



**SUBJECT:** 2022 municipal election planning and advocacy

**TO:** Corporate Services, Strategy, Risk & Accountability Cttee.

**FROM:** Office of the City Clerk

Report Number: CL-32-21

Wards Affected: All

File Numbers:

Date to Committee: November 10, 2021

Date to Council: November 10, 2021

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**Recommendation:**

Request the Halton District School Board and Halton Catholic District School Board schedule a Professional Development Day on Municipal and School Board Election Day, October 24, 2022; and

Forward a copy of this resolution to the Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; the Honourable Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education; the Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario; the Association of Municipalities of Ontario; Region of Halton; Town of Halton Hills; Town of Milton and Town of Oakville.

**PURPOSE:**

Requesting the support of Burlington City Council in advocating for a Professional Development Day on Municipal Election Day October 24, 2022.

**Vision to Focus Alignment:**

- Building more citizen engagement, community health and culture

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**Background and Discussion:**

Municipal and School Board elections are planned and delivered in accordance with policies and procedures that are necessary to conduct an election in a manner that reflects the principles of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996, SO 1996, c32, as amended*,

(MEA) as amended, and its regulations. The Office of the City Clerk is responsible for administering municipal elections in a fair and objective manner and strives to deliver progressive and innovative elections.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to be an evolving public health concern. Staff continues to monitor guidance from public health authorities and observe trends and practices in elections. A number of Ontario municipalities have held by-elections during the peak of the pandemic, and through their experiences we must consider its impact on all election processes, including securing and safe operation of voting locations, and the hiring of Voting Day staff.

When determining voting locations, the City relies on the school facilities provided by both school boards as voting locations in municipal and school board elections. Schools provide accessible and community based voting locations and it is our intention to utilize space in schools in the 2022 municipal election to be held October 24, 2022.

Similar to 2017, we have begun discussions with both the Halton District School Board and the Halton Catholic District School Board on the possibility of designating voting day as a Professional Development (PD) day. Strategically this is ideal, as there are consistent concerns for student safety, in addition to public health concerns with COVID-19 in schools. While we were unsuccessful in obtaining the PD day in 2018, other jurisdictions were. For 2022 The Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO) a professional association of municipal administrators in Ontario has taken an advocacy approach for PD days across Ontario.

## **Strategy/process**

### Determining Voting Locations

Physical voting locations for advance voting and voting day will be determined by the City Clerk, in accordance with the MEA. Additional locations and advance voting opportunities will be considered to address wait times and to allow for physical distancing, following public health guidance.

Municipalities across Ontario are working to partner with local school boards to ease the stress of using these facilities as voting locations. While legislation allows the Clerk to use schools as polling stations, getting the support of local principals may be difficult. This will be particularly challenging in the midst of a pandemic.

### Advocacy by AMCTO

Advocating for voting day to be designated as PD day for school boards is supported by AMCTO. AMCTO have requested, in successive submissions, amendments to the MEA, requesting that the Province mandate a Province-wide PD Day. In an effort to find an interim 'non-legislative' solution to this problem. The Association President recently

issued a letter to all school boards advocating for this change. In addition, they have emailed its membership with a communique and a draft resolution for Council's to consider. Advocacy materials are attached as Appendix A. Council lending their support may help persuade the School Boards, and administration. Therefore, staff recommend that Council support this advocacy work and request the Halton District School Board, Halton Catholic District School Board, Conseil scolaire Viamonde, and scolaire catholique MonAvenir to schedule a Professional Development Day on Municipal and School Board Election Day, October 24, 2022.

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### **Financial Matters:**

None.

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### **Climate Implications**

None.

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### **Engagement Matters:**

Although there are no significant regional implications associated with this report, it should be noted that the local Municipal Clerks in Halton Region will be working closely with the Regional Clerk to ensure that the vote is compiled for the Regional Chair position.

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### **Conclusion:**

The City Clerk requests Council's support in advocating that school boards declare a PD day for voting day, October 24, 2022 to ensure student safety, the greatest possible use of the facility, respecting COVID health and safety protocols, physical distancing and limitations on capacities that may still be in place in 2022.

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Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Arjoon

City Clerk

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**Appendices:**

- A. AMCTO Advocacy Background Material

**Report Approval:**

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Counsel.