February 25, 2013

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

FROM: Keith D. Crafton, Secretary

SUBJECT: Regular Meeting of the County Committee—Wednesday, March 6, 2013

The next regular meeting of the County Committee will be held at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 6, 2013, in the Board Room of the Los Angeles County Office of Education, located at 9300 Imperial Highway in Downey. Reserved parking spaces will be available on the east side of the building just south of the main entrance for County Committee members.

Attached is the agenda for the meeting of March 6, 2013.

If you have any questions, please call me at (562) 922-6144.

KDC/AD:ah
Attachments
AGENDA

LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION
(COUNTY COMMITTEE)

Regular Meeting

Los Angeles County Office of Education
Board Room
March 6, 2013
9:30 a.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER—Chairperson Mr. AJ Willmer

II. FLAG SALUTE—Mr. Willmer

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the regular meeting of the County Committee, held on January 9, 2013, will be submitted for approval.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS—Secretary Mr. Keith Crafton

Newspaper Article

- A January 24, 2013, article from the San Diego Union-Tribune—“Menifee Union board approves by-trustee-are voting, new maps.” (Attachment 1)

- A February 14, 2013 article from the Pasadena Weekly—“Making the grade, minority candidates poised to take on incumbents for new school district seats.” (Attachment 2)

- A February 15, 2013 article from Kingston Community News—“Washington Voting Rights Act draws contentious testimony: Minority representation versus at-large elections.” (Attachment 3)

- A February 18, 2013, article from the LA Times.Com—“Complaint alleges racial bias in Palmdale elections: Case scheduled to go to trial in May alleges that Palmdale’s system of at-large council seats dilutes the influence of minority voters.” (Attachment 4)

- A February 21, 2013, article from the Monterey Herald—“Smooth shift to trustee areas for North Monterey County schools.” (Attachment 5)
V. PRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Any persons present desiring to address the County Committee on any proper matter may do so at this time. (Form must be completed and submitted to the Secretary.)

VI. UPDATE ON THE PETITION PROPOSING TO FORM A WISEBURN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT (USD)

The Secretary will update the County Committee on the petition to form a Wiseburn USD.

VII. UPDATE ON THE CALIFORNIA VOTING RIGHTS ACT (CVRA) AND TRUSTEE AREA ISSUES

The Secretary will discuss recent developments related to the CVRA and trustee area issues in Los Angeles County.

VIII. PRESENTATION OF A PETITION TO UPDATE TRUSTEE AREAS AND INSTITUTE TRUSTEE AREA VOTING WITHIN THE DOWNEY USD

The Secretary will present a petition from the Downey USD to update current trustee areas and institute trustee area voting. This petition will be the subject of a public hearing scheduled for 11:00 a.m. on March 6, 2013, immediately following the regular meeting of the County Committee in the LACOE Board Room.

IX. UPDATE ON COUNTY COMMITTEE WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

The Secretary will discuss the development of a LACOE-hosted website for the County Committee.

X. REVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

The Secretary will provide the County Committee with an overview of proposed legislation related to school district organization. The County Committee may take action to support or oppose the legislation or provide comments to the authors. (Attachment 6)
XI. UPDATE ON LOS ANGELES USD REORGANIZATION PROPOSALS  

The Secretary will provide the County Committee with an update on school district reorganization proposals affecting the Los Angeles USD.

(Attachment: “Summary of Los Angeles Unified School District Reorganization Proposals”) (Attachment 7)

XII. UPDATE ON LOS ANGELES COUNTY SD REORGANIZATION PROPOSALS EXCLUDING THOSE AFFECTING THE LOS ANGELES USD

The Secretary will provide the County Committee with an update on school district reorganization proposals affecting Los Angeles County school districts other than the Los Angeles USD.

(Attachment: “Summary of Los Angeles County School District Reorganization Proposals [excluding those affecting the Los Angeles Unified School District]”) (Attachment 8)

XIII. ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATIONS, CONCERNS, OR ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

XIV. ADJOURNMENT
UNAPPROVED MINUTES OF THE
LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION

Regular Meeting
January 9, 2013

The Los Angeles County Committee on School District Organization (County Committee) met on Wednesday, January 9, 2013, at the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) in Downey. The meeting was called to order at 11:35 a.m. by Chairperson Ms. Maria Calix.

Members Present

Ben Allen
Frank Bostrom
Maria Calix
Ted Edmiston
Owen H. Griffith
Joan Jakubowski
John Nunez
Joel Peterson
Suzan T. Solomon
AJ Wilmer

Members Absent

Frank Ogaz

Staff Present

Keith D. Crafton, Secretary
Allison Deegan, Staff
Anna Heredia, Recording Secretary

Ms. Maria Calix led the flag salute.

