275.18](#).

[R60, §2097, 2105; C73, §1800, 1801, 1811; C97, §2794, 2799; S13, §2793, 2820-e, -f; SS15, §2793, 2794, 2794-a; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §4133, 4134, 4141, 4153, 4155, 4174; C46, 50, §274.16, 274.17, 274.23, 274.38, 276.2, 276.21; C54, 58, 62, §275.10, 275.12; C66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.12]

83 Acts, ch 53, §1; 83 Acts, ch 91, §1; 84 Acts, ch 1078, §6 – 8; 86 Acts, ch 1226, §1; 89 Acts, ch 135, §64; 93 Acts, ch 160, §5; 94 Acts, ch 1179, §16; 95 Acts, ch 49, §5; 2001 Acts, ch 56, §12; 2002 Acts, ch 1134, §81, 115; 2008 Acts, ch 1115, §12, 21; 2014 Acts, ch 1013, §18; 2015 Acts, ch 93, §1, 8

Referred to in [§275.5, 275.11, 275.20, 275.23, 275.23A, 275.24, 275.25, 275.35, 275.36, 275.38, 275.41, 275.57, 278.1](#)

*Chapter 423E repealed effective June 30, 2023, pursuant to terms of former [§423E.7](#); corrective legislation is pending

275.13 Affidavit — presumption.

Such petition shall be accompanied by an affidavit showing the number of registered voters living in each affected district or portion thereof described in the petition and signed by a

registered voter residing in the territory, and if parts of the territory described in the petition are situated in different area education agencies, the affidavit shall show separately as to each agency, the number of registered voters in the part of the agency included in the territory described. The affidavit shall be taken as true unless objections to it are filed on or before the time fixed for filing objections as provided in [section 275.14](#).

[C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §4156; C46, 50, §276.3; C54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.13]
[94 Acts, ch 1169, §64; 2018 Acts, ch 1026, §92](#)
 Referred to in [§275.11, 275.23, 275.24, 275.36](#)

275.14 Objection — time of filing — notice.

1. Within ten days after the petition is filed, the area education agency administrator shall fix a final date for filing objections to the petition which shall be not more than sixty days after the petition is filed and shall fix the date for a hearing on the objections to the petition. Objections shall be filed in the office of the administrator who shall give notice at least ten days prior to the final day for filing objections, by one publication in a newspaper published within the territory described in the petition, or if none is published in the territory, in a newspaper published in the county where the petition is filed, and of general circulation in the territory described. The notice shall also list the date, time, and location for the hearing on the petition as provided in [section 275.15](#). The cost of publication shall be assessed to each district whose territory is involved in the ratio that the number of pupils in basic enrollment for the budget year, as defined in [section 257.6](#) in each district bears to the total number of pupils in basic enrollment for the budget year in the total area involved. Objections shall be in writing in the form of an affidavit and may be made by any person residing or owning land within the territory described in the petition, or who would be injuriously affected by the change petitioned for and shall be on file not later than 12:00 noon of the final day fixed for filing objections.

2. Objection forms shall be prescribed by the department of education and may be obtained from the area education agency administrator. Objection forms that request that property be removed from a proposed district shall include the correct legal description of the property to be removed.

[SS15, §2794-a; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §4157, 4166, 4170; C46, 50, §276.4, 276.6, 276.17; C54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.14]

[85 Acts, ch 221, §1; 89 Acts, ch 135, §65](#)
 Referred to in [§275.11, 275.13, 275.15, 275.23, 275.23A, 275.24](#)

275.15 Hearing — decision — publication — appeal.

1. At the hearing, which shall be held within ten days of the final date set for filing objections, interested parties, both petitioners and objectors, may present evidence and arguments, and the area education agency board shall review the matter on its merits and within ten days after the conclusion of any hearing, shall rule on the objections and shall enter an order fixing the boundaries for the proposed school corporation as will in its judgment be for the best interests of all parties concerned, having due regard for the welfare of adjoining districts, or dismiss the petition.

2. The area education agency board, when entering the order fixing the boundaries, shall consider all available evidence including, but not limited to, information presented by the petitioners, all objections requesting territory exclusion, reorganization studies and plans, geographical patterns evidenced by students using open enrollment to attend school in another district pursuant to [section 282.18](#), potential travel distances required of students, and geographic configuration of the proposed district. The exclusion of territory shall represent a balance between the rights of the objectors and the welfare of the reorganized district.

3. If the petition is not dismissed and the board determines that additional information is required in order to fix boundary lines of the proposed school corporation, the board may continue the hearing for no more than thirty days. The date of the continued hearing shall be announced at the original meeting. Additional objections in the form required in [section 275.14](#) may be considered if filed with the administrator within five days, not including

Saturdays, Sundays, or holidays, after the date of the original board hearing. If the hearing is continued, the area education agency administrator may conduct one or more meetings with the boards of directors of the affected districts. Notice of any such meeting must be given at least forty-eight hours in advance by the area education agency administrator in the manner provided in [section 21.4](#). The area education agency board may request that the administrator make alternative recommendations regarding the boundary lines of the proposed school corporation. The area education agency board shall make a decision on the boundary lines within ten days following the conclusion of the continued hearing.

4. The administrator shall at once publish the decision in the same newspaper in which the original notice was published. Within twenty days after the publication, the decision rendered by the area education agency board may be appealed to the district court in the county involved by any school district affected. For purposes of appeal, only those school districts who filed reorganization petitions are school districts affected. An appeal from a decision of an area education agency board or joint area education agency boards under [section 275.4](#), [275.16](#), or [this section](#) is subject to appeal procedures under [this chapter](#) and is not subject to appeal under [chapter 290](#).

[C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §4158 – 4160; C46, 50, §276.5 – 276.7; C54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.15]

[84 Acts, ch 1078, §9](#); [85 Acts, ch 221, §2](#); [86 Acts, ch 1226, §2](#); [86 Acts, ch 1239, §1](#); [93 Acts, ch 160, §6](#); [2006 Acts, ch 1185, §79](#); [2007 Acts, ch 214, §34](#)

Referred to in [§275.11](#), [275.12](#), [275.14](#), [275.16](#), [275.18](#), [275.23](#), [275.23A](#), [275.24](#)

275.16 Hearing when territory in different area education agencies.

1. If the territory described in the petition for the proposed corporation lies in more than one area education agency, the agency administrator with whom the petition is filed shall fix the time and place for a hearing and call a joint meeting of the members of all the agency boards in which territory of the proposed school corporation lies, to act as a single board for the hearing of the objections, and a majority of members of each of the agency boards of the different agencies in which any part of the proposed corporation lies, constitutes a quorum. The president of the board of directors of the area education agency in which the petition has been filed, or a member of the board designated by the president, shall preside at the joint meeting. The joint boards acting as a single board shall determine whether the petition conforms to plans or, if the petition requests a change in plans, whether a change should be made, and may change the plans of any or all the area education agency boards affected by the petition. The joint board shall determine and fix boundaries for the proposed corporation as provided in [section 275.15](#) or dismiss the petition. The joint board may continue the hearing as provided in [section 275.15](#).

