February 21, 2014

TO: Members of the Los Angeles County Committee on School District Organization (County Committee)

FROM: Keith D. Crafton, Secretary of the County Committee

SUBJECT: Cancellation of the March 5, 2014, Regular Meeting of the County Committee

The regular meeting of the County Committee scheduled for Wednesday, March 5, 2014, has been CANCELLED. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 2, 2014, at 9:30 a.m.

Newspaper Articles

- A January 10, 2014, article from the Antelope Valley Times—“Palmdale files notice of appeal on voting rights lawsuit.” (Attachment 1)
- A January 10, 2014, article from the Record Gazette—“Beaumont school board approves re-districting trustee areas.” (Attachment 2)
- A January 24, 2014, article from the Simi Valley Acorn—“Wood Ranch Elementary added to Simi’s School of Choice list.” (Attachment 3)
- A January 24, 2014, article from the OC Register—“Threat of legal action prompts election changes.” (Attachment 4)
- A January 24, 2014, article from the OC Register—“Anaheim district elections far from certain.” (Attachment 5)
- A January 31, 2014, article from 89.3 KPPC—“Judge refuses to halt Whittier Latino voting rights lawsuit.” (Attachment 6)
• A February 5, 2014, article from Bloomberg—“Baton Rouge’s Rich Want New Town to keep Poor Pupils Out: Taxes.” (Attachment 7)

• A February 6, 2014, article from the Fresno Bee—“Judge approves City Council district elections in Visalia to end lawsuit.” (Attachment 8)

• A February 11, 2014, article from the Press-Enterprise—“MORENO VALLEY: Schools may change how trustees elected.” (Attachment 9)

• A February 11, 2014, article from the Antelope Valley Times—“Expert to analyze Lancaster’s compliance with Voting Rights Act.” (Attachment 10)

• A February 12, 2014, article from the Desert Sun—“Matt Monica plans to run for College of the Desert Board of Trustees.” (Attachment 11)

• A February 12, 2014, article from the Whittier Daily News—“Whittier College president Sharon Herzberger stands by decision to deny tenure.” (Attachment 12)

• A February 18, 2014, article from the Desert Sun—“Desert Water Agency pressured to forgo at-large electoral system.” (Attachment 13)

Legislative Review

Attached is a review of pending legislation related to school district organization. (Attachment 14)

School District Organization Proposals

Updated versions of the following two documents are provided for your information:

• “Summary of Los Angeles Unified School District Reorganization Proposals.” (Attachment 15)

• “Summary of Los Angeles County School District Reorganization Proposals (excluding those affecting the Los Angeles Unified School District).” (Attachment 16)

Please call me at (562) 922-6144 if you have any questions or concerns.

KDC/AD/EH:ah
Attachments
PALMDALE – The City of Palmdale filed a notice of appeal this week on the Final Statement of Decision in the voting rights lawsuit, which now stays the Final Statement issued on Dec. 23 and means that there will not be district elections in Palmdale in June.

“This is actually our second appeal in the voting rights case,” said City Attorney Matthew Ditzhazy. “What we filed [Wednesday] is an appeal of Judge Mooney’s Final Order which permanently enjoins at-large elections, prematurely terminates the terms of the existing councilmembers, and orders a district-based election on June 3,” Ditzhazy said. “Our appeal puts everything on hold until the Court of Appeals can rule on it, which means there will be no Palmdale election in June.”

“The first appeal was filed in November and it dealt primarily with the certification of our November elections and with why the trial court’s temporary injunction was improper,” Ditzhazy continued. “At that election, Frederick Thompson was elected to Council along with Tom Lackey who was re-elected for his third term. Jim Ledford was re-elected Mayor for his 11th term. We are waiting for the Court of Appeals to allow the City to certify that election so we can swear in our duly elected Council.”

Thompson, a retired community college dean who formerly served on the Palmdale Planning Commission and Palmdale School District board, became the first African-American to win a City Council seat, but not the first minority candidate, to win a Citywide election.
“It’s ironic, and frankly sad, that the plaintiffs’ attempts to stop the city’s at-large election has resulted in preventing an African-American from holding office,” said Deputy City Attorney Noel Doran. “A year ago, the plaintiffs trumpeted Mr. Thompson’s prior inability to get elected to the City Council as evidence that Latinos and African-Americans lacked access to the political process. Now that he’s been elected, they question whether or not he was the minority ‘candidate of choice.’”

“We will continue to work toward protecting our citizens’ constitutional right to determine the manner and method of electing their city leaders,” said Doran.
The Beaumont school board approved a resolution on Jan. 7, to change the electoral system from an at-large system to a by-trustee area voted on only by residents who live in that particular geographic section of town.

They also approved the waiver that allows them to bypass having an election for the voters to decide whether they wanted to keep the at-large system.

The waiver vote was 3-2, with Susie Lara and Wayne Hackney voting no.

The board heard a presentation at the Dec. 10, 2013 meeting on how this system would work.

Attorney Todd Robbins said there are three ways under the 2002 California Voting Rights Act to hold an election:

- At-large, where all voters can vote for candidates of choice;
- A from-trustee area, where the trustee presides over the district where they live and all voters can still choose a candidate;
- A by-trustee area, where there are five separate areas like the above scenario but only residents can vote for candidates in their geographic district.

Robbins said the board might want to consider adopting a resolution containing a waiver that prevents them from litigation risks.

The board needed to hold a public hearing Tuesday night so that they could meet the 60-day lead time to get on the State Board agenda, said Robbins.

The by-trustee area would be divided into five sections.

Should this be approved by the state board, all of the trustees seats are safe.

But there is an election in November 2014, in which Lara’s, Janelle Poulter’s and Margaret DeLongchamp’s seats are up for re-election.
Susie Lara asked Robbins about the possibility that if trustee David Sanchez was in the newly-redesigned district, then Janelle Poulter couldn’t run.

Robbins said that would be correct.

Board president DeLongchamp asked Robbins if they have to re-do the trustee area every time there is a census. Robbins said yes.

Sanchez brought up the point that every board member is geographically separated in their respective districts.

Superintendent Maureen Latham said that the presentation was more of an information item on Dec. 10 and that it would be placed as an agenda item for the Jan. 7 meeting.

Poulter said she was in favor of the waiver.

“In the long run, I think it’s better so we don’t get sued,” said Poulter.

If the public had decided they wanted to keep the at-large method of electing board members, Hackney said the school district could get sued.

Robbins said that the liability factor is potentially great for the board.

Tuesday night’s meeting did not draw many residents to speak on the issue. But the city of Beaumont showed up, including city manager Alan Kapanicas, city attorney Joe Aklufi, police chief Frank Coe, new mayor Brenda Knight and council members David Castaldo and Roger Berg.

DeForge was already at the school board meeting because he is an employee of the district. City staff member Kelsey Gormley also attended the meeting.

The city was interested in what direction the school board was heading because it is doing research on the pros and cons of redistricting its council members.

Della Condon, a Beaumont resident, has a Ph.d. in educational management from USC and also did post-doctorate work with the American Council of Education in Washington, D.C., working with school boards.

Condon was very emphatic about the dangers of changing to trustee only areas for the board members.

“Citizens deserve the right to select all board members because each elected individual affects all our children equally,” said Condon. “Boards elected from sequestered districts become polarized from other board members, identifying with their specific area instead of all the district’s children.”