Mr. Crafton provided the results of the annual election of members to the County Committee that was conducted at the fall meeting of the Los Angeles County School Trustees Association on October 29, 2012. The results are as follows: In a run-off election Mr. John Nunez will represent the 1st Supervisory District. Mr. Frank Bostrom will represent the 4th Supervisory District and Mr. Joel Peterson will represent the 5th Supervisory District.

Mr. Joel Peterson introduced himself as the new member of the County Committee representing the 5th Supervisory District.

Ms. Calix administered the Oath of Office to the reelected and newly elected County Committee members.

It was moved by Ms. Susan Soloman and seconded by Frank Bostrom to recommend AJ Willmer for Chairperson and Mr. Ben Allen for Vice Chairperson for 2013. Motion carried.
It was **MOVED** by Frank Bostrom and **SECONDED** by Ms. Solomon that the minutes of the regular meeting held on October 3, 2012, be approved. Motion carried with one abstention.

Mr. Crafton reviewed and discussed correspondence contained in the County Committee agenda packets and member folders.

There were no members of the public to address the County Committee.

Mr. AJ Willmer led the discussion by stating that the bulletin that was distributed by the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) with regards to the California Voting Rights Act (CVRA) and Trustee Area Issues was very extensive and well written.

Discussion continued with Dr. Deegan reiterating that the bulletin was an informational bulletin whose purpose was to inform the districts and provoke internal dialogue. She also stated that the county office plays a neutral role and the goal is to get the most reporting out to the districts, not to compel the districts to take any particular action. The main focus of the bulletin was to report what is going on statewide and advise the districts to do their own study, placing them in a better position to make decisions. Dr. Deegan stated that as a result of the bulletin there have been a number of calls from the districts, and it seems that some are moving to trustee areas. She added that the vast majority do not have trustee areas. She also stated that the only safe harbor under CVRA is to have trustee areas implemented.

Mr. John Nunez discussed his concerns with regards to upcoming elections.

Dr. Deegan stated that in some instances the court has induced the districts to have a special election to validate the trustee areas. However, delaying election dates creates complications as well.

Ms. Solomon asked how the districts are notified of a CVRA violation.

Dr. Deegan informed the committee that there is no clear pattern and it is impossible to predict; some alleged CVRA violations come in the form of a demand letter, threat of litigation, litigation filed, etc. She stated that the lawsuit would require a local plaintiff such as community groups, attorneys in partnership, and individuals.

Mr. Bostrom stated that it is important to provide more information.

Ben Allen questioned what the committee can do beyond the information that was provided by the LACOE bulletin.
Mr. Willmer stated that this bulletin covered information to districts and asked the committee what actions the County Committee needs to take.

Ms. Jakubowski’s concern was that since the bulletin was sent during the December holiday, some districts might have missed it. She recommended that a letter be sent to districts on the behalf of the County Committee.

Mr. Joel Peterson gave his input as to his understanding of CVRA and the contents of the bulletin that was distributed.

Ms. Calix wants to make sure that the districts have all the information and that the County Committee should provide the information that was not mentioned in the LACOE bulletin.

Mr. Willmer requested a consensus.

Mr. Bostrom stated that the districts need to be advised about timelines, consequences and other information that was not provided in the bulletin.

Mr. Nunez made a motion to draft a letter, seconded by Mr. Bostrom, motion carried with a majority vote.

Mr. Willmer will take the lead and meet with Mr. Bostrom and Mr. Crafton to draft a letter to board members and superintendents.

The County Committee adjourned at 12:25 p.m. for lunch and reconvened at 1:15 p.m., at which time they went into a closed session. The County Committee reconvened in open session at 2:05 p.m.

Reconvene in Open Session

Evaluation of the Secretary and Staff to the County Committee

Mr. Frank Bostrom (Chair) addressed the staff with the results of the evaluation of the secretary and staff to the County Committee. He stated that it was unanimous among the committee members that participated in completing the evaluations that Dr. Allison Deegan merits the greatest of commendations for her work. He went on to state that Dr. Deegan’s performance is well received and appreciated, and that her institutional knowledge is impeccable. Ms. Maria Calix and Mr. AJ Willmer added that they appreciate the assistance that the clerical staff provides.