2. Votes of each member of an area education agency board in attendance shall be weighted so that the total number of votes eligible to be cast by members of each board in attendance shall be equal. However, if the joint boards cast a tie vote and are unable to agree to a decision fixing the boundaries for the proposed school corporation or to a decision to dismiss the petition, the time during which actions must be taken under [section 275.15](#) shall be extended from ten days to fifteen days after the conclusion of the hearing under [section 275.15](#), and the joint board shall reconvene not less than ten and not more than fifteen days after the conclusion of the hearing. At the hearing the joint board shall reconsider its action and if a tie vote is again cast it is a decision granting the petition and changing the plans of any and all of the agency boards affected by the petition and fixing the boundaries for the proposed school corporation. The agency administrator shall at once publish the decision in the same newspaper in which the original notice was published.

3. In case a controversy arises from such meeting, the area education agency board or boards or any school district aggrieved may bring the controversy to the department of education, as provided in [section 275.8](#), within twenty days from the publication of this order, and if said controversy is taken to the department of education, a ten-day notice in writing shall be given to all agency boards and school districts affected or portions thereof. The department shall have the authority to affirm the action of the joint boards, to vacate, to

dismiss all proceedings or to make such modification of the action of the joint boards as in their judgment would serve the best interest of all the agencies.

4. Judicial review of the actions of the department may be sought in accordance with the terms of the Iowa administrative procedure Act, [chapter 17A](#). Notwithstanding the terms of said Act, petitions for judicial review must be filed within thirty days after the decision of the department of education.

[C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §4162; C46, 50, §276.9; C54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.16]
[84 Acts, ch 1078, §10](#); [85 Acts, ch 212, §24](#); [85 Acts, ch 221, §3](#); [86 Acts, ch 1237, §17](#); [2003 Acts, ch 44, §114](#); [2010 Acts, ch 1061, §180](#)

Referred to in [§275.8](#), [275.11](#), [275.12](#), [275.15](#), [275.18](#), [275.23](#), [275.23A](#), [275.24](#)

275.17 Filing a petition.

If an area education agency board does not approve the change in boundaries of school districts in accordance with a petition, a petition describing the identical or similar boundaries shall not be filed for a period of six months following the date of the hearing or the vote of the board, whichever is later.

[C79, 81, §275.17]

[83 Acts, ch 91, §2](#)

Referred to in [§275.11](#), [275.23](#), [275.23A](#), [275.24](#)

275.18 Special election called — time.

1. When the boundaries of the territory to be included in a proposed school corporation and the number and method of the election of the school directors of the proposed school corporation have been determined as provided in [this chapter](#), the area education agency administrator with whom the petition is filed shall give written notice of the election to the county commissioner of elections of the county in the proposed school corporation which has the greatest taxable base. The question shall be submitted to the voters at an election held on a date specified in [section 39.2, subsection 4](#), paragraph “c” in the calendar year prior to the calendar year in which the reorganization will take effect.

2. The county commissioner of elections shall give notice of the election by one publication in the same newspaper in which previous notices have been published regarding the proposed school reorganization, and in addition, if more than one county is involved, by one publication in a legal newspaper in each county other than that of the first publication. The publication shall be not less than four nor more than twenty days prior to the election. If the decision published pursuant to [section 275.15](#) or [275.16](#) includes a description of the proposed school corporation and a description of the director districts, if any, the notice for election and the ballot do not need to include these descriptions. Notice for an election shall not be published until the expiration of time for appeal, which shall be the same as that provided in [section 275.15](#) or [275.16](#), whichever is applicable; and if there is an appeal, not until the appeal has been disposed of.

3. The area education agency administrator shall furnish to the commissioner a map of the proposed reorganized area which must be approved by the commissioner as suitable for posting. The map shall be displayed prominently in at least one place within the voting precinct, and inside each voting booth.

[R60, §2097, 2105; C73, §1800, 1801; C97, §2794; SS15, §2794, 2794-a; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §4142, 4164; C46, 50, §274.24, 275.4, 276.11; C54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.18]

[83 Acts, ch 53, §2](#); [85 Acts, ch 221, §4](#); [98 Acts, ch 1123, §12](#); [2008 Acts, ch 1115, §38, 71](#); [2009 Acts, ch 57, §77](#)

Referred to in [§257.11A](#), [275.11](#), [275.12](#), [275.23](#), [275.23A](#), [275.24](#), [275.27](#)

275.19 Reserved.

275.20 Separate vote in existing districts.

The voters shall vote separately in each existing school district affected and voters residing in the entire existing district are eligible to vote upon the proposition to create a new school corporation and on any additional provision authorized pursuant to [section 275.12, subsection 6](#). If a proposition receives a majority of the votes cast in each of at least

seventy-five percent of the districts, and also a majority of the total number of votes cast in all of the districts, the proposition is carried.

[R60, §2097, 2105; C73, §1800, 1801; C97, §2794; SS15, §2794, 2794-a; C24, 27, 31, 35, §4142, 4166, 4167, 4191; C39, §4142, 4144.1, 4166, 4167; C46, 50, §274.24, 274.27, 276.13; C54, §275.20, 275.21; C58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.20]

[89 Acts, ch 135, §66; 2014 Acts, ch 1013, §19](#)

Referred to in [§257.11A, 275.11, 275.22, 275.23, 275.23A, 275.24](#)

275.21 Reserved.

275.22 Canvass and return.

The canvass shall be conducted pursuant to [section 50.24](#). The county commissioner of elections or controlling commissioner shall certify the results of the election to the area education agency administrator. If the majority of the votes cast by the registered voters is in favor of the proposition, as provided in [section 275.20](#), a new school corporation shall be organized. If the majority of votes cast is opposed to the proposition, a new petition describing the identical or similar boundaries shall not be filed for at least six months from the date of the election. If territory is excluded from the reorganized district, action pursuant to [section 274.37](#) shall be taken prior to the effective date of reorganization. The secretary of the new school corporation shall file a written description of the boundaries as provided in [section 274.4](#).

[S13, §2820-f; SS15, §2794-a; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §4144, 4169; C46, 50, §274.26, 275.5, 275.7, 276.16; C54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, §275.23; C77, 79, 81, §275.22]

[83 Acts, ch 91, §3; 93 Acts, ch 160, §7; 95 Acts, ch 67, §53; 2017 Acts, ch 155, §37, 44](#)

Referred to in [§275.11, 275.23, 275.23A, 275.24](#)

275.23 Frequency of change.

A school district which is enlarged, reorganized, or changes its boundaries under [sections 275.12 through 275.18, 275.20, and 275.22](#), shall not file a petition under [section 275.12](#) for the purpose of reducing the area served or changing the boundaries to exclude areas encompassed by the enlargement, reorganization, or boundary changes for a period of five years following the effective date of the enlargement, reorganization, or boundary change unless the action is approved by the director of the department of education.

[C77, 79, 81, §275.23]

[86 Acts, ch 1245, §1463; 2021 Acts, ch 80, §146](#)

Referred to in [§275.23A](#)

275.23A Redistricting following federal decennial census.