Condon also said that this method encourages political climbers to run for school board so they can improve their visibility for other elected offices and that special interest groups may seek to control the shape of the school board.

Their reasons would be financial in nature, such as seeking to control contracts for bond projects.

Attorney Robbins was at the meeting Tuesday night and took questions from the board.
David Sanchez asked if the California Voter Rights Act had gone through the court system. Robbins said that it has withstood challenge and is still a good law.

Janelle Poulter had a simple question. "In the plainest language, why would a district want to do this?"

Robbins said that the at-large election method doesn’t allow the voices of minority groups to elect the candidate of their choice.

This puts a school district in a litigious situation. The at-large method gives a plaintiff the opportunity to show that racially-polarized voting exists.

Robbins said in one instance, a school district had to pay $1.8 million.

“There’s a lot of money floating around for plaintiffs so they’re looking for vulnerable districts,” he said.

Susie Lara said she believes that all five board members and the school district look out for all groups.

Lara praised speaker Condon for her insight into the issue.

“She said it so well and I agree with her so much,” said Lara.

She also was concerned about creating problems where there aren’t any and that it isn’t in the best interest of the school district.

“It could create a lot of problems in the community if we go to trustee areas,” said Lara.

Her advice would be to slow down and really study the issue and give the voters a say on whether they want trustee-only areas.

Janelle Poulter said she felt that the board was very diverse in their residences within Beaumont and Cherry Valley.

Questions arose about if certain ethnic groups wanted their candidate on the school board.

Robbins said that if candidate “A” was elected but candidate “B” was the voters choice, that is evidence of racially polarized voting.

Sanchez said he doesn’t doubt that the current school board would remain objective in making decisions for the children and the school district.

“I have faith and trust in all five of us to come up with something that is fair,” said Sanchez.

Board president Margaret DeLongchamp said it looked to her that water districts, school districts and city councils were all going to change to trustee areas in the future.

City attorney Joe Aklufi spoke to the board and said that city manager Alan Kapanicas has directed him and city staff to research the issue to see whether it would be viable for the city.

“It doesn’t seem to be an issue in the city just yet,” said Aklufi.
City Councilman David Castaldo said that studies show that the Anglo race in California is less than 50 percent so that the minorities are the majority in this state.

But he pointed out that the communities in Beaumont are ethnically diverse.

Janelle Poulter wasn’t sure that the city needed to get involved in the school district’s decision.

“The issues for the city and the issues for the schools are two different things,” said Poulter.

City Manager Alan Kapanicas said that the city will take its lead from the schools on whether to change its council to trustee-areas.

Poulter said she would rather hear from the public than the city council at the meeting.

Lloyd White, who wanted to run for the school board, would not be eligible if the trustees voted for trustee-only areas.

He agreed that the school district and the board looks out for all kids but was concerned that the board was moving too fast on the issue.

“There’s no reason you can’t go slow on this,” said White.

The board approved the Scenario 1 map unanimously, the transitioning from at-large to trustee-only by a 4-1 vote, with Lara dissenting; held a public hearing and approved the waiver 3-2, with Hackney and Lara dissenting.

Jim Love told the board that this new voting system would take away his right to vote every two years and change it to every four years.

He also felt that they were being persuaded by the attorney to make this choice.

“Don’t vote out of fear,” said Love. “Vote out of what you know is best for the people of this district.”

Councilman Roger Berg said that Beaumont has changed tremendously over the years and that Beaumont is more diverse than when he was born and grew up there.

But he also wanted to see if Beaumont had a problem before going ahead with the plan.

CSEA President Diane Lockwood said that the California School Employees Association hadn’t met yet and questioned the wording on the agenda item.

“We are not in agreement with what you’re voting on,” said Lockwood.
Wood Ranch Elementary added to Simi’s School of Choice list

Attorney calls for switch to district voting for SVUSD board members

By Rick Hazeltine

hazeltine@theacorn.com

For the first time, families outside the boundaries of Wood Ranch Elementary School may choose to enroll in the school beginning next year, Simi Valley Unified School District Superintendent Kathy Scroggin announced at the district board meeting Jan. 14 at City Hall.

Families can apply for a School of Choice during February. Applications will be available from Feb. 3 to 28 at the school of choice.

Hollow Hills and Vista fundamental schools are not available on a choice basis. Wood Ranch had previously been closed to those outside its boundaries because it was at capacity with neighborhood families. All other SVUSD elementary schools are available on a choice basis.

The deadline for applications to be submitted is 4 p.m. Fri., Feb. 28 at the school of choice.

Applications will also be accepted at SVUSD’s three middle schools and three high schools.

Selection will be made by lottery, and a waiting list will be created if needed.

Scroggin also announced that Santa Susana High School has received a $50,000 Specialized Secondary Program grant. The money will be used to launch an advanced robotics and engineering program.
She said that for the 2014-15 school year, the district plans to make Hillside Middle School a performing and technical arts program and that the school would work with Santa Susana, which has academies for technical arts and visual and performing arts.

Simi Valley High will also add a manufacturing class through its Regional Occupation Program, and Royal High will begin an International Baccalaureate program.

In other action at the Tuesday board meeting, SVUSD attorney Robert Thurbon told the board it is likely the district would be legally challenged under the California Voting Rights Act because of “polarized voting.”

The act protects underrepresented groups and has forced many school districts to switch from at-large to by-district representation on school boards.

Thurbon noted that Simi Valley’s population is 23 percent Hispanic/Latino, and that a court would likely determine that group of citizens is not adequately represented on the school board because the district elects trustees on an at-large basis. At-large elections mean the top vote-getters fill positions regardless of where they live. A by-district format means candidates would have to live in the district for which they run.

The board agreed to spend up to $30,000 to hire a consulting company to prepare a demographic report on the city and to suggest boundaries for five districts. Thurbon indicated the board should consider changing the election format when trustees Arleigh Kidd and Jeanne Davis are up for reelection in November.
The threat of lawsuits over minority voting rights is prompting cities and school districts throughout the state to change from at-large to district elections rather than face millions in legal fees.

Citing those costs, the Anaheim City Council agreed this month to set aside its opposition to the change and settle one such lawsuit. As a result, the city's voters will decide in November whether to switch from citywide to district elections, which make it easier for geographic concentrations of ethnic minorities to elect members of their community.

Anaheim was the fifth city in the state and the first in the county to settle such a suit.

In the wake of the Anaheim lawsuit, the city's high school district voted to change to district elections and the city's elementary school district began study of a possible switch, although no suit has been filed against either. So far, 87 school districts statewide have moved to district elections.

At least six more Orange County cities are vulnerable to similar lawsuits, which stem from the vaguely defined California Voting Rights Act of 2001.

An American Civil Liberties Union attorney handling the case against Anaheim wouldn't rule out further suits, but said he hoped other cities would follow the lead of the Anaheim high school district and make the change on their own.
“It behooves every city in Orange County to ask their city attorney to look at voting patterns and if there's a problem, establish district elections,” ACLU lawyer Bardis Vakili said.

While at least one council member – in Buena Park – has such a request pending, most officials contacted by the Register preferred the citywide elections that put them into office. However, the reality of huge legal fees has overridden opposition to district elections in the cases brought so far.