Review of Proposed Legislation

Mr. Crafton explained that State Bill 41 serves as clean up legislation with regards to the Wiseburn School District (SD) unification and its revenue computation. Dr. Deegan added that once this new legislation is signed by the governor, the Wiseburn SD unification will move forward. Dr. Deegan along with Mr. Crafton will participate with the auditing staff in Business Advisory Services (BAS) to solve the revenue limit concerns.
Dr. Deegan stated that a group of about 100 schools within Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), in the Crenshaw area, are reviving a 15 year old petition. In working with the new petitioner we have learned that they have decided to abandon their old petition. The petitioner was given all the information and documents in order to proceed.

Mr. Crafton informed the group that the Wiseburn SD parcel tax passed by a 71-72% vote. Dr. Deegan stated that they have met with district staff and environmental consultants regarding the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) study report and how to get it adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE). If approved by the SBE, the unification will be effective in July 2014.

Mr. Bostrom requested a letter of support be sent to the SBE.

Mr. Willmer will work with staff to draft a letter.

John Nunez requested that the meeting starting time be revised to better accommodate staff. Staff was instructed by Mr. Willmer to survey members.

Discussion occurred regarding the new LACOE website to include the County Committee.

Mr. Bostrom requested that the website component be included in future evaluations.

All agreed that the LACOE website be an ongoing agenda item

County Committee members will advise Ms. Heredia if they do not want to receive the agenda in paper form.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:35 p.m.
San Diego Union-Tribune

DISTRICT OKS ELECTION CHANGE

Menifee Union board approves by-trustee-area voting, new maps


The governing board of the Menifee Union School District on Tuesday unanimously voted to adopt a by-trustee-area election process and one of three proposed maps, moving the district a step closer to complying with state and federal voting rights acts aimed at protecting minority groups’ interests before the November election.

The decision came after the governing board held the third and final public hearing on the matter at Tuesday’s meeting. Without any comments at any of the three hearings, the board settled on a map with boundaries defined largely by major roads and geographic features:

- District 1 (Rita Peters) is essentially Quail Valley, north of Normandy Road and west of Murrieta Road.

- District 2 (Robert O’Donnell) is north of the Salt Creek Flood Control Channel and west of Murrieta Road.

- District 3 (Ron Ulibarri) is south of the flood control channel, east of Interstate 215 and north of a path along Garbani, Menifee and Holland roads.

- District 4 (Randall Freeman) is south of that path and east of I-215.

- District 5 (Jerry Bowman) is west of I-215 and south of a path along Normandy and Murrieta roads and the Salt Creek Flood Control Channel.

In all three versions of maps presented in December by consultant Jeanne Gobalet, Latino-concentrated Quail Valley made up its own district, spurring Peters to apply for an appointment to Scott Mann’s vacated seat on the board earlier this month.

Peters will run for the remaining two years of that term in November, when Bowman, Freeman and Ulibarri are up for election.
"I'm from Quail Valley, and there’s a high Hispanic content there,” Peters said. “They have special needs, so I just think each area has its own needs that need to be addressed."

One of the other proposed maps followed current elementary school boundaries, which could change much sooner than a 2020 U.S. Census report that could force the district to review its trustee areas, depending on the results.

Gobalet said in December that racially polarized voting can be found in many district areas if people look hard enough, which has happened after the 2001 California Voting Rights Act essentially made local agencies with at-large voting vulnerable to lawsuits — and paying successful plaintiffs’ legal fees — when they dilute the strength of minority votes.

With the board approving a move away from an at-large process, as well as a map, the district’s by-trustee-area election resolution, demographic reports and final map will be submitted to the Riverside County Committee on School District Organization, which will conduct a public hearing with an eye on completing this process by the November election.

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Making the grade

Minority candidates poised to take on incumbents for new school district seats

By André Coleman 02/14/2013

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Should two of three incumbent candidates lose re-election on March 5, minority officeholders for the first time could hold a majority of votes on the recently reconstituted Pasadena Unified School District Board of Education.

Seven minority candidates — four Latinos and three African Americans — are running for four vacant seats, three of which are occupied by white incumbents seeking re-election.

The emergence of Latino and African-American candidates is a result of the district’s going from at-large elections, in which each voter was able to cast ballots for all of the candidates, to district-only or neighborhood elections in seven districts.

The change, approved by a special task force hoping to stave off potential lawsuits that might be filed against the district under provisions of the California Voting Rights Act, was later approved in June by 54 percent of voters in Pasadena, Altadena and Sierra Madre, the three communities that make up the district. The 2001 Voting Rights Act prohibits “racially polarized” elections that impair the election of minorities.
The only two incumbents not seeking re-election are Board members Ed Honowitz and Ramon Miramontes, currently the board's only Latino member. Latinos make up about 61 percent of the district's student population. The board's only black member is Renatta Cooper, who is not up for re-election.