1. School districts which have directors who represent director districts as provided in [section 275.12, subsection 2](#), paragraphs “b”, “c”, “d”, and “e”, shall be divided into director districts according to the following standards:

a. All director district boundaries shall follow the boundaries of areas for which official population figures are available from the most recent federal decennial census and, wherever possible, shall follow precinct boundaries.

b. To the extent possible in order to comply with paragraph “a”, all director districts shall be as nearly equal as practicable to the ideal population for the districts as determined by dividing the number of districts to be established into the population of the school district.

c. All districts shall be composed of contiguous territory as compact as practicable unless the school district is composed of marginally adjacent territory. A school district which is composed of marginally adjacent territory shall have director districts composed of contiguous territory to the extent practicable.

d. Consideration shall not be given to the addresses of incumbent officeholders, political affiliations of registered voters, previous election results, or demographic information other than population head counts, except as required by the Constitution and the laws of the United States.

e. A city shall not be divided into two or more director districts unless the population of

that portion of the city that is within the school district is greater than the ideal size of a director district. Cities shall be divided into the smallest number of director districts possible.

2. Following each federal decennial census the school board shall determine whether the existing director district boundaries meet the standards in [subsection 1](#) according to the most recent federal decennial census. In addition to the authority granted to voters to change the number of directors or method of election as provided in [sections 275.35, 275.36, and 278.1](#), the board of directors of a school district may, following a federal decennial census, by resolution and in accordance with [this section](#), authorize a change in the method of election as set forth in [section 275.12, subsection 2](#), or a change to either five or seven directors after the board conducts a hearing on the resolution. If the board proposes to change the number of directors from seven to five directors, the resolution shall include a plan for reducing the number of directors. If the board proposes to increase the number of directors to seven directors, two directors shall be added according to the procedure described in [section 277.23, subsection 2](#). If necessary, the board of directors shall redraw the director district boundaries. The director district boundaries shall be described in the resolution adopted by the school board. The resolution shall be adopted no earlier than November 15 of the second year immediately following the year in which the federal decennial census is taken and no later than May 15 of the third year immediately following the year in which the federal decennial census is taken. A copy of the plan shall be filed with the area education agency administrator of the area education agency in which the school's electors reside. If the board does not provide for an election as provided in [sections 275.35, 275.36, and 278.1](#) and adopts a resolution to change the number of directors or method of election in accordance with [this subsection](#), the district shall change the number of directors or method of election as provided unless, within twenty-eight days following the action of the board, the secretary of the board receives a petition containing the required number of signatures, asking that an election be called to approve or disapprove the action of the board in adopting the resolution. The petition must be signed by eligible electors equal in number to not less than one hundred or thirty percent of the number of voters at the last preceding regular school election, whichever is greater. The board shall either rescind its action or direct the county commissioner of elections to submit the question to the registered voters of the school district at an election held on a date specified in [section 39.2, subsection 4, paragraph "c"](#). If a majority of those voting on the question at the election favors disapproval of the action of the board, the district shall not change the number of directors or method of election. If a majority of those voting on the question does not favor disapproval of the action, the board shall certify the results of the election to the department of management and the district shall change the number of directors or method of election as provided in [this subsection](#). At the expiration of the twenty-eight-day period, if no petition is filed, the board shall certify its action to the department of management and the district shall change the number of directors or method of election as provided in [this subsection](#).

3. The school board shall notify the state commissioner of elections and the county commissioner of elections of each county in which a portion of the school district is located when the boundaries of director districts are changed. The notices of changes submitted to the state commissioner shall be postmarked no later than the deadline for adoption of the resolution under [subsection 2](#). The board shall provide the commissioners with maps showing the new boundaries and shall also certify to the state commissioner the populations of the new director districts as determined under the latest federal decennial census. If, following a federal decennial census a school district elects not to redraw director districts under [this section](#), the school board shall so certify to the state commissioner of elections, and the school board shall also certify to the state commissioner the populations of the retained director districts as determined under the latest federal decennial census. If the state commissioner determines that a district board has failed to make the required changes by the dates specified by [this section](#), the state commissioner of elections shall make or cause to be made the necessary changes as soon as possible. The state commissioner shall assess any expenses incurred to the school district. The state commissioner of elections may request the services of personnel of and materials available to the legislative services agency to assist the state commissioner in making any required boundary changes.

4. If more than one incumbent director resides in a redrawn director district, the terms of office of the affected directors expire at the organizational meeting of the board of directors following the next regular school election following the adoption of the redrawn districts.

5. The boundary changes under [this section](#) take effect July 1 following their adoption for the next regular school election.

6. [Section 275.9](#) and [sections 275.14 through 275.23](#) do not apply to changes in director district boundaries made under [this section](#).

[83 Acts, ch 77, §3, 4; 89 Acts, ch 296, §24; 90 Acts, ch 1233, §9; 92 Acts, ch 1246, §45; 94 Acts, ch 1179, §17, 18; 95 Acts, ch 189, §18; 2002 Acts, ch 1024, §1, 3; 2002 Acts, ch 1140, §16, 46; 2003 Acts, ch 35, §44, 49; 2008 Acts, ch 1115, §39, 71; 2010 Acts, ch 1033, §36; 2013 Acts, ch 88, §14; 2014 Acts, ch 1026, §74](#)

Referred to in [§39.24, 49.8, 275.12, 275.35, 275.36, 275.57, 277.23](#)

275.24 Effective date of change.

1. If a proposition to enlarge, reorganize, or change the boundary of a school district pursuant to [sections 275.12 through 275.18, 275.20, and 275.22](#), is approved by voters pursuant to [section 275.18](#) prior to January 1, 2025, the change shall take effect on July 1 following the date of the reorganization election held pursuant to [section 275.18](#).

2. If a proposition to enlarge, reorganize, or change the boundary of a school district pursuant to [sections 275.12 through 275.18, 275.20, and 275.22](#), is approved by voters pursuant to [section 275.18](#) on or after January 1, 2025, the change shall take effect on July 1 in the calendar year immediately subsequent to the calendar year in which the reorganization election was held pursuant to [section 275.18](#).

[C54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.24]

[83 Acts, ch 53, §3; 2008 Acts, ch 1115, §40, 71; 2021 Acts, ch 80, §147; 2025 Acts, ch 2, §1, 3](#)

2025 amendment applies retroactively to January 1, 2025; 2025 Acts, ch 2, §3
Section amended

275.25 Election of directors.

1. *a.* If the proposition to establish a new school district carries under the method provided in [this chapter](#), the area education agency administrator with whom the petition was filed shall give written notice of a proposed date for a special election for directors of the newly formed school district to the commissioner of elections of the county in the district involved in the reorganization which has the greatest taxable base. The proposed date shall be as soon as possible pursuant to [section 39.2, subsections 1 and 2, and section 47.6, subsections 1 and 2](#), but not later than the third Tuesday in January of the calendar year in which the reorganization takes effect.

b. The election shall be conducted as provided in [section 277.3](#), and nomination petitions shall be filed pursuant to [section 277.4](#), except as otherwise provided in [this subsection](#). Nomination petitions shall be filed with the secretary of the board of the existing school district in which the candidate resides not less than twenty-eight days before the date set for the special school election. The secretary of the board, or the secretary's designee, shall be present in the secretary's office until 5:00 p.m. on the final day to file the nomination papers. The nomination papers shall be delivered to the commissioner no later than 5:00 p.m. on the twenty-seventh day before the election.

c. If the special election is held in conjunction with the regular school election, the filing deadlines for the regular school election apply.