By the time of the Anaheim settlement, the city had already racked up more than $1.26 million in legal bills. If it had continued to trial and lost the case, it would have had to pay the plaintiffs' legal fees as well. Because of the settlement, the city is instead negotiating how much of plaintiffs' $1 million in costs it will cover.

“If I think it was important to settle, because it ensured full dismissal of the case so that we did not continue to accrue legal fees,” Anaheim Councilwoman Kris Murray told the Register after the vote.

But she stood by her position that all council members should be accountable to all voters, and that Latinos were already being elected to the council in adequate numbers.

“I am still opposed to a form of single-member district election,” she said.

Latinos make up 32 percent of Anaheim's voting-age citizens, according to census data. There are currently no Latino council members, and only one has been elected in the past 10 years.

Critics of local district elections warn that district council members have little motivation to look at concerns beyond the districts that elect them. Advocates say that in additional to helping ensure proportional representation by ethnicity and geography, campaigning by district is much cheaper and makes it possible for more citizens to run for office.

Buena Park Councilman Art Brown is among potential advocates for district elections in his city, which census data says is 30 percent Latino and 25 percent Asian among citizens of voting age.

“I recognize the demographics of the city,” Brown said. “Several people of Mexican descent have run but they haven't been able to get elected.”
In the wake of a related ruling in Palmdale – now on appeal by the city – Brown asked Buena Park's city attorney to report back on the issue and said he's inclined to support any subsequent recommendation to institute district elections.

But the very idea of special provisions to help minority voters strikes some as wrong.

“To put race above all in elections – I'm not sure that's good civics,” Fullerton Councilman Bruce Whitaker said. “I don't think you have to be a particular race to be sensitive.”

Whitaker's view could find conflict with the law. His city's citizens of voting age are 23 percent Latino and 20 percent Asian, but just one Latino and one Asian have been elected to the council in the past 20 years.

Beside Buena Park and Fullerton, the cities of Costa Mesa, Fountain Valley, Garden Grove and Tustin also could be vulnerable to such lawsuits.

**Law called vague**

The federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 has been used for decades to force district elections to empower minority voters, but typically requires the change create at least one district with a majority of the ethnic minority electorate. If that majority cannot be achieved, district elections are not required.

There's no such threshold in the California Voting Rights Act. State legislators decided rather than meet the majority threshold, which would allow the protected ethnic class to elect its candidate of choice, newly drawn districts need only to allow the ethnic class to more proportionately “influence” the outcome of an election.

Because no CVRA lawsuits have been fought in court to conclusion, there are no established threshold precedents.

“California law is so vague, it's impossible for cities to tell if they're in violation or not,” said Douglas Johnson, a districting expert who worked as a consultant for the city in the Anaheim suit.

Districting consultant Paul Mitchell, whose clients have included parties on both sides of the suits, agreed the law is unclear.
“You have a lot of jurisdictions that say, ‘We don't think we're in violation, but we don't want to be sued so we'll change,’” Mitchell said.

But sometimes cities are closer to a violation than their elected officials think, he said. Fountain Valley Councilman John Collins may be one of those officials.

Fountain Valley's citizens of voting age are 35 percent Asian – mostly Vietnamese Americans – but the city has elected just one Asian council member in the past decade. Collins said the city is integrated, leaving no benefit from district elections.

“There aren't really large Vietnamese pockets,” said Collins, a councilman since 1990.

After Collins' comment, the Register asked Mitchell to analyze the city's electorate. He divided the city into five districts, including one in the northeast corner in which Asians made up 53 percent of the citizens of voting age. A district south of Interstate 405, meanwhile, had just an 18 percent Asian electorate.

So the city is more segregated than Collins thought – but that's not enough to establish a violation of the CVRA. There must also be racially polarized voting – that is, ethnic voters must have a track record of not being able to elect their preferred candidate while other voters tend not to vote for that candidate.

“The next step would be to look at the local races for signs of racially polarized voting,” Mitchell said. “But, I don't have that data at my fingertips.”

**The Latino vote**

A state voting rights lawsuit against the city of Escondido said there was racially polarized voting – even though one of the five council members was Latina and the city's Latino electorate is 25 percent of the population. Despite that, a lower court ruled in favor of the plaintiff and the city eventually settled.

That's largely because the Latina councilwoman didn't live in the predominantly Latino urban core, and precinct results showed that voters in that core preferred different Latino candidates.

Another twist in the law can be seen in Garden Grove, which has an electorate that's 38 percent Asian. And Asians have accounted for 33 percent of the winners of council and mayoral elections in the past decade.
It's been a different story for the 24 percent of the city's Latino citizens of voting age – none of the six Latino candidates since 1994 has been successful.

“Latinos just aren't as likely to vote,” said Garden Grove Councilman Chris Phan, citing voter data used by his campaign to determine which households were most likely to cast ballots.

However, neither the federal nor state voting rights acts takes voting propensity into account. That's because lower-income and lesser-educated populations – a category Latinos fall into disproportionately – are less likely to vote, and voters unable to elect their preferred candidates are less likely to bother turning out at the polls.

Even cities in which no Latino candidates have run in the past decade – such as Costa Mesa, where 20 percent of the electorate is Latino but no Latino has ever served on the council – are not immune from CVRA violations.

“They may not choose to run because they don't think they can win,” said Justin Levitt, who specializes in election law at Loyola Law School.

Levitt said he'd like clearer definitions of what constitutes a CVRA violation. But he supports the law nonetheless and says it's not unusual for courts to establish the specifics.

“In the federal Voting Rights Act, most of the specificity is court-made,” Levitt said. “What these standards are in the CVRA is something for the courts to decide.”

While no cities or school districts so far have fought a lawsuit to the end, Levitt expects the growing trend toward such suits will result in precedent-setting cases in the future.

“I think there are cities where the elected officials feel strongly enough that they'll fight it,” he said.
Advocates of district elections in Anaheim celebrated the Jan. 7 settlement in which the city agreed to put the matter before voters, but they could be in for a rude disappointment when the November ballots are tallied.

Latino activists sued the city last year, alleging that the citywide, at-large form of electing City Council members made it too difficult for Latinos to elect members from their community. The suit called on the city to switch to district elections, which makes it easier for geographic concentrations of ethnic minorities to get their preferred candidates elected.

A majority of council members opposed this form of district elections, where voters can cast ballots only for candidates that live in their area. But they eventually agreed to settle in the face of spiraling legal costs that topped $1.26 million before even going to trial.

Douglas Johnson, a districting expert who worked as a consultant for the city in the case, says an end to legal spending is only one reason why the council majority should be pleased with the settlement terms.

“I think that putting it on the ballot is a win for the city, because it is likely to be voted down,” Johnson said.

Part of the logic behind Johnson’s thinking is that the majority of voters who elect council members under the current system are unlikely to vote to dilute their electoral influence. Bardis Vakili, an ACLU lawyer who represented the plaintiffs in the lawsuit, acknowledged that it might appear like an uphill battle to convince the majority of the electorate to back district elections.
“It can seem counterintuitive,” Vakili said. “But we’re confident that when we get out and educate voters, they’ll see that district voting is how any large, modern city should be run.”

The larger the city, the more likely it is to have district elections to ensure that all geographic areas of a city are represented on the council. Anaheim is the state’s 10th largest city; the other nine all have district elections.