African-American candidates include: Hermond Dean Cooper (no relation to Renatta Cooper), running against incumbent Kim Kenne for the new District 1 seat; and Deirdre Duncan and Tyron Hampton Jr., who are among four candidates running for the board's empty District 3 seat.

Latino candidates include Guillermo Arce and Ruben Hueso, who are also running for the District 3 seat; Stella Murga, who is looking to unseat incumbent Elizabeth Pomeroy, who is white, in District 5; and Luis Carlos Ayala, who is hoping to replace two-term incumbent Scott Phelps, also white, in District 7.

Under the new district voting system, Miramontes and Honowitz would have been forced to face board colleagues Kenne and Pomeroy, respectively, if they had chosen to run again.

District 1, which includes Eliot Middle School and Altadena, Jackson, Franklin and Loma Alta elementary schools, is the only race without a Latino candidate.

Despite being elected in 2011, Kenne, 50, is being forced to run two years before the end of her initial four-year term due to the changes in district voting procedures.

"I think [the change to districts] is a good change. There are a lot of new faces getting involved, that we wouldn't have seen. Whether the new people will win is a different question," Kenne said. "There is certainly more access to candidates. People are walking the districts now, and I am not sure they did that before."

Kenne has so far raised $10,000, half from a loan to herself and a $5,000 donation from Richard Webster, owner of event listing Web site goldstar.com. Kenne said she is focused on fiscal transparency, parent engagement and accountability.

Hermond Cooper, who filed papers with the City Clerk's Office declaring he will raise and spend less than $1,000 during the campaign, is a former school district employee who has filed two unsuccessful discrimination lawsuits against the district. He did not return phone calls.

In District 3 — a predominately Latino area in Northwest Pasadena and the only district without an incumbent — Arce, a Los Angeles County Human Services Department administrator, is squaring off against 46-year-old Hueso, a district volunteer, Duncan, a foster parent, and Hampton, a contractor.

The district includes Cleveland Middle, John Muir High, Washington Elementary and Washington Accelerated schools.

Hueso, brother of former San Diego Assemblyman Ben Hueso, is the top fundraiser in the race, declaring $6,175, including a $5,000 campaign contribution from former state Assemblymen
Fabian Nuñez, also of San Diego. His opponents have so far not raised any declarable campaign funds.

Hueso is endorsed by Assemblyman Chris Holden, United Teachers of Pasadena, Honowitz, former Board member Jackie Jacobs and Democrats of the Pasadena Foothills. Hueso, who has a daughter enrolled in a local school and another daughter who recently graduated, did not return a number of calls seeking comment.

The 50-year-old Arce, who has three children attending schools in the district (two of whom have special needs) filed a lawsuit against the district for allegedly failing to meet special education requirements for one of his children. The suit was settled in 2012.

“I have dealt with the district a lot,” Arce said. “My children have been victimized by them. They are condescending and only listen when you have an attorney. I am the only candidate that will be working for the parents. My campaign is so grassroots I can smell the dirt.”

Hampton, 29, graduated from John Muir High School in 2001. He was born and raised in Pasadena and is the only candidate to go through the local school system, attending Cleveland Elementary and Washington Middle schools. Hampton has not raised more than $1,000 for his campaign.

In District 5, which contains parts of eastern and southern Pasadena and includes McKinley School, Rose City High, Marshall Fundamental and Hamilton and Jefferson elementary schools, incumbent Pomeroy is running for a second term against Murga, executive director of the Pasadena Youth Center.

“I don’t think there is much transparency or accountability in the district on a variety of levels, from the budget to hires,” the 62-year-old Murga told the Weekly. “The board needs to be more proactive and ask more questions and not just wait for staff reports. The board does not function as a team right now. Instead of focusing on student achievement, they have been focusing on their differences.”

Murga is endorsed by United Teachers of Pasadena, the Pasadena Foothills Association of Realtors, local attorney Dale Gronemeier, Pasadena City College Board of Trustee member Berlinda Brown, PUSD Board President Renatta Cooper and former PUSD Board member Susan Kane. Murga has raised about $5,000 for her campaign.

Pomeroy, a former English teacher at Pasadena City College who has raised about $7,000, including $5,000 from the California Teamsters, is endorsed by her former board colleague, Miramontes.

Pomeroy is also endorsed by Congresswoman Judy Chu (D-Pasadena), Democratic state Sen. Carol Liu, Pasadena Councilwoman Margaret McAustin, Pasadena City College Trustee Jeanette Mann, Teamster Local 911, ACT Pasadena, current Board member Tom Selinske and former Board members Bob Harrison, Marge Wyatt and Alexander “Mike” Babcock.
“After four years of working intensively, I believe I see what the issues and obstacles are and I also see very promising initiatives that are under way in our district,” Pomeroy, 74, told the Weekly.

