

BILL

ORIGINAL

YEAR

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
 2           An act relating to the School Board of Lee County;  
 3           providing for a referendum to increase the number of  
 4           school board members from five to seven; providing an  
 5           effective date.

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 7 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:  
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9           Section 1. (1) Upon submission by the School Board of Lee  
 10 County of a proposition to increase the number of school board  
 11 members from five to seven, the Supervisor of Elections of Lee  
 12 County shall submit the proposition to the qualified electors of  
 13 Lee County in a general election. Before the proposition is  
 14 submitted to the electors, the school board must adopt a plan of  
 15 apportionment for the seven-member board. The proposition  
 16 submitted by the school board shall include a ballot statement,  
 17 and the plan must be included as part of the ballot statement.

18           (2) If the proposition is approved by the electors, the  
 19 school board has the authority to establish a seven-member board  
 20 according to the plan adopted by the school board and approved  
 21 by the electors.

22           (3) Such a proposition shall not be submitted to the  
 23 electors more than once in any 5-year period.

24           Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

# Request to Expand Lee County School Board Membership

On Tuesday, April 3, 2013, the Lee County School Board passed a resolution requesting the Florida Legislature to grant them the authority to place before its citizens a referendum to expand their board membership from five to seven members. The referendum would be put on the general election ballot in November of 2014 and if approved, the two new members would be elected for the first time in 2016. The board asked the Legislature to model the authority after a bill passed for the Polk School District in 1996 where that board would determine as part of the referendum how the board members would be apportioned. In August of 2013, the School Board added this request to their Platform for 2014 Legislative Issues.

Every district that is larger than Lee County in public school student population or general population for the county has already expanded their board memberships beyond 5 members. The next largest districts below Polk and Lee are significantly smaller both by student and county population figures (Brevard; Seminole; and, Volusia). They have not expanded their board memberships, as of yet, but it would take a while for any of those districts to reach the population/student levels for Lee and Polk.

District	Population	Student Membership	# of Board Members
Miami Dade	2,551,290	352,234.57	9 single member
Broward	1,771,099	260,107.96	7 (7 single + 2 at-large)
Palm Beach	1,335,415	179,834.25	7 single member
Hillsborough	1,256,118	199,475.20	7 single member
Orange	1,175,941	184,452.13	8 (1 at-large chair + 7 single member)
Pinellas	920,381	102,752.24	7 (4 single member + 3 at-large)
Duval	869,729	127,702.22	7 single member
Lee	638,029	86,550.00	5 at-large
Polk	606,888	95,916.97	7 at-large
Brevard	545,625	70,508.33	5 at-large

The attached bill draft will be offered by Rep. Caldwell at the December 3 Lee County Legislative Delegation Hearing. The draft local bill language copies the process utilized when the Polk County School Board considered and adopted a board membership expansion. That was the most recent board to expand. If any member of the delegation has any questions or concerns about this request, please contact Bob Cerra the cell or email below.

Bob Cerra – [bobcerra@comcast.net](mailto:bobcerra@comcast.net) – (850) 212-6233



## RESOLUTION

**WHEREAS**, Article IX, Section 4 of the Florida Constitution provides that a school board shall be composed of five or more members; and


**WHEREAS**, the population of Lee County, Florida has increased from 335,113 in 1990 to 625,310 in 2010; and

**WHEREAS**, increased school board membership is needed to ensure representation of all constituents of the District, and

**NOW, THEREFORE** the School Board of Lee County resolves to request the Florida Legislature pass a bill authorizing the School Board of Lee County to place a measure on the ballot to increase the membership of the Lee County School Board from five to seven in the following format:

The Lee County School Board may submit to the qualified electors of Lee County in the 2014 general election a proposition to increase the number of school board members from five to seven. The two additional members shall first be elected in 2016. Before submitting the proposition to the electors, the Board must adopt a plan of apportionment for the seven-member board. That plan must be included as part of the ballot statement.

Adopted at a regular meeting of The School Board of Lee County, Florida  
This Second day of April 2013

  
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Mary B. Fischer  
Chairperson