Pending campaigns

The day after the council vote to settle, plaintiff and activist Jose Moreno held a rally outside City Hall for about 100 supporters. He announced there would be both a volunteer, grassroots effort to contact voters and an effort funded at least in part by unions representing public employees and resort-area workers. He said he didn’t know how much the campaign would spend.

It’s unclear who would coordinate and fund a campaign to oppose the measure. The deepest pockets in town belong to Mickey Mouse – Disneyland poured $489,000 into PACs that then spent the money on the 2012 City Council elections and Disney has backed the three council members who oppose district elections.

But Disneyland’s previous president, George Kalogridis, wrote the city in 2012 that the resort supported district elections. And most of that $489,000 went toward electing Jordan Brandman, who supports district elections.

If the ballot measure is defeated, the city would nonetheless dump at-large elections – and replace them with a hybrid system approved by the council last year. That system would require that candidates live in the areas they wish to represent, but voters citywide would cast ballots for each seat.

Moreno and his fellow plaintiffs cannot sue again, according to the settlement. However, a fresh set of plaintiffs could file suit if voters reject the district elections measure.
A judge has denied the city of Whittier’s request to halt a lawsuit by a coalition of Latino residents who allege the city’s at-large elections violate the California Voting Rights Act. The Whittier Latino Coalition is asking for all five council members to be elected by district.

Whittier is one of several California cities where the state Voting Rights Act is being used to challenge longstanding practices of having voters from all parts of a city choose all council members.

The coalition believes lawsuit calls on voting districts would give Latino candidates a better chance to win elections. Only one Latino has won election to the Whittier City Council since 1989, and one was appointed. The city’s population is 67 percent Latino.

Under the law, local governments can be forced to adopt voting-by-district if plaintiffs can show at trial that the at-large system has resulted in racially-polarized voting patterns that keep residents from electing candidates of their choice. The cities of Anaheim and Compton have changed their voting systems as part of lawsuit settlements, and plaintiffs won at trial in a Palmdale case.

In response to the lawsuit, the Whittier City Council last year decided to place a charter amendment on the June 3 ballot asking voters to switch the at-large system to one in which residents of four districts would choose their own council member, and all voters would select a mayor.

Superior Court Judge Michael Johnson will hold a hearing March 18 on the Whittier Latino Coalition’s challenge of that June charter amendment election. The coalition prefers five council districts, and wants to participate in the drawing of the district boundaries, said coalition spokesman Louis Reyes. The coalition also wants the city elections to be held on the same days as major state elections.

A spokesperson for the city of Whittier could not be reached immediately for comment on the judge’s Friday decision.
The Whittier Latino Coalition is also challenging an April 8 at-large election to select two City Council members to four-year terms.

Canceling the April election would cost the city money. The election is required to be held by the city's charter and will cost about $162,000, said City Clerk Kathryn Marshall. The city's 13,000 permanent vote-by-mail voters will receive ballots by March 10 and will already be casting votes by the time of the March 18 court hearing, she said.
Bloomberg

Baton Rouge’s Rich Want New Town to Keep Poor Pupils Out: Taxes

By Margaret Newkirk   Feb 5, 2014

In East Baton Rouge, Louisiana, middle-class and wealthy neighborhoods want an educational divorce from a neighboring community where four out of 10 families live in poverty.

Saying they want local control, they’re trying to leave the 42,000-pupil public-education system. They envision their own district funded by property taxes from their higher-value homes, which would take money from schools in poorer parts of state-capital Baton Rouge, home of Louisiana State University. They even want their own city.

Similar efforts have surfaced in the past two years in Georgia, Alabama, Texas and Tennessee, some of them succeeding as the end of court-ordered desegregation removed legal barriers. The result may be a concentration of poverty and low achievement. A 2012 report by ACT, the Iowa-based testing organization, found only 10 percent of low-income students met college benchmarks in all subjects, less than half the average.

“It’s going to devastate us,” said Tania Nyman, 45, who has two elementary-age children in the Baton Rouge system. “They’re not only going to take the richer white kids out of the district, they are going to take their money out of it.”

U.S. educational funding varies by state, often relying heavily on local taxes. The South, once notorious for segregated schools, by 2011 had the nation’s second-narrowest funding disparity among districts, according to a study by the Federal Education Budget Project, a Washington-based research organization that is an offshoot of the nonpartisan New America Foundation.

Dropping Further

Louisiana, however, scored worst in the nation, according to the study. A December report by three LSU economics professors found that breaking up the East Baton Rouge Parish school system would
depress total per-pupil spending to $8,870 from $9,635. It would rise to $11,686 in the breakaway district.

Eighty percent of the current district’s students are black, and 82 percent poor enough to qualify for free or reduced school meals. Nyman and other district boosters say a split would set a dire precedent.

“Every affluent community in the state will want to create their own little school system,” said Carnell Washington, president of the East Baton Rouge Federation of Teachers. “They are taking money away that would help the entire school system and the entire city.”

**Opting Out**

Backers of the split, whose website is called Local Schools for Local Children, say the district has been failing for at least a dozen years, with some schools performing so poorly that the state took them over. In the 2011-2012 school year, six of 10 students attended a school ranked failing or almost failing by the state and the drop-out rate was 20 percent, according to Baton Rouge Area Chamber, a business group.

“Baton Rouge is one of the best job markets around, and the middle class is moving out,” said Republican state Senator Mack “Bodi” White. “Those who stay have their kids in private schools.”

About 30 percent of children within district lines were in private schools in 2009, according to Tulane University’s Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives.

White and other supporters say a split’s impact has been exaggerated, in part by estimates that assume a new district will pay nothing toward the current one’s retirement obligations, which they say they would share.

They also say an influx of state money would buoy the students and teachers left behind: “Nothing will happen to them,” said Lionel Rainey III, 36, a public-relations consultant who is the seceding group’s lead spokesman.

**Poorer Still**

James Richardson, director of the Public Administration Institute at LSU, who researched a split, said the remaining district will get more state dollars because it will have more impoverished children, but that won’t replace lost revenue.
The researchers assumed the new district would pay no retirement obligations because there has been no binding proposal for sharing them, he said.

Horacio Aldrete, a Dallas-based Standard & Poor’s managing director who studies school finance, warned of risk for both sides. A reduced tax base and declining enrollment could hurt the remaining district, while a smaller newcomer would lose efficiencies of scale as it hires superintendents and staff, he said. The splinter system may have to build schools and raise taxes if pupils migrate from private education, he said.

Baton Rouge is among several metropolitan areas where affluent enclaves threatened to secede.

**Dropping Out**

In **Alabama**, which makes it relatively easy to create districts, two Birmingham suburbs left the countywide system in the past two years. Jefferson County, which encompasses the city, now has 13 systems to serve its population of about 660,000.

In Tennessee, the majority-black Memphis schools last year merged with the majority-white county district. In response, the Republican-dominated legislature lifted a decades-old ban on new systems and six suburbs seceded, approving sales-tax increases to pay for their plans.

In the Atlanta area, new districts have been proposed by Dunwoody, which is part of the DeKalb County schools. In Georgia, new districts require a constitutional amendment, and Dunwoody legislators want to get one on the ballot. A city study showed a new district would immediately have a $30 million annual surplus.

And, in **Dallas**, a move to create a district emerged last year. Parents are proposing a system called White Rock in an affluent area east of the city.