In District 7, the 49-year-old incumbent Phelps, who has raised $3,500, is a former John Muir High School math teacher who is hoping to hold off a challenge from Ayala, an immigration attorney.

Phelps has two young children attending school in the district.

The 49-year-old Ayala, who has raised $3,000 ($1,000 of which he lent to himself) has two daughters in local private schools. He also did not return calls for comment.

The West Pasadena district contains Blair International Baccalaureate School and San Rafael, Roosevelt and Linda Vista elementary schools.

“The biggest challenge is stabilizing and growing enrollment,” Phelps told the Weekly. “I believe the dual-language immersion program can do that by attracting new families.”

Phelps made national headlines in 2002 when he wrote and distributed a note to his fellow teachers that the majority of the students who were failing and disruptive were black. Phelps was suspended by then Superintendent Percy Clark. Phelps later said he was trying to get the district to stop holding teachers solely responsible for student performance.

Phelps has raised $3,500, including two donations equaling $2,500 from Miramontes, with whom he often sides on issues facing the board.

Miramontes told the Weekly he was excited to see more people of color running, but said local liberals could have made that occur well before this election.

“We have a well-entrenched liberal Democrat crew that could have marshaled their money to put more people of color on the board at any time,” Miramontes told the Weekly. “It’s good they are running, but I am focused on results. Let’s see what happens.”

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Washington Voting Rights Act draws contentious testimony: Minority representation versus at-large elections

By KYLEE ZABEL
Bainbridge Island Review By Kylee Zabel, Reporter WNPA Olympia News Bureau
FEBRUARY 15, 2013 - UPDATED 8:51 AM

OLYMPIA — A group of House Democrats re-introduced a bill this session that would affect how local governments run their elections in certain political subdivisions.

Known as the Washington Voting Rights Act, House Bill 1413 is intended to address underrepresentation of minority groups in local government. The bill prohibits unfair elections in which members of a protected class (members of a racial, ethnic or language minority) are unable to influence an election and/or receive adequate representation in local political subdivisions.

To affect how elections are operated in local government districts, persons of a minority group must provide evidence that polarized voting has occurred and that members of a protected class, while maybe a smaller percentage of the total electorate, do not have an equal opportunity to influence election results.

Polarized voting may be observed when there is a disparity between the candidate chosen by voters of a protected class or by those of the remainder of the electorate.

To remedy the issue, under the proposed legislation, political subdivisions face two options.

They can transition from at-large to district-based elections or, if they do not make the switch, they risk being sued by members of the protected class that have notified the political subdivision of their grievance.

At-large elections typically occur when voters of a jurisdiction vote for candidates living within that jurisdiction.

Supporters of the bill take issue with these types of elections because they say it limits the minority representation because it does not require candidates to live within geographic areas where the majority of civilians are of a protected class.

District-based elections would require that political subdivisions be divided into different geographic districts that each contains majorities of members of different protected classes. By doing this, supporters said, minorities will have a greater chance of influencing local elections.

Political subdivisions include any city, county, fire protection district, school district, public utility district or port district.

Mountlake Terrace Rep. Luis Moscoso (D-1st District) sponsored HB 1413 because he believes there has been mounting evidence of polarized voting in Washington during recent years.
"It's a rare occasion when you have legislation like this that enhances and augments the democratic process," he said. "It's an honor to bring this bill forward."

There are several concerns with the legislation. Some say the bill only offers a greater opportunity for litigation, costing the districts and, thus, taxpayers more money.

Trent England, executive vice president of the Freedom Foundation – a conservative, Washington-based educational research organization – said: "The only thing you can be sure that this legislation will do is create lots and lots of lawsuits."

Countering the argument that this bill would enhance the freedom of others to influence elections, England said, "it provides lots of freedom for action for attorneys and for judges to tie up local jurisdictions in court and extract money from them."

Moscoco disagrees, claiming that the bill is not an open invitation for more lawsuits but that "it brings people together to talk about things. It does not initiate litigation," he said.

Supporters, such as Toby Guevin of OneAmerica, reminded skeptics of the bill that litigation would only be brought if, after a county or district had been approached about its violation of the law, the district failed to act on that warning within 45 days. The 45-day window is a provision Guevin said is unprecedented in voting-rights laws throughout the U.S. and is an attempt to create a partnership between citizens and local government, not tension between the two.