2. *a.* The number of directors of a school district is either five or seven as provided in [section 275.12](#). In school districts that include a city of fifteen thousand or more population as shown by the most recent decennial federal census, the board shall consist of seven members elected in the manner provided in [subsection 3](#). If it becomes necessary to increase the membership of a board, two directors shall be added according to the procedure described in [section 277.23](#).

b. The county board of supervisors shall canvass the votes and the county commissioner of elections shall report the results to the area education agency administrator who shall notify the persons who are elected directors.

3. The directors who are elected and qualify to serve shall serve until their successors

are elected and qualify. At the special election, the three newly elected directors receiving the most votes shall be elected to serve until their successors qualify after the third regular school election date occurring after the effective date of the reorganization and the two newly elected directors receiving the next largest number of votes shall be elected to serve until the directors' successors qualify after the second regular school election date occurring after the effective date of the reorganization. However, in districts that include all or a part of a city of fifteen thousand or more population and in districts in which the proposition to establish a new corporation provides for the election of seven directors, the timelines specified in [this subsection](#) for the terms of office apply to the four newly elected directors receiving the most votes and then to the three newly elected directors receiving the next largest number of votes.

4. The board of the newly formed district shall organize within fifteen days after the special election upon the call of the area education agency administrator. The new board shall have control of the employment of personnel for the newly formed district for the next following school year under [section 275.33](#). Following the first organizational meeting of the board of the newly formed district, the board may establish policy, organize curriculum, enter into contracts, complete planning, and take action as necessary for the efficient management of the newly formed community school district.

5. [Section 49.8, subsection 5](#), does not permit a director to remain on the board of a school district after the effective date of a boundary change which places the director's residence outside the boundaries of the district. Vacancies caused by this occurrence on a board shall be filled in the manner provided in [sections 279.6 and 279.7](#).

6. The board of the newly formed district shall appoint an acting superintendent and an acting board secretary. The appointment of the acting superintendent shall not be subject to the continuing contract provisions of [sections 279.20, 279.23, and 279.24](#).

[R60, §2099, 2100, 2106; C73, §1801; C97, §2795; S13, §2820-f; SS15, §2794-a; C24, §4144, 4145, 4148; C27, 31, 35, §4144-a1, 4145, 4148; C39, §4144.2, 4144.3, 4145, 4148; C46, 50, §274.28 – 274.30, 275.5, 276.18; C54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.25]

[83 Acts, ch 53, §4; 85 Acts, ch 221, §5; 86 Acts, ch 1239, §2; 88 Acts, ch 1038, §1; 93 Acts, ch 143, §43; 2002 Acts, ch 1134, §82, 115; 2008 Acts, ch 1115, §13, 21; 2009 Acts, ch 41, §263](#)

Referred to in [§275.1, 275.41, 331.383](#)

275.26 Payment of expenses.

1. If a district is established or changes its boundaries it shall pay all expenses incurred by the area education agency administrator and the area education agency board in connection with the proceedings. The county commissioner of elections shall assess the costs of the election against the district as provided in [section 47.3](#). If the proposition is dismissed or defeated at the election, all expenses shall be apportioned among the several districts in proportion to the assessed valuation of property therein.

2. If the proposed district or boundary change embraces territory in more than one area education agency, such expenses shall be certified to and, if necessary, apportioned among the several districts by the joint agency board. If in only one agency, the certification shall be made by the agency administrator.

3. The respective boards to which such expenses are certified shall audit and order the same paid from the general fund. In the event of failure of any board to so audit and pay the expenses certified to it, the area education agency administrator shall certify the expenses to the county auditor in the same manner as is provided for tuition claims in [section 282.21](#) and the funds shall be transferred by the county treasurer from the debtor district to the agency board for payment of said expenses.

[S13, §2820-h; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §4147, 4172; C46, 50, §274.32, 275.6, 276.19; C54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.26]

[2017 Acts, ch 54, §76](#)

Referred to in [§331.552](#)

275.27 Community school districts — part of area education agency.

School districts created or enlarged under [this chapter](#) are community school districts and are part of the area education agency in which the greatest number of registered voters of the

district reside at the time of the special election called for in [section 275.18](#), and sections of the Code applicable to public or accredited nonpublic schools generally are applicable to these districts in addition to the powers and privileges conferred by [this chapter](#). If a school district, created or enlarged under [this chapter](#) and assigned to an area education agency under [this section](#), can demonstrate that students in the district were utilizing a service or program prior to the formation of the new or enlarged district that is unavailable from the area education agency to which the new or enlarged district is assigned, the district may be reassigned to the area education agency which formerly provided the service or program, upon an affirmative majority vote of the boards of the affected area education agencies to permit the change.

[C73, §1715; C97, §2802; S13, §2802; SS15, §2794-a; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §4136; C46, 50, §274.18; C54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.27]

[84 Acts, ch 1078, §11](#); [91 Acts, ch 44, §1](#); [95 Acts, ch 49, §6](#); [2018 Acts, ch 1026, §93](#)

275.28 Plan of division of assets and liabilities.

In addition to setting up the territory to comprise the reorganized districts, a reorganization petition shall provide for a division of assets and liabilities of the districts affected among the reorganized districts. However, if territory is excluded from the reorganized district by the petition or by the area education agency board of directors, the division of all assets and liabilities shall be made under the provisions of [sections 275.29 through 275.31](#).

[C46, 50, §275.7; C54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.28]

[93 Acts, ch 160, §8](#); [2015 Acts, ch 93, §2, 8](#); [2016 Acts, ch 1073, §92](#)

Referred to in [§275.12](#)

275.29 Division of assets and liabilities after reorganization.

1. Between July 1 and July 20, or on a date determined by agreement of the initial board and the boards of districts receiving territory of the school districts affected, but not later than August 30, the initial board shall meet with the boards of districts receiving territory of the school districts affected, for the purpose of reaching joint agreement on an equitable division of the assets and an equitable distribution of the liabilities of the school districts affected. In addition, if outstanding general obligation indebtedness is in existence in any district, the initial board of directors of the newly formed school district shall meet with the boards of all school districts affected prior to April 30 prior to the school year the reorganization is effective to determine the distribution of liability for payment of the general obligation bonded indebtedness between the districts so that the newly formed district may certify its budget under the procedures specified in [chapter 24](#). The boards shall consider the mandatory levy required in [section 76.2](#) and shall assure the satisfaction of outstanding obligations. If a school district affected by the reorganization has outstanding bonds issued under [section 423E.5*](#) or [423F.4](#), the joint agreement shall assure that the estimated revenue under [section 423F.2](#) for each district to which liability for payment of such bonds is assigned is sufficient for the payment of principal and interest on the outstanding bonds required to be paid in the budget year following reorganization.

2. For bonds issued under [section 423E.5*](#) or [423F.4](#), the approval of the joint agreement creates a lien on the revenues from the secure an advanced vision for education fund received by the school district to which liability is assigned, subject to the same priority as provided by the affected school district that issued the bonds.