**New Autonomy**

Carving out districts would have been difficult 20 years ago, when desegregation decrees were in place across the U.S., especially in the South, said Dennis Parker, director of the **American Civil Liberties Union**’s Racial Justice Program.

“They could not have done this under court order,” Parker said.
About half of the almost 500 districts under desegregation orders in 1990 were released by 2009, according to a Stanford University study.

The Baton Rouge case ended in 2007, the nation’s longest at 47 years, according to the Tulane institute. Supporters of a new school system twice tried to get the Louisiana legislature to put a constitutional question on the ballot that would create a district. Last year, they started working to form a new town, saying it would better their chances.

**Patron Saint**

If approved by voters, **St. George**, as it would be called, would be Louisiana’s fifth-largest city. Prospective residents hope its existence would provide political momentum for separate schools.

St. George would have about 100,000 residents, or a quarter of the population now governed by the combined city-parish government of Baton Rouge. It also would include much of the area’s retail and commercial development, including the Mall of Louisiana, which has more than 150 shops, among them department stores of **Macy’s Inc. (M)** and **Dillard’s Inc. (DDS)**

The area generates a disproportionate 40 percent of local government’s sales and use tax receipts, according to the LSU report. Removing that might mean the splintering of the unified government that now runs Baton Rouge, the researchers said.

They called the new-city method of creating a school system “costly and imprecise.”
Visalia — In a major change to city politics, a Tulare County judge on Thursday ordered Visalia to hold district elections of City Council members.

Currently, Visalia council members are elected citywide.

Tulare County Superior Court Judge Melinda Reed approved an agreement that settles a California Voting Rights Act lawsuit by four Latino residents who claimed Visalia's "at-large" voting system makes it all but impossible for Hispanic candidates to be elected to the council.

The first elections under the new system will be in November 2016.

The agreement also changes Visalia council elections from odd years to even.

The residents who filed the lawsuit in December hailed the agreement as a victory for civil rights.

"We want Hispanics represented on the council -- that's sorely missing," said Louis Montion, a plaintiff and former Visalia Unified school board member.

In city history, only one Hispanic has been elected to the City Council.

Of Visalia's 127,000 residents, 46% are Hispanic -- a percentage expected to climb.

But others will benefit too, said plaintiff Robert Aguilar, an educator.

"This will be an opportunity for many people, not only Hispanic, to come forward and run for office," he said. "You'll see new faces in the future."
District elections have been controversial in Visalia. Two years ago, voters rejected a ballot measure to change the city charter for election to the City Council from at-large to district. A similar proposal lost in 1994.

According to the legal agreement, "racially polarized voting" exists in Visalia as defined by the California Voting Rights Act.

Council Member Warren Gubler, a lawyer who has urged support for district elections, said the city saved millions of dollars in legal fees by not fighting the lawsuit.

"I'm looking at this from the point of view of a lawyer," he said. "The bottom line is, you're not going to win a case like this. Only time will tell if district elections are superior to citywide elections."

Mayor Steve Nelsen and Council Member Amy Shuklian, who opposed district elections, voted no in closed session against approving the agreement to end the lawsuit.

But because the agreement passed by a 3-2 vote, "I will move forward," Nelsen said.

The switch brings Visalia in line with several cities in California that have changed their elections after the passage of the California Voting Rights Act 13 years ago.

Other cities that switched because of a lawsuit or threat of legal action include Tulare, Madera, Modesto, Escondido and Compton.

In all, 108 governing boards in California -- mostly school districts -- have changed to district elections, said Joanna Cuevas Ingram, a lawyer for the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area.

The Visalia settlement did not establish new district lines. The city will hire a consultant to draw districts, and the boundaries will need the council's approval.

Nelsen said that once the lines are drawn, some council members will probably find they live in the same district.

Marguerite Melo, the attorney representing the plaintiffs, said the current system in Visalia of "winner take all" will remain, meaning that the top vote-getter of three or more candidates in district elections will win, even if the winner's votes are less than a majority.

The switch to even-numbered years -- the years of presidential and gubernatorial elections -- means the terms of current council members will be extended by one year each.

The terms of council members Bob Link and Shuklian will extend until 2016, and the terms of Greg Collins, Nelsen and Gubler won't expire until 2018.
MORENO VALLEY: Schools may change how trustees elected

BY IMRAN GHORI
STAFF WRITER
Published: February 11, 2014; 03:32 PM

Moreno Valley Unified School District’s five trustees may be elected by area instead of at-large.

The district held two public meetings last week and will host a third Wednesday, Feb. 12, before the board decides at its Feb. 25 meeting.

Moreno Valley school board President Tracey Vackar said the board may choose to make the change on its own or ask voters in November if the district should change how trustees are elected.

In considering the switch, Moreno Valley is following the trend of districts across the state.

Some changed to electing trustees by area after being threatened with lawsuits under the 2001 California Voting Rights Act. The law allows for a protected class, such as a minority group, to sue if at-large elections hinder their ability to elect members of their community.

Most Inland school districts including Riverside, Corona-Norco and the Riverside Community College District have made the shift in the past couple years.

Moreno Valley’s school board has not had a problem electing minorities. Several have been elected in the past and the current board includes two African-Americans and a Latino.

“If you look at the different board members we’ve had, it’s been pretty diverse,” Vackar said.
A consultant has prepared two proposals that split the district into five geographic areas. Each area would have a population of about 33,000 residents. The representation of different minority groups varies in each district.

Vackar said she does not expect that each trustee would turn their focus on their own district as sometimes occurs with council or county districts.

“It’s only for representation purpose,” she said. “The bottom line is we’re representatives for all schools in our district.”

Contact Imran Ghori at 951-368-9558 or ighori@pe.com

DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

WHAT: Moreno Valley school officials are hosting a public meeting to get input on proposals to draw trustee boundaries.

WHEN: Wednesday, Feb. 12, 6 p.m.

WHERE: Sunnymead Elementary School, multipurpose room, 24050 Dracaea Ave., Moreno Valley
LANCASTER – The public is invited to hear expert third party analysis on Lancaster’s compliance with the California Voting Rights Act.

The meeting, featuring Voting Rights Act expert Dr. Morgan Kousser, will take place at 12 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 18, at the City Council Chambers, located at 44933 Fern Avenue, according to a press release from the city of Lancaster. Read it below:

On February 18, the City of Lancaster’s appointed citizen Elections Committee will hear a third party analysis from Voting Rights Act expert, Dr. Morgan Kousser. Dr. Kousser will provide the findings from his study examining the City of Lancaster’s compliance with the California Voting Rights Act.

Voting Rights Act expert Dr. Morgan Kousser boasts an extensive background in voting rights and redistricting law. Dr. Kousser has consulted or testified in twenty-five federal and seven state cases regarding voting rights and redistricting. A graduate of both Yale and Princeton, Dr. Kousser has been an instructor at the California Institute of Technology since 1969. He has also authored several books and numerous scholarly articles and reviews on minority voting rights, race relations, political history, educational discrimination, and quantitative methods.

The study was requested by the City Council, on the recommendation of the City’s Elections Committee, to undertake an examination of Lancaster’s compliance with the California Voting Rights Act. The committee is chaired by local attorney, Steven Derryberry, who is joined by commissioners Ed Galindo, Cassandra Harvey, Darren Parker, and Kitty Szeto.
The meeting will take place on Tuesday, February 18, at noon in the City Council Chambers (44933 Fern Avenue.) The public is welcome to attend.