Some argue that this so-called attempt to bring citizens and government closer together is just an illusion.

"This is not an opening for dialogue," said Michael Schechter of Foster Pepper Law Firm.

"Jurisdictions that are served notice have 45 days to do something about it. Basically, begin redistricting or be faced with a lawsuit," he said.

Matt A. Barreto, associate professor of political science and adjunct professor of law at the University of Washington, disagreed.

"Concerns over the potential costs of the legislation are completely made up," Barreto said.

"The legislation provides an opportunity for jurisdictions to avoid lawsuits altogether with an 'opt-out' clause that allows jurisdictions to switch to district-based elections and face zero litigation costs," he said.

A similar law was passed in California in 2002. The major difference with the Washington proposed legislation being that the 45-day time period for review of accusations and violations is not established.

And while supporters see the California law as a great success, others see it as something that may work in California, but not in Washington.

Prior to the 2002 law, California had repeated offenses under the federal Voting Rights Act. Washington has had virtually none, with the exception being the recent lawsuit against the city of Yakima by the American Civil Liberties Union.

The ACLU claims that Yakima City Council elections prevent Latino participation. Although Yakima's population is 41 percent Latino, no Latino has ever been elected to a city council position.
Sonia Rodriguez True, a Latino, was appointed to the Yakima City Council in 2009 but was defeated in her race to be elected to the position that fall.

Lawsuits concerning violations of the federal or California’s Voting Rights Acts have often carried large litigation costs. In Sanchez vs. the City of Modesto, a California case, the city had to pay $3 million in attorney fees to the defendants. The case as a whole cost upward of $4.5 million.

Some take issue with the assumption that appears to be made that all members of certain protected classes vote the same way. More specifically, the assumption that minorities vote for minority candidates based on the candidate’s race or ethnicity rather than the merits of their candidacy.

In the 2012 presidential election, Barack Obama won the majority of votes from minority groups, but when it comes to local elections, which may not be as highly politicized or partisan, some believe that people vote based on specific issues rather than if a candidate can toe a party line or shares the same ethnicity that they are.

Rep. Matt Manweller (R-13th District, Ellensburg) used the example of Ellensburg City Councilmember Anthony (Tony) Aronica, a Native American, to defend his position.

“People didn’t vote for or against Tony because he was Native American. They voted for him because he was a quality candidate,” Manweller said.

“I think that’s the American way; you vote for the best candidate,” he continued. “You don’t start gerrymandering so that you can vote for people that look like you.”

According to Baretto, however, data using a technique called “ecological inference” reliably measures voting behaviors of different groups.

“It has been widely accepted by state and federal courts as the best way to assess polarized voting,” he said.

Manweller stated that there is no doubt that majorities of subgroups tend to vote either Democrat or Republican, depending on the priorities of those specific groups.

However, he explained: “As we become more racially diverse and have more minority persons running for office, we start to vote more on quality of candidate than color of skin.”

One other concern is the impact this bill could have on the potential candidates for different positions.

Dan Steele, assistance executive director of the Washington Association of School Administrators, is concerned that going from at-large to district-based elections would narrow the pool of potential candidates and may limit the selection of qualified candidates.

“It’s almost disingenuous to say that somebody wouldn’t step up,” said Moscoso. “We have all types of candidates with various experience that run for office and they learn once they get in there.”

Forty-four persons signed in support of HB 1413 when it received a public hearing in the House Government Operations and Elections committee Jan. 30. These individuals were representing various organizations, including the ACLU of Washington, OneAmerica, the League of Women Voters of Washington, Progresso: Latino Progress Alliance and Planned Parenthood. Some were there to support the legislation on their own behalf, many were from Yakima and surrounding cities.
The legislation was scheduled for an executive session Wednesday (Feb. 6) but was cancelled due to Rep. Kevin Van De Wege's (D-24th District, Sequim) absence, said Rep. Sam Hunt (D-22nd District, Olympia), House Government Operations and Elections chairman. It is being re-set for further consideration.

Kylee Zabel is a reporter with the WNPA Olympia News Bureau.
Latinos and African Americans make up about two-thirds of the population of Palmdale. But since the city's incorporation in August 1962, not a single black resident and only one Latino has ever served on the City Council.

That's the backdrop of a complaint filed in Los Angeles County Superior Court by Antelope Valley civil rights activists alleging racial bias in city elections in this High Desert locale. The complaint argues that Palmdale's system of at-large council seats dilutes the influence of minority voters.

"Latinos and African Americans are locked out of the political system in the city of Palmdale," said Malibu attorney Kevin Shenkman, who is representing plaintiff Juan Jauregui, a Palmdale resident. Three local black activists and the NAACP have also said they will join the case, scheduled to go to trial in May.