[C73, §1715; C97, §2802; S13, §2802, 2820-g; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §4137; C46, 50, §274.19; C54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.29]

[84 Acts, ch 1078, §12](#); [85 Acts, ch 221, §6](#); [93 Acts, ch 1, §6](#); [93 Acts, ch 160, §9](#); [2015 Acts, ch 93, §3, 8](#); [2023 Acts, ch 71, §71, 98](#)

Referred to in [§256.11](#), [275.1](#), [275.12](#), [275.28](#)

2023 amendment to subsection 1 applies to political subdivision budgets for fiscal years beginning on or after July 1, 2024; [2023 Acts, ch 71, §98](#)

*[Chapter 423E](#) repealed effective June 30, 2023, pursuant to terms of former [§423E.7](#); corrective legislation is pending

275.30 Arbitration.

1. If the boards cannot agree on such division and distribution, the matters on which they differ shall be decided by disinterested arbitrators, one selected by the initial board of directors of the newly formed district, one selected jointly by the boards of directors of

contiguous districts receiving territory of the school districts affected, and one selected by the area education agency administrator.

2. The decision of the arbitrators shall be made in writing and filed with the secretary of the new corporation, and a party to the proceedings may appeal the decision to the district court by serving notice on the secretary of the new corporation within twenty days after the decision is filed. The appeal shall be tried in equity and a decree entered determining the entire matter, including the levy, collection, and distribution of any necessary taxes.

3. a. If a school district affected by the reorganization has outstanding bonds issued under [section 423E.5*](#) or [423F.4](#), the arbitrators' decision and any decision of the court on appeal shall assure that the estimated revenue under [section 423F.2](#) for each district to which liability for payment of such bonds is assigned is sufficient for the payment of principal and interest on the outstanding bonds required to be paid in the budget year following reorganization.

b. The issuance of the arbitrators' decision or court decision on appeal creates a lien on the revenues from the secure an advanced vision for education fund received by the district to which the liability for payment of the bonds were assigned, subject to the same priority as provided by the affected school district that issued the bonds.

[C73, §1715; C97, §2802; S13, §2802, 2820-g; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §4138; C46, 50, §274.20; C54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.30]

[93 Acts, ch 160, §10](#); [2015 Acts, ch 93, §4, 8](#)

Referred to in [§256.11](#), [275.1](#), [275.12](#), [275.28](#)

*[Chapter 423E](#) repealed effective June 30, 2023, pursuant to terms of former [§423E.7](#); corrective legislation is pending

275.31 Taxes and appropriation to effect equalization.

1. If necessary to equalize the division and distribution, the board or boards may provide for the levy of additional taxes, which shall be sufficient to satisfy the mandatory levy required in [section 76.2](#) or other liabilities of the districts, upon the property of a corporation or part of a corporation and for the distribution of the tax revenues so as to effect equalization. When the board or boards are considering the equalization levy, the division and distribution shall not impair the security for outstanding obligations of each affected corporation. Any owner of bonds of an affected corporation may bring suit in equity for adjustment of the division and distribution in compliance with [this section](#). If the property tax levy for the amount estimated and certified to apply on principal and interest on lawful bonded indebtedness for a newly formed community school district is greater than the property tax levy for the amount estimated and certified to apply on principal and interest in the year preceding the reorganization or dissolution for a school district that is a party to the reorganization or dissolution, that had a certified enrollment of less than six hundred for the year prior to the reorganization or dissolution, and that approved the reorganization or dissolution prior to July 1, 1989, the board of the newly formed district shall inform the department of management. The department of management shall pay debt service aid to the newly formed district in an amount that reduces the rate of the property tax levy for lawful bonded indebtedness in the portion of the newly formed district where the new rate is higher, to the rate that was levied in that portion of the district during the year preceding the reorganization or dissolution.

2. For the school year beginning July 1, 1987, and succeeding school years, there is appropriated from the general fund of the state to the department of management an amount sufficient to pay the debt service aid under [this section](#). Debt service aid shall be paid in the manner provided in [section 257.16](#).

3. Not later than May 1 of each year, the department of management shall inform the board of the newly formed school district the amount of debt service aid that the district will receive and the rate of the property tax levy for the amount estimated and certified to apply on principal and interest on lawful bonded indebtedness in the portion of the newly formed district where the new rate would have been higher, and for the remainder of the newly formed district. The department of management shall notify the county auditor of each applicable county of the amount, in dollars and cents per thousand dollars of assessed valuation, of the property tax levy in each portion of each applicable newly formed school district in the county for the amount estimated and certified to apply on principal and interest

on lawful bonded indebtedness, and the boundaries of the portions within the newly formed district for which the levies shall be made. The county auditor shall spread the applicable property tax levy for each portion of a school district over all taxable property in that portion of the district.

[S13, §2820-g; SS15, §2794-a; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §4139, 4175; C46, 50, §274.21, 276.22; C54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.31]

85 Acts, ch 221, §7; 86 Acts, ch 1226, §3; 89 Acts, ch 135, §67; 92 Acts, ch 1163, §62; 2017 Acts, ch 54, §76

Referred to in §256.11, 275.1, 275.12, 275.28

275.32 Reserved.

275.33 Contracts of new district.

1. The terms of employment of superintendents, principals, and teachers, for the school year following the effective date of the formation of the new district shall not be affected by the formation of the new district, except in accordance with the provisions of [sections 279.15 through 279.18](#) and [279.24](#) and the authority and responsibility to offer new contracts or to continue, modify, or terminate existing contracts pursuant to [sections 279.12, 279.13, 279.15 through 279.21, 279.23, and 279.24](#) for the school year beginning with the effective date of the reorganization shall be transferred from the boards of the existing districts to the board of the new district on the third Tuesday of January prior to the school year the reorganization is effective.

2. a. The collective bargaining agreement of the district with the largest basic enrollment for the year prior to the reorganization, as defined in [section 257.6](#), in the new district shall serve as the base agreement and the employees of the other districts involved in the formation of the new district shall automatically be accreted to the bargaining unit of that collective bargaining agreement for purposes of negotiating the contracts for the following years without further action by the employment appeal board. If only one collective bargaining agreement is in effect among the districts which are party to the reorganization, then that agreement shall serve as the base agreement, and the employees of the other districts involved in the formation of the new district shall automatically be accreted to the bargaining unit of that collective bargaining agreement for purposes of negotiating the contracts for the following years without further action by the employment appeal board.

b. The board of the newly formed district, using the base agreement as its existing contract, shall bargain with the combined employees of the existing districts for the school year beginning with the effective date of the reorganization. The bargaining shall be completed by the dates specified in [section 20.17](#) prior to the school year in which the reorganization becomes effective or within one hundred eighty days after the organization of the new board, whichever is later. If a bargaining agreement was already concluded by the board and employees of the existing district with the contract serving as the base agreement for the school year beginning with the effective date of the reorganization, that agreement shall be void. However, if the base agreement contains multiyear provisions affecting school years subsequent to the effective date of the reorganization, the base agreement shall remain in effect as specified in the agreement.

c. The provisions of the base agreement shall apply to the offering of new contracts, or continuation, modification, or termination of existing contracts as provided in [subsection 1](#).