Lancaster uses at-large elections; however, Lancaster Mayor R. Rex Parris is the plaintiff’s attorney in a voting-rights lawsuit to prevent the city of Palmdale from using at-large elections. The lawsuit claims Palmdale’s at-large elections result in racially polarized voting, which prevents minorities’ candidates of choice from being elected. In a final statement issued late last year, Judge Mark Mooney found Palmdale in violation of the California Voting Rights Act and ordered the city to hold a district-based election in June. Palmdale is appealing the decision.
Matt Monica plans to run for College of the Desert Board of Trustees

Feb. 12, 2014

Written by Blake Herzog

The Desert Sun

PALM DESERT — Desert Sands Unified School District board member Matt Monica announced Monday he plans to run for the Area 4 seat on the College of the Desert Board of Trustees in the November election.

Monica said he and his wife Mary Ann combined have worked for COD for more than 50 years, and both of their sons attended the school before going on to four-year universities. Matt Monica has been a counselor, instructor and administrator at the college. He retired in 2006 as a financial aid counselor.

“Some of my priorities will be: accountability regarding budget, programs, services and facilities; financial aid and scholarships for students; East and West Valley Campuses; increase the number of course offerings; emphasize students in order for them to complete their Certificate and Associate Degree and increase recognition and respect for all employees,” he said in a statement.

Monica has served on the Desert Sands board for 28 years. His current term ends in 2016.

In November, he cast the board’s only vote against a proposal to move to trustee districts, which would force him to run against another current board member who lives in Palm Desert, Wendy Jonathan, for a single seat.

The election shift is intended to preempt a potentially costly lawsuit that claims racial discrimination. In some areas of California, school districts that use at-large voting have been successfully sued for millions of dollars after they were accused of violating the
California Voting Rights Act. The act forbids at-large voting when it dilutes the voting power of minority groups.

This lawsuit threat has prompted similar election transformations from the Coachella Valley Water District and Palm Springs Unified School District, all of which abandoned at-large voting out of fear that they would be sued.

Monica said he considers Jonathan a friend, and his decision was already brewing before the threatened lawsuit. “I would be running for the COD board, anyway,” he said. “I wanted to be involved at my home institution.”

He said he voted against the districting plan because he feels Desert Sands’ “at-large representation has strength in its diversity.”

If he were to win the COD board of trustees seat, he would have to step down from the Desert Sands board. He said it’s “too soon to tell” whether he’ll run again in Desert Sands if he doesn’t succeed in November.

Last March, Monica shouted at members of the audience when a few of them stood to leave during a discussion about proposed district layoffs.

Later in the meeting, he again yelled at members of the public who interrupted him.

In return, audience members demanded Monica take off a hat he wore during the meeting. Monica continued to shout.

“You had your chance. You had your chance. It’s my turn. It’s my turn. It’s my turn. It’s my turn,” Monica shouted over raised voices. “Wait until you hear me. Wait until you hear me. Wait until you hear me. Then fine, I'll take off the hat.”

The incident prompted Jonathan to suggest the board adopt a code of conduct and plan a self-evaluation.

Monica initially called the proposal an action “against” him, but then said he would participate.

Monica reversed his position even further afterward.
He apologized to the rest of the board for opposing the proposal and said the self-evaluation was an invaluable tool that should be repeated.

“I can’t believe how important it was for me to do this along with my colleagues, and I really have done a reversal. An apology may not be enough,” Monica said.

College of the Desert’s Trustee Area 4 covers parts of Palm Desert, Rancho Mirage, Indian Wells and La Quinta, and has been represented by Aurora Wilson since April, after trustee John Marman resigned from the position.

Wilson said Monday she plans to run for a full four-year term on the board. “I’m seeing a lot of support out here in the community, and I just look forward to being able to serve people for a full term,” she said.

She said she considers the two-year campus and others like it an important part of civic life. “I don’t know where I would be if I hadn’t gone to a community college. And (COD) is such an important part of the economic development of this area.”

She said the knowledge of local government and nonprofits she’d gained through her job as director of community resources for the Coachella Valley Association of Governments, as well as her late husband’s 30 years spent teaching at COD, helped make the trustee job a natural fit for her.

This will be Wilson’s second attempt to win elected office, after a failed Palm Desert City Council bid in 2012.

“It’s really true, how the old saying goes, when one door closes, another window opens,” she said.
Assistant political science professor Eric Lindgren wore a forlorn, vacant expression as he left the office of the dean of faculty Wednesday afternoon after being informed that his bid for tenure was being denied.

Lindgren had just been informed of Whittier College President Sharon Herzberger’s decision during a meeting with Charlotte Borst, vice president of academic affairs and dean of the faculty. The chairman of the faculty personnel committee also was present at that meeting.

Borst told Lindgren that Herzberger was standing by her recommendation that Lindgren not be granted tenure, according to college faculty sources.

Lindgren, who has been an outspoken advocate of Latino voting rights in Whittier and Southern California, and who has studied voting patterns in Whittier and other California cities, declined comment when asked for his reaction.

Herzberger, through her staff, also declined a request for an interview. The school’s public information officer, Ana Lilia Barraza, said Herzberger cannot comment because it’s a personnel matter.

In the next step of the process, two letters on the issue of tenure for Lindgren will be sent to the board of trustees, which is expected to make its decision in about a week.

Herzberger met with the faculty personnel committee on Monday in an attempt to resolve their differences on Lindgren’s application for tenure. Herzberger opposed granting tenure to Lindgren.
The faculty personnel committee and the Political Science Department both had recommended tenure for Lindgren.

Borst said faculty members’ political activities off campus are not cause for denying tenure.

“The Board of Trustees is the final arbiter of tenure at Whittier College,” she said in an earlier email. “Many of our faculty members participate in political activities off campus, and these and other personal activities are not relevant to the tenure process.”

On Feb. 3, three students delivered petitions signed by 558 Whittier College students in support of tenure for Lindgren to Herzberger and Borst.

Lindgren has been quoted in several media outlets, including the Whittier Daily News, saying cities with at-large voting systems such as Whittier are at risk for legal challenges if their voting patterns are racially polarized, meaning the Latino and non-Latino populations vote for different candidates. “It is my personal hope that some of (cities being sued) get in front of this issue and voluntarily change their format, which would improve representation for minorities,” Lindgren said in a Dec. 3 Whittier Daily News story.

The city of Whittier is being sued by three Latino residents who claim the city’s at-large voting system prevents Latinos from being elected to the City Council. According to the 2010 Census, about 66 percent of Whittier residents are Latino.

On Sept. 26, Lindgren was one of three speakers at a presentation on the California Voting Rights Act at Villalobos Hall at Whittier College, sponsored by the Whittier Latino Coalition and the California Latino Legislative Caucus Institute for Public Policy.
Palm Springs — Desert Water Agency is facing a demand that it do away with its at-large electoral system and change to a system in which each board member would be elected by a single district.

Blogger Dean Gray suggested the change at a DWA meeting Tuesday, saying the current electoral system violates state law and doesn’t provide proper representation for residents of Desert Hot Springs.

“You might be good people trying to do a good job, but one of you has to go,” Gray told the board members. “The at-large system of electing board members has failed the people of Desert Hot Springs.”