The litigation is the latest in a series of racially themed conflicts in the Antelope Valley as blacks and Latinos have moved into once mostly white areas. Housing programs and police practices have been flash points as activists have challenged policies they perceive as unfairly targeting minority residents.

Plaintiffs say the city's at-large election system violates the state's 2001 Voting Rights Act, which guards against disenfranchisement of minorities. They seek a change to district-by-district voting.

Palmdale is fighting back. In court documents, city attorneys argue that because blacks and Latinos are a majority of registered voters in the city, they are "in a position, numerically" to elect the mayor and City Council members.

The lawyers also insist that district voting would not have helped minority candidates who lost. "They simply had very little support from voters, and no drawing or gerrymandering of districts would have resulted in a district which would have elected them," the attorneys said.
Moreover, in November 2001 Palmdale’s residents voted against a measure to introduce district voting. City Atty. Wm. Matthew Ditzhazy said via email that "ultimately it was the community's decision to make."

In a recent deposition, James Ledford, who has been elected the city's mayor 11 times since 1992, said he did not even know the race of his fellow council members and was not aware that all but one had been white.

Asked whether it bothered him "in any way that racial minorities in Palmdale might feel that they are not being represented in the City Council," Ledford said no.

Ledford declined to be interviewed for this article, although in the past he has said he favored district voting.

Traditionally, low voter turnout among blacks and Latinos in Palmdale's municipal elections has shrunk their voting power compared with that of whites, who turn out in greater numbers, statistics show.

The majority of Palmdale Latinos voted yes for district elections in 2001, but the measure was defeated because 66% of whites opposed it, according to data compiled by a city consultant and cited by Shenkman.

Similarly, in 2009, when V. Jesse Smith, president of the Antelope Valley chapter of the NAACP, ran for City Council, he split the Latino vote 49% to 51% with Steve Fox, who is white. But neither won a council seat. The spots went to white candidates Tom Lackey and Laura Bettencourt, who scored heavily among whites, although neither got a single Latino vote, Shenkman said.

Shenkman acknowledged the poor voting record of minority groups, but he blamed the system of at-large voting. Blacks and Latinos didn't vote because they had "grown to understand that their vote doesn't matter," he said.

At least a dozen government entities in California, including cities, school districts and county boards, have been sued under the state's Voting Rights Act, said Shenkman. Some cases are still pending, others have ended in settlements resulting in district elections, he said.

One of those was Compton, which placed the issue on the ballot last June to settle a lawsuit. Voters approved the switch from at-large to district voting. The change may give Latinos — who make up a majority of the city's population but a minority of eligible voters — a greater chance of putting the first Latino on the City Council in April.

For supporters of district voting in Palmdale, the claim represents a new effort to shake up the political status quo in the Antelope Valley. They say it will make city representatives more accountable to voters.
But Richard Loa, an attorney who in 2001 became the only Latino ever to win a council seat in Palmdale, said that although he supported Latinos' push for representation, he opposes resolving the issue through litigation.

"The important thing is to have effective leadership," said Loa, who has said he will run again.

Race isn't everything, agreed Darren Parker, who as chairman of the California Democratic Party's African American caucus helps recruit potential minority candidates to run for local office, but he said High Desert cities need black voices in leadership.

"I don't believe that anyone who doesn't get up in the morning and look like me can really walk in my shoes," Parker said.

Among the lawyers representing the plaintiffs is attorney R. Rex Parris, mayor of neighboring Lancaster, which uses at-large elections but is weighing a change.

Lancaster's population is about 40% Latino and 20% African American, but the City Council has four white men and one Latina. The city has also faced charges of racial bias, but Lancaster has a track record of minority representation on its council, including an African American who twice served as mayor.

Lilia Galindo, who has used her Palmdale-based Café Con Leche radio talk show to encourage Latinos to get out and vote, said High Desert Latinos were eager to find their political voice. District elections would help, she said.

"We've started to realize how important it is to express our rights as citizens," Galindo said.

ann.simmons@latimes.com
Residents in the North Monterey County Unified School District are scheduled to begin electing board members by trustee area starting this fall, after perhaps one of the least contentious reorganization efforts in Monterey County’s history.

The Monterey County Committee on School District Organization on Wednesday unanimously approved adoption of the new trustee area map, which splits Castroville, Prunedale, Elkhorn and Royal Oaks into five areas. Previously, trustees were elected at large.

Efforts to carve up the district began last summer, kicked into gear in the fall and smoothly wrapped up late Wednesday with a public hearing in which no one raised objections.