[S13, §2820-f; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §4146; C46, 50, §274.31; C54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.33]

85 Acts, ch 221, §8; 86 Acts, ch 1239, §3; 89 Acts, ch 135, §68; 93 Acts, ch 1, §7, 14; 93 Acts, ch 160, §11; 2010 Acts, ch 1061, §97; 2018 Acts, ch 1026, §94; 2024 Acts, ch 1170, §299

Referred to in §275.25

275.34 Reserved.

275.35 Change in number of directors — change in method of elections.

1. A school district may change the number of directors to either five or seven and may also change its method of election of school directors to any method authorized by [section](#)

275.12 by submission of a proposal, stating the proposed new method of election, by the school board of such district to the electors at an election held on a date specified in [section 39.2, subsection 4](#), paragraph “c”. The school board shall notify the county commissioner of elections who shall publish notice of the election in the manner provided in [section 49.53](#). The election shall be conducted pursuant to [chapters 39 through 53](#) by the county commissioner of elections. Such proposal shall be adopted if it is approved by a majority of the votes cast on the proposition.

2. If the proposal adopted by the voters requires the establishment of or change in director district boundaries, the school board shall draw the necessary boundaries within forty days after the date of the election. The boundaries shall be drawn according to the requirements of [section 275.23A](#). Following adoption by the school board, the plan shall be submitted to the state commissioner of elections for approval.

[C58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.35]

[2002 Acts, ch 1134, §83, 115; 2008 Acts, ch 1115, §41, 71](#)

Referred to in [§275.23A, 278.1](#)

275.36 Submission of change to electors.

1. If a petition for a change in the number of directors or in the method of election of school directors is filed with the school board of a school district pursuant to the requirements of [section 278.2](#), the school board shall submit such proposition to the voters at an election held on a date specified in [section 39.2, subsection 4](#), paragraph “c”. The petition shall be accompanied by an affidavit as required by [section 275.13](#). If a proposition for a change in the number of directors or in the method of election of school directors submitted to the voters under [this section](#) is rejected, it shall not be resubmitted to the voters of the district in substantially the same form within the next three years; if it is approved, no other proposal may be submitted to the voters of the district under [this section](#) within the next six years.

2. If the proposal adopted by the voters requires the establishment of or a change in director district boundaries pursuant to [section 275.12, subsection 2](#), paragraph “b”, “c”, “d”, or “e”, the school board shall draw the necessary boundaries within forty days after the date of the election. The boundaries shall be drawn according to the requirements of [section 275.23A](#). Following adoption by the school board, the plan shall be submitted to the state commissioner of elections for approval. The new boundaries shall become effective on July 1 following approval.

[C58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.36]

[93 Acts, ch 143, §44; 2002 Acts, ch 1134, §84, 115; 2008 Acts, ch 1115, §42, 71](#)

Referred to in [§275.23A, 278.1](#)

275.37 Increase in number of directors.

At the next succeeding regular school election in a district where the number of directors has been increased from five to seven, and directors are elected at large, there shall be elected a director to succeed each incumbent director whose term is expiring in that year, and two additional directors. Upon organizing as required by [section 279.1](#), either one or two of the newly elected directors who received the fewest votes in the election shall be assigned a term of two years as necessary in order that as nearly as possible one-half of the members of the board shall be elected biennially. If some or all directors are elected from director districts, the board shall assign terms appropriate for the method of election used by the district.

[C58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §275.37, 275.38; C75, 77, 79, 81, §275.37]

[2002 Acts, ch 1134, §85, 115; 2008 Acts, ch 1115, §14, 21](#)

Referred to in [§39.24, 275.38, 277.23, 278.1](#)

275.37A Decrease in number of directors.

1. A change from seven to five directors shall be effected in a district at the first regular school election after authorization by the voters in the following manner:

a. If at the first election in the district there are four terms expiring, two directors shall be elected. At the second election in that district, if three terms are expiring, three directors shall be elected.

b. If at the first election there are three terms expiring, one director shall be elected. At

the second election in that district, if four terms are expiring, three directors shall be elected for a four-year term and one director shall be elected for a two-year term.

2. If some or all of the directors are elected from director districts, the board shall devise a plan to reduce the number of members so that as nearly as possible one-half of the members of the board shall be elected biennially and so that each district will be continuously represented.

2002 Acts, ch 1134, §86, 115; 2008 Acts, ch 1115, §15, 21; 2010 Acts, ch 1033, §37

Referred to in §39.24

275.38 Implementing changed method of election.

If change in the method of election of school directors is approved at an election, the directors who were serving unexpired terms or were elected concurrently with approval of the change of method shall serve out the terms for which they were elected. If the plan adopted is that described in [section 275.12, subsection 2](#), paragraph “b”, “c”, “d”, or “e”, the board shall at the earliest practicable time designate the districts from which residents are to be elected as school directors at each of the next two succeeding regular school elections, arranging so far as possible for elections of directors as residents of the respective districts to coincide with the expiration of terms of incumbent members residing in those districts. If an increase in the size of the board from five to seven members is approved concurrently with the change in method of election of directors, the board shall make the necessary adjustment in the manner prescribed in [section 275.37](#), as well as providing for implementation of the districting plan under [this section](#).

[C75, 77, 79, 81, §275.38]

2008 Acts, ch 1115, §16, 21, 43, 71

275.39 Excluded territory included in new petition.

Territory described in the petition of a proposed reorganization which has been set out of the proposed reorganization by the area education agency board or the joint boards and in the event of an appeal, after the decision of the director of the department of education or the courts, may be included in any new petition for reorganization.

[C62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §275.39]

86 Acts, ch 1245, §1464

275.40 Reserved.

275.41 Alternative method for director elections — temporary appointments.

1. As an alternative to the method specified in [section 275.25](#) for electing directors in a newly formed community school district, the procedure specified in [this section](#) may be used and if used, the petition filed under [section 275.12](#) shall state the number of directors on the initial board. If two districts are named in the petition, either five or seven directors shall serve on the initial board. If three or more districts are named in the petition, either seven or nine directors shall serve on the initial board. The petition shall specify the number of directors to be retained from each district, and those numbers shall be proportionate to the populations of the districts. If the exclusion of territory from a reorganization affects the proportionate balance of directors among the affected districts specified in the petition, or if the proposal specified in the petition does not comply with the requirement for proportionate representation, the area education board shall modify the proposal. However, all districts affected shall retain at least one member.

2. Prior to the organizational meeting of the newly formed district, the boards of the former districts shall designate directors to be retained as members to serve on the initial board, and if the total number of directors determined under [subsection 1](#) is an even number, that number of directors shall function and may within five days of the organizational meeting appoint one additional director by unanimous vote with all directors voting. Otherwise, the board shall function until a special election can be held to elect an additional director. The procedure for calling the special election shall be the procedure specified in [section 275.25](#). If there is an insufficient number of board members eligible to be retained from a former school district, the board of the former school district may appoint members

to fill the vacancies. A vacancy occurs if there is an insufficient number of former board members who reside in the newly formed district or if there is an insufficient number who are willing to serve on the board of the newly formed district.