He said that only when DWA switches to district elections could residents of Desert Hot Springs have representation on the agency’s board.

“I’m not here to threaten you with a lawsuit, to spend money on something that you will lose. When so informed, our local public agencies have conformed to state law,” said Gray, who is also a planning commissioner for the city of Desert Hot Springs.

The challenge follows recent decisions by several other local boards to scrap at-large elections, including those of College of the Desert, and Desert Sands and Palm Springs unified school districts.
The Coachella Valley Water District, the largest of five public water agencies in the valley, voted in November to do away with its at-large election system after a complaint by a group of voters that argued the existing system violates the California Voting Rights Act and is unfair to Latino voters.

Gray also cited the Voting Rights Act and urged the DWA board to study the issue. “The people of Desert Hot Springs will be watching and paying attention. We want you to do the right thing,” he said.

The DWA board agreed to ask Mike Riddell, the agency’s attorney, to prepare a report on the matter.

“We’ll get a report from the agency attorney at a future meeting and then the board will decide how to proceed from there,” said Craig Ewing, president of the DWA board.

Desert Water Agency serves customers in Palm Springs, parts of Cathedral City and other areas. DWA also serves the Desert Hot Springs area by importing water from the Colorado River that is used for replenishing groundwater supplies. Home customers in Desert Hot Springs get water from Mission Springs Water District.

Gray said that DWA and CVWD both have wells that are pumping groundwater in the area. “So, they’re taking our water, but we have nobody sitting on that board,” he said.

Ewing said that both DWA and Mission Springs Water District pump water for delivery to customers in their respective jurisdictions, but that DWA does not pump water within Mission Springs’ jurisdiction.

Gray said that in addition to DWA, the Desert Healthcare District also needs to represent Desert Hot Springs residents.

“I’m taking the same message to them, too,” Gray said. “And I expect to see success without having to go to the trouble of litigation.”
Los Angeles County Committee on School District Organization
1000 Imperial Highway, Downey, CA 90242-2890

LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION (COUNTY COMMITTEE)
LEGISLATIVE REVIEW - MARCH 2014

DESCRIPTION OF BILL

This bill has died; it would’ve required the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) to establish seven trustee areas by July 1, 2014, with vacancies filled at subsequent elections via trustee-area voting. Four of the seats would’ve expired June 30, 2015, and the other three seats on June 30, 2017.

POTENTIAL IMPACT OF BILL ON LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMITTEE, SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION PROCESS AND/OR LOS ANGELES COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

N/A - bill has died and will no longer be followed.

RECOMMENDED POSITION

Staff recommends the following position:

- **Watch**
  Bill should be monitored by County Committee staff, but no action taken at this time.

- **Approve**
  County Committee supports the bill’s concept, but will not actively work for passage.

- **Support**
  County Committee actively supports the bill.

- **Oppose**
  County Committee actively opposes the bill.

- **Disapprove**
  County Committee disapproves of the bill’s concept, but will not actively oppose passage.
BILL NUMBER/AUTHOR: Assembly Bill 59/BONTA  
INTRODUCTION DATE: 01/01/13  
LAST ACTIVITY/DATE: 02/03/14: Author withdrew from consideration and bill subsequently died.

DESCRIPTION OF BILL

Bill’s language was dramatically altered so that it was no longer solely a school district matter pertaining to parcel taxes.

POTENTIAL IMPACT OF BILL ON LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMITTEE, SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION PROCESS AND/OR LOS ANGELES COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

N/A- bill has died and will no longer be followed

RECOMMENDED POSITION

Staff recommends the following position:

- **Watch**  Bill should be monitored by County Committee staff, but no action taken at this time.
- **Approve**  County Committee supports the bill’s concept, but will not actively work for passage.
- **Support**  County Committee actively supports the bill.
- **Oppose**  County Committee actively opposes the bill.
- **Disapprove**  County Committee disapproves of the bill’s concept, but will not actively oppose passage.

AMENDMENTS REQUIRED

If staff’s recommended position is based on the need for amendments to the bill language, suggested alternative language is attached.
CORRESPONDENCE REQUIRED

If staff’s recommended position is based on the need for correspondence to the bill’s author, the Governor or other governmental officials, a draft of suggested language is attached.

Please direct all comments to Mr. Keith D. Crafton, Secretary to the County Committee at (562) 922-6144.
Summary of Los Angeles Unified School District Reorganization Proposals

March 2014

The following is a summary of school district reorganization proposals affecting the Los Angeles Unified School District (USD) that were at various stages in the school district organization process as of February 18, 2014.

PROPOSAL TO TRANSFER CERTAIN TERRITORY FROM THE COMPTON USD TO THE LOS ANGELES USD

Status: Final petition submission pending.

Status Date: June 26, 2007

OTHER INQUIRIES REGARDING REORGANIZATION (within the last nine months)

Formation Proposals/Last Activity Date

• Inner City Unified School District/July 2012

Transfer of Territory Proposals/Last Activity Date

• None
Summary of Los Angeles County School District Reorganization Proposals (Excluding those affecting the Los Angeles Unified School District)

March 2014

The following is a summary of school district reorganization proposals [exclusive of those affecting the Los Angeles Unified School District (USD) that are at various stages in the school district reorganization process as of February 18, 2014.]

FORMATION—WISEBURN USD (CURRENTLY LIES WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE CENTINELA VALLEY UNION HIGH SD)

In May of 2001, the Citizens for a Wiseburn Unified School District organization petitioned to form a Wiseburn USD from within the boundaries of the Centinela Valley Union High SD (UHSD). After approval by the County Committee and a long review period by the CDE and SBE, the petition was moved forward via successful legislation, the formation of two related joint power agencies, and final approval by the SBE on May 9, 2013. The voter approval of the proposal and the election of the first governing board for the Wiseburn USD occurred on November 5, 2013. Staff is working on logistics related to the launch of the unified district.

*Status: Proposal passed and first governing board elected November 5, 2013
Status Date: February 18, 2014

PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF TRUSTEE AREAS AND TRUSTEE AREA VOTING, WITHIN THE ABC USD

On January 18, 2013, LACOE received a request for a petition pursuant to EC §5019 and §5020 to establish trustee areas, and trustee area voting within the ABC USD. The request was submitted by chief petitioner, Mr. Charles Ara. The petition was forwarded to County Counsel to determine the legal compliance of format and content. On February 21,
2013, County Counsel deemed the petition sufficient; staff returned the petition to the chief petitioner on February 27, 2013, for circulation.

Status: Petition in circulation.  
Status Date: April 10, 2013

PROPOSED INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF TRUSTEES FROM FIVE TO SEVEN, ESTABLISHMENT OF TRUSTEE AREAS, AND THE REQUIREMENT OF TRUSTEE AREA VOTING, WITHIN THE POMONA USD

On June 6, 2012, LACOE received a request for a petition pursuant to EC §5019 and §5020 to increase the number of trustees from five to seven, to establish trustee areas, and to require trustee area voting within the Pomona USD. The request was submitted by chief petitioner, Mr. John Mendoza. The petition was forwarded to County Counsel to determine the legal compliance of format and content. On June 19, 2012, County Counsel deemed the petition sufficient; staff returned the petition to the chief petitioner on June 20, 2012, for circulation.

