



City and Borough of Juneau
City & Borough Manager's Office
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TO: Deputy Mayor Smith and CBJ Borough Assembly
FROM: Katie Koester, City Manager
DATE: May 29, 2025
RE: Rank Choice Voting as it Applies to Juneau School Board Elections

The purpose of this memo is to organize Assembly discussion on proposed Ordinance 2025-13vHRC "An Ordinance Amending the Election Procedures Code to Include General Procedures for Ballot Count, Relating to Ranked Choice Voting."

Assemblymember Adkison has proposed Ordinance 2025-13vHRC to implement rank choice voting (RCV) for CBJ Assembly races. This was discussed at the [February 3](#) and [March 3](#) HRC meetings and forwarded to the COW for further discussion. At the HRC there was debate on whether to proceed with RCV for all CBJ elections (Assembly and School Board) or just Assembly races. There was concern that to apply RCV to the School Board races, there would have to be designated seats. Since then, our voting machine contractor, Dominion, has confirmed that CBJ can implement RCV for both races, using the cascading style of RCV, without the School Board changing their practices. There is a helpful video that can be found [here](#) that explains how RCV works in multi seat races.

What About Multimember Races (Board of Education)

The sponsor met with the Mayor, President of the Board of Education, and Superintendent Hauser and requested the Board of Education's comments on the proposed changes to elections. The Board of Education is meeting on Friday May 30th to discuss and provide their input to the body.

The draft version of Ordinance 2025-13 in your packet today has one change from the version forwarded from HRC; it clarifies how multi-member races will be counted. This makes it possible for RCV to be implemented without making candidates choose designated seats (Board of Education).

Election Results Timing

Election staff's current practice is to release election results on Election night and provide periodic updates until the election is certified two weeks later. While the results are not official until every vote is counted, the updated total on the Friday after the election has been highly predictive of the final results. Under RCV, staff would be able to provide periodic updates to *first choice* vote numbers, like the State of Alaska. By the Friday after the election the public would likely know the eventual winners for: ballot propositions, races with only two candidates, and races with three or more candidates if one candidate has more than 50% of the vote share. Staff cannot begin the rank choice process until after the Canvass Review Board meets – that means that close races and races for multimember seats would not be known until two weeks after the election.

Cost

There is a onetime \$14,000 cost for implementation with an annual cost of \$10,000 for software licensing fees. The Assembly may want to appropriate additional funds in year one for voter education.

Implementation Timing

There is no way to implement RCV by the October 2025 election. However, the Clerk's Office has asked that any changes pass by late January to allow sufficient time for the new software model.

Enc:
2.3.2025 Memo on Ranked Choice Voting
Ordinance 2025-13vHRC with staff amendment
Sample Ballots