3. Prior to the effective date of the reorganization, the initial board shall approve a plan that commences at the first regular school election held after the effective date of the merger and is completed at the second regular school election held after the effective date of the merger, to replace the initial board with the regular board. If the petition specifies a number of directors on the regular board to be different from the number of directors on the initial board, the plan shall provide that the number specified in the petition for the regular board is in place by the time the regular board is formed. The plan shall provide that as nearly as possible one-half of the members of the board shall be elected biennially, and if a special election was held to elect a member to create an odd number of members on the board, the term of that member shall end at the organizational meeting following the second regular school election held after the effective date.

4. The board of the newly formed district shall organize within forty-five days after the approval of the merger upon the call of the area education agency administrator. The new board shall have control of the employment of all personnel for the newly formed district for the ensuing school year. Following the organization of the new board the board shall have authority to establish policy, organize curriculum, enter into contracts and complete such planning and take such action as is essential for the efficient management of the newly formed community school district.

5. The board of the newly formed district shall appoint an acting superintendent and an acting board secretary. The appointment of the acting superintendent shall not be subject to the continuing contract provision of [sections 279.20, 279.23, and 279.24](#).

6. [Section 49.8, subsection 5](#), shall not permit a director to remain on the board of a school district after the effective date of a boundary change which places the director's residence outside the boundaries of the district. Vacancies so caused on any board shall be filled in the manner provided in [sections 279.6 and 279.7](#).

[C62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, §275.25; C79, 81, §275.41]

[83 Acts, ch 53, §5; 85 Acts, ch 221, §9; 93 Acts, ch 160, §12, 13; 2005 Acts, ch 3, §58; 2008 Acts, ch 1115, §17, 21; 2009 Acts, ch 41, §248; 2016 Acts, ch 1121, §8](#)

Referred to in [§275.1](#)

275.42 through 275.50 Reserved.

SUBCHAPTER II

DISSOLUTION OF DISTRICTS

275.51 Dissolution commission.

1. As an alternative to school district reorganization prescribed in [this chapter](#), the board of directors of a school district may establish a school district dissolution commission to prepare a proposal of dissolution of the school district and attachment of all of the school district to one or more contiguous school districts and to include in the proposal a division of the assets and liabilities of the dissolving school district. A school district dissolution commission shall be established by the board of directors of a school district if a dissolution proposal has been prepared by eligible electors who reside within the district. The proposal must contain the names of the proposed members of the commission and be accompanied by a petition which has been signed by eligible electors residing in the school district equal in number to at least twenty percent of the registered voters in the school district.

2. The dissolution commission shall consist of seven members appointed by the board for a term of office ending either with a report to the board that no proposal can be approved or on the date of the election on the proposal. Members of the dissolution commission must be eligible electors who reside in the school district, not more than three of whom may be members of the board of directors of the school district. Members shall be appointed from

throughout the school district and should represent the various socioeconomic factors present in the school district.

3. Members of the dissolution commission shall serve without compensation and may be appointed to a subsequent commission. A vacancy on the commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment was made.

4. The board of the school district shall certify to the area education agency board that a commission has been formed, the names and addresses of commission members, and that the commission members represent the various geographic areas and socioeconomic factors present in the district.

[C81, §275.51]

[88 Acts, ch 1263, §3](#); [93 Acts, ch 160, §14](#); [94 Acts, ch 1175, §6](#); [95 Acts, ch 49, §7](#); [2001 Acts, ch 56, §13](#); [2017 Acts, ch 54, §76](#)

275.52 Meetings.

1. The commission shall hold an organizational meeting not more than fifteen days after its appointment and shall elect a chairperson and vice chairperson from its membership. Thereafter the commission may meet as often as deemed necessary upon the call of the chairperson or a majority of the commission members.

2. The commission shall request statements from contiguous school districts outlining each district's willingness to accept attachments of the affected school district to the contiguous districts and what conditions, if any, the contiguous school district recommends. The commission shall meet with boards of contiguous school districts and with residents of the affected school district to the extent possible in drawing up the dissolution proposal.

3. The commission may seek assistance from the area education agency and the department of education.

[C81, §275.52]

[2018 Acts, ch 1041, §75](#)

275.53 Dissolution proposal.

1. The commission shall send a copy of its dissolution proposal or shall inform the board that it cannot agree upon a dissolution proposal not later than one year following the date of the organizational meeting of the commission. If the dissolving school district has outstanding bonds issued under [section 423E.5*](#) or [423F.4](#), the proposal shall require each school district receiving territory from the dissolving district to assume liability for the payment of a portion of such bonds that is equal to the percentage of the total number of resident pupils from the dissolving district who lived in the territory received during the last year of the dissolving district's existence. The commission shall also send a copy of the dissolution proposal to the boards of directors of all school districts to which area of the dissolving school district will be attached. If the board of a district to which area of the dissolving school district will be attached objects to the attachment, within ten days following receipt of the dissolution proposal the board shall send its objections in writing to the commission. The commission may consider the objections and may modify the dissolution proposal. If the dissolution proposal is modified, the commission shall notify the boards of directors of all school districts to which area of the dissolving school district will be attached.

2. Notifications required under [subsection 1](#) shall be delivered using one of the following methods:

- a. Mail bearing a United States postal service postmark.
- b. Hand delivery.
- c. Facsimile transmission.
- d. Electronic delivery.

3. If the commission cannot agree upon a dissolution proposal prior to the expiration of its term, the board may appoint a new commission.

[C81, §275.53]

[2009 Acts, ch 50, §3](#); [2015 Acts, ch 93, §5, 8](#)

*[Chapter 423E](#) repealed effective June 30, 2023, pursuant to terms of former [§423E.7](#); corrective legislation is pending

275.54 Hearing.

1. Within ten days following the filing of the dissolution proposal with the board, the board shall fix a date for a hearing on the proposal which shall not be more than sixty days after the dissolution petition was filed with the board. The board shall publish notice of the date, time, and location of the hearing at least ten days prior to the date of the hearing by one publication in a newspaper in general circulation in the district. The notice shall include the content of the dissolution proposal. A person residing or owning land in the school district may present evidence and arguments at the hearing. The president of the board shall preside at the hearing. The board shall review testimony from the hearing and shall adopt or amend and adopt the dissolution proposal.

2. The board shall notify the boards of directors of all school districts to which area of the affected school district will be attached and the director of the department of education of the contents of the dissolution proposal adopted by the board. The notification shall be delivered using one of the following methods:

- a. Mail bearing a United States postal service postmark.
- b. Hand delivery.
- c. Facsimile transmission.
- d. Electronic delivery.

3. If the board of a district to which area of the affected school district will be attached objects to the attachment, that portion of the dissolution proposal will not be included in the proposal voted upon under [section 275.55](#) and the director of the department of education shall attach the area to a contiguous school district.