Please note that this is a separate petition, distinct from the other petitions requested by Mr. Mendoza, requesting some of the same changes within the Pomona USD (the addition of two governing board members and the creation of trustee areas). It was submitted under EC §5019 and §5020 and requires valid signatures from ten percent of the registered voters within the petition area (approximately 6,100 signatures in the case of the Pomona USD, based on the most recent count of registered voters). If valid and certified by the County Committee, this petition would trigger a ballot initiative (as opposed to a reference report and vote by the County Committee).

Status: Petition in circulation.  
Status Date: June 20, 2012

FORMATION—ALTADENA USD (CURRENTLY LIES WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE PASADENA USD)

On January 17, 2006, LACOE received a request for a petition from chief petitioners Ms. Maurice Morse, Ms. Shirlee Smith, and Mr. Bruce Wasson, three community members who are residents of the area known as Altadena. The chief petitioners want to form an Altadena USD from territory within the boundaries of the Pasadena USD. The petition request was returned to the chief petitioners on January 20, 2006, because it lacked an adequate description of the area pursuant to EC §35700.3.

On February 10, 2006, LACOE received a revised request for a petition. Staff reviewed the request and forwarded a draft petition to County Counsel on February 22, 2006, for a legal compliance review regarding format and content. We received notification on March 6, 2006, from County Counsel informing us that the draft petition was legally acceptable.
On March 7, 2006, staff forwarded the draft petition to the Registrar-Recorder for verification that the description of the proposed boundaries of the Altadena USD was sufficiently clear (so that registered voters residing within the proposed petition area could be identified with specificity). The Registrar-Recorder confirmed that the description was sufficient on March 10, 2006.

The petition was mailed to the chief petitioners on March 14, 2006, for circulation within the petition area. The Registrar-Recorder estimated the chief petitioners will need to collect approximately 7,000 valid signatures in order to meet the criteria set forth in EC §35700(a).

On September 23, 2010, chief petitioners delivered signed petitions to LACOE. Staff submitted the petitions to the Registrar-Recorder on September 27, 2010, for signature verification. On October 22, 2010, the Registrar-Recorder notified staff that there were insufficient valid signatures (less than the required 25 percent of the registered voters within the petition area). Staff notified the chief petitioners of the insufficiency, and at Mr. Wasson’s request, returned the petitions to the Registrar-Recorder for a signature audit. Staff also advised the chief petitioner regarding the collection of additional signatures. Upon notification by the Registrar-Recorder of a sufficient number of valid signatures, staff will present the petition to the County Committee at the next regular meeting.

On January 4, 2011, staff conferred with a representative from the Registrar-Recorder’s office, who informed us that no audit of petition signatures had been done yet, and they clarified the cost of signature verification. On February 15 and March 1, 2011, staffs contacted the Registrar-Recorder and were informed that the signature audit had still not been done. On May 12, 2011, staff from the Registrar-Recorder’s office advised LACOE that an audit of the petition’s signatures was underway. On November 28, 2011, the chief petitioner Mr. Wasson notified LACOE of the death of one of the co-chief petitioners, Ms. Morse. Mr. Wasson stated that another chief petitioner would not be named.

Status: Petition insufficient; chief petitioners may gather additional signatures.
Status Date: December 5, 2011

PROPOSED INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF TRUSTEES FROM FIVE TO SEVEN AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TRUSTEE AREAS WITHIN THE POMONA USD

On July 13, 2009, LACOE received a request for a petition pursuant to EC §5019 and §5020 to increase the number of trustees from five to seven and to establish trustee areas within the Pomona USD. The request was submitted by chief petitioner Mr. Mendoza. The petition was forwarded to County Counsel to determine its legal compliance regarding format and content. On August 7, 2009, County Counsel deemed the petition sufficient. Staff returned the petition to the chief petitioner on August 11, 2009, for circulation.
Please note that this is a separate petition, distinct from the other petitions requested by Mr. Mendoza, and requests some of the same changes within the Pomona USD (the addition of two governing board members and the creation of trustee areas). It was submitted under EC §5019 and §5020 and requires valid signatures from ten percent of the registered voters within the petition area (approximately 7,000 signatures in the case of the Pomona USD). If valid and certified by the County Committee, this petition would trigger a ballot initiative (as opposed to a reference report and vote by the County Committee).

Status: Petition in circulation.
Status Date: August 20, 2009

**FORMATION—MALIBU USD (CURRENTLY LIES WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE SANTA MONICA-MALIBU USD)**

Status: Petition currently in circulation.
Status Date: February 21, 2008

**FORMATION—ALTADENA USD (CURRENTLY LIES WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE PASADENA USD)**

Status: Petition in circulation.
Status Date: May 11, 2007

**FORMATION—LA MIRADA USD (CURRENTLY LIES WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE NORWALK – LA MIRADA USD)**

Status: Petition in circulation.
Status Date: March 20, 2007

**PROPOSED INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF TRUSTEES FROM FIVE TO SEVEN WITHIN THE POMONA USD, RETAINING THE AT-LARGE VOTING METHOD**

Status: Petition in circulation.
Status Date: January 17, 2007

**PROPOSED INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF TRUSTEES FROM FIVE TO SEVEN, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TRUSTEE AREAS, AND THE REQUIREMENT OF TRUSTEE AREA VOTING WITHIN THE MOUNT SAN ANTONIO CCD**

Status: Petition in circulation.
Status Date: October 2, 2006
PROPOSED INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF TRUSTEES FROM FIVE TO SEVEN AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TRUSTEE AREAS WITHIN THE POMONA USD

Status: Petition in circulation.
Status Date: April 11, 2006

PROPOSED INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF TRUSTEES FROM FIVE TO SEVEN, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TRUSTEE AREAS, AND THE REQUIREMENT OF TRUSTEE AREA VOTING WITHIN THE MOUNT SAN ANTONIO CCD

Status: Petition in circulation.
Status Date: April 11, 2006

PROPOSED INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF TRUSTEES FROM FIVE TO SEVEN WITHIN THE MOUNT SAN ANTONIO CCD

Status: Petition in circulation.
Status Date: July 21, 2003

PROPOSED INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF TRUSTEES FROM FIVE TO SEVEN WITHIN THE POMONA USD

Status: Petition in circulation.
Status Date: June 16, 2003

PROPOSAL TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF TRUSTEES FROM FIVE TO SEVEN, TO ESTABLISH TRUSTEE AREAS, AND TO REQUIRE THAT EACH GOVERNING BOARD MEMBER RESIDE IN AND BE ELECTED BY THE REGISTERED VOTERS OF EACH PARTICULAR TRUSTEE AREA WITHIN THE MOUNT SAN ANTONIO CCD

Status: Petition in circulation.
Status Date: August 20, 2001

RECENT INQUIRIES REGARDING REORGANIZATION

Unification Proposals/Last Activity Date

- Malibu USD (Santa Monica-Malibu USD)/November 2011
Transfer of Territory Proposals/Last Activity Date

- Glendale USD to La Canada USD/May 2013
- Pasadena USD to La Canada USD/April 2013
- Temple City USD to Arcadia USD/March 2012

Formation Proposals/Last Activity Date

- None

Trustee Areas and Governing Board Size/Last Activity Date

- ABC USD/January 2013

This document was prepared by staff to the County Committee.