4. a. If the board of a district to which area of the dissolving school district will be attached objects to the division of assets and liabilities contained in the dissolution proposal, the matter shall be decided by a panel of disinterested arbitrators. The panel shall consist of one arbitrator selected jointly by affected districts objecting to the provisions of the dissolution proposal, one selected jointly by the affected districts in favor of the provisions of the dissolution proposal, and one selected by the dissolving district. If the number of arbitrators selected is even, a disinterested arbitrator shall be selected by the administrator of the area education agency to which the dissolving district belongs. The decision of the arbitrators shall be made in writing and filed with the secretary of each affected school district. A party to the proceedings may appeal the decision to the district court by serving notice on the secretary of each affected school district within twenty days after the decision is filed. The appeal shall be tried in equity and a decree entered determining the entire matter, including the levy, collection, and distribution of any necessary taxes.

b. If the dissolving district has outstanding bonds issued under [section 423E.5*](#) or [423F.4](#), the arbitrators' decision and any decision of the court on appeal shall require each school district receiving territory from the dissolving district to assume liability for the payment of a portion of such bonds that is equal to the percentage of the total number of resident pupils from the dissolving district who lived in the territory received during the last year of the dissolving district's existence.

5. If a dissolution proposal adopted by a board contains provisions that ninety-five percent or more of the taxable valuation of the dissolving district would be assumed and attached to a single school district, the dissolving school district shall cease further proceedings to dissolve and shall comply with reorganization procedures specified in [this chapter](#).

[C81, §275.54]

[86 Acts, ch 1245, §1465](#); [2009 Acts, ch 50, §4](#); [2015 Acts, ch 93, §6, 8](#)

*[Chapter 423E](#) repealed effective June 30, 2023, pursuant to terms of former [§423E.7](#); corrective legislation is pending

275.55 Election.

1. After the final hearing on the dissolution proposal, the board of the school district shall submit the proposition to the voters at the next election held on a date specified in [section 39.2, subsection 4](#), paragraph "c". However, the date of the final hearing on the dissolution proposal must be not less than thirty nor more than sixty days before the election. The proposition submitted to the voters residing in the school district shall describe each separate area to be attached to a contiguous school district and shall name the school district to which

it will be attached. In addition to the description, a map may be included in the summary of the question on the ballot.

2. The board shall give written notice of the election to the county commissioner of elections. The county commissioner of elections shall give notice of the election by one publication in the same newspaper in which the previous notice was published about the hearing, which publication shall not be less than four nor more than twenty days prior to the election.

3. The proposition shall be adopted if a majority of the electors voting on the proposition approve its adoption.

4. a. (1) If the proposition was approved by voters pursuant to [this section](#) prior to January 1, 2025, the attachment is effective July 1 following its approval.

(2) If the proposition was approved by voters pursuant to [this section](#) on or after January 1, 2025, the attachment is effective July 1 in the calendar year immediately subsequent to the calendar year in which the attachment was approved.

b. If the dissolution proposal is for the dissolution of a school district with a certified enrollment of fewer than six hundred, the territory located in the school district that dissolved is eligible, if approved by the director of the department of education, for a reduction in the foundation property tax levy under [section 257.3, subsection 1](#). If the director approves a reduction in the foundation property tax levy as provided in [this section](#), the director shall notify the director of the department of management of the reduction.

5. For bonds issued under [section 423E.5*](#) or [423F.4](#), the approval of the dissolution at election creates a lien on the revenues from the secure an advanced vision for education fund received by the district to which liability for payment of a portion of such bonds, subject to the same priority as provided by the dissolving school district. However, such a lien is limited to the extent required to satisfy payments for the portion of the liability assigned to the district.

[C81, §275.55]

[88 Acts, ch 1263, §4](#); [89 Acts, ch 135, §69](#); [2002 Acts, ch 1134, §87, 115](#); [2008 Acts, ch 1115, §44, 71](#); [2009 Acts, ch 50, §5](#); [2015 Acts, ch 93, §7, 8](#); [2025 Acts, ch 2, §2, 3](#)

Referred to in [§257.3, 275.54](#)

2025 amendment to subsection 4 applies retroactively to January 1, 2025; 2025 Acts, ch 2, §3

*[Chapter 423E](#) repealed effective June 30, 2023, pursuant to terms of former [§423E.7](#); corrective legislation is pending

Subsection 4 amended

275.55A Attendance in other district.

A student enrolled in ninth, tenth, or eleventh grade during the school year preceding the effective date of a dissolution proposal, who was a resident of the school district that dissolved, may enroll in a school district to which territory of the school district that dissolved was attached until the student's graduation from high school, unless the student was expelled or suspended from school and the conditions of expulsion or suspension have not been met. The student under expulsion or suspension shall not be enrolled until the board of directors of the school district to which territory of the dissolved school district was attached approves, by majority vote, the enrollment of the student. Notwithstanding [section 282.24](#), the district of residence of the student, determined in the dissolution proposal, shall pay tuition to the school district selected by the student in an amount not to exceed the district cost per pupil of the district of residence and the school district selected by the student shall accept that tuition payment and enroll the student.

[88 Acts, ch 1263, §5](#); [95 Acts, ch 218, §26](#)

Referred to in [§282.9, 291.6](#)

275.56 Increasing enrollment.

If the enrollment of a school district increases or is expected to increase because an adjacent district has dissolved or is expected to dissolve, the board of directors of the school district shall determine whether there is a need to hire additional licensed or unlicensed employees. If the board of directors determines that there is a need to hire additional employees, the board shall determine the nature and number of the necessary new positions. Individuals who were employees of the dissolved district may apply for the new positions. The board shall hire those applicants who were employees of the dissolved district whenever the applicant is

licensed for the new position or, in the case of unlicensed personnel, is otherwise qualified. If two employees of the dissolved district apply for a single licensed position, the applicant who is best qualified in the opinion of the board shall be hired. The board is not required to hire applicants who were employees of the dissolved district if the district has been dissolved for one or more school years. Applicants who are reemployed under [this section](#) shall maintain in the reemploying district vacation, salary or alternatively placement on a salary schedule based on the employee's years of experience, sick leave, and completion of probationary status as defined by [section 279.19](#).

[C81, §275.56]

[89 Acts, ch 265, §40](#); [2012 Acts, ch 1023, §157](#)

275.57 Changing director district boundaries following dissolution.

1. If a school district accepting attachments of a dissolved district is currently divided into director districts as provided in [section 275.12, subsection 2](#), paragraph “b”, “c”, “d”, or “e”, the board of directors of the district shall draft a proposal to incorporate the newly received territory into existing contiguous director districts. If the attached territory is contiguous to more than one director district, the board may divide the territory and attach it to more than one director district. If necessary to comply with the population equality standards prescribed in [section 275.23A](#), the board shall redraw the boundaries of all director districts according to the standards provided in [section 275.23A, subsection 1](#), paragraphs “a”, “c”, and “d”.

2. A public hearing on the proposed changes to director districts shall be held no later than May 15 following the dissolution. Not less than ten nor more than twenty days before the public hearing, the board shall publish notice of the time and place of the hearing.

3. The final plan for the assignment of attached lands and any other boundary changes made shall be adopted by resolution of the board. The resolution shall contain a legal description of the new director district boundaries and a map of the director district boundaries changed by the resolution. A copy of the resolution shall be filed with the county commissioners of elections of each county in which a portion of the school district is located. The resolution shall also be filed with the state commissioner of elections not later than June 15. The boundary changes shall take effect upon approval by the state commissioner of elections for the next regular school election, but not later than July 1.

[2002 Acts, ch 1134, §88, 115](#)

Referred to in [§256.11](#)