"The North Monterey County Board of Education did an excellent job," said Harvey Kuffner, committee chairman. "They moved pretty fast, they did their homework and they need to be congratulated for the fine job they did."

District reorganizations are usually emotional affairs that draw hundreds of people who feel passionately one way or the other. One of the most recent reorganizations was the splitting of the Monterey Peninsula College district into separate trustee areas, an issue that former trustees ferociously resisted.

But the reorganization in North Monterey County drew no opposition. Early in the process, new Superintendent Kari Yeater appointed a group of about 20 district residents to serve as advisers, a group that worked well together in coming up with the boundaries.

"When you get people involved who are willing to set aside their egos, good things happen," said Diana Jimenez, a representative of the League of United Latin American Citizens in North Monterey County, who sat on the redistricting committee.
Jimenez, a former board member, raised concerns about the lack of Latinos on the board after she lost re-election in 2011. The district is 54 percent Latino.

Two of the newly drawn trustee areas — Areas 2 and 4 — have a majority Latino population. They are the two areas up for election this fall.

The trustees up for re-election are Samuel Laage and Polly Jimenez.

Traditionally, this type of reorganization is put to a public vote, but district officials requested and got a waiver from the School District Organization Committee, which is made up of members from the Monterey County Board of Education. Not having to put the issue to a vote means the process moves along faster and saves the district money.

There are two hurdles that need to be cleared: The United States attorney general has to agree to the changes because Monterey County is covered under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act and every change has to be approved; and the State Board of Education needs to agree to waiving the election.

"This is a textbook case of how democracy in action works," Kuffner said. "It doesn't happen that often. It was an ideal situation, and I can't be more pleased."

Claudia Meléndez Salinas can be reached at 753-6755 or cmelendez@montereyherald.com.
LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION
(COUNTY COMMITTEE)
LEGISLATIVE REVIEW-MARCH 2013

BILL NUMBER/AUTHOR: Senate Bill 41/Wright
INTRODUCTION DATE: 12/12/12
LAST ACTIVITY/DATE: 02/01/13: Set for hearing
February 27.

DESCRIPTION OF BILL
This bill attached serves as clean-up legislation clarifying a provision from prior legislation authorizing the creation of the Wiseburn Unified School District (USD). Specifically, the bill removes a provision in the original legislation aimed at revising the revenue limit computation process for the new Wiseburn USD (when formed). The prior legislation would have required a revenue limit to be computed utilizing a blended formula including the revenue limit for both the Wiseburn SD and the Centinela Valley Union High SD. Upon the removal of that provision via this bill, the revenue limit for the new Wiseburn USD will be calculated as mandated for all unifications.

POTENTIAL IMPACT OF BILL ON LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMITTEE, SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION PROCESS AND/OR LOS ANGELES COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS
As this bill refines processes already approved through prior legislation, it will have no additional impact on the County Committee, the school district organization process or any local districts beyond those already impacted by the Wiseburn unification.

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 2013

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 21, 2013.

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 six months)

Formation Proposals/Last Activity Date

• Inner City Unified School District/July 2012

Transfer of Territory Proposals/Last Activity Date

• None

* Indicates update from previous summary.
Summary of Los Angeles County School District Reorganization Proposals  
(Excluding those affecting the Los Angeles Unified School District)  

March 2013  

The following is a summary of school district reorganization proposals (exclusive of those affecting the Los Angeles Unified School District (USD) that were at various stages in the school district reorganization process as of February 21, 2013.  

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

On May 16, 2001, the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) received a request from the Citizens for a Wiseburn Unified School District organization to prepare a petition (25 percent of the registered voters) proposing to form a Wiseburn USD from existing territory of the Wiseburn SD. The proposed formation territory currently lies within the boundaries of the Centinela Valley Union High SD (UHSD). The petition was provided to the chief petitioners on June 20, 2001.  

On November 9, 2001, the chief petitioners submitted a signed petition to the Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools (County Superintendent) to determine if the petition was sufficient and signed as required by law pursuant to Education Code (EC) §35700(a). In accordance with EC §35704, the County Superintendent found the petition to be sufficient and signed as required by law on December 4, 2001. On December 5, 2001, the petition was presented to the Los Angeles County Committee on School District Organization (County Committee) at its regular meeting and transmitted to the State Board of Education (SBE). Pursuant to EC §35705, a public hearing was conducted within the Wiseburn SD and Centinela Valley UHSD on January 23, 2002, at Richard Henry Dana Middle School in the Wiseburn SD.  

At its regular meeting on March 6, 2002, the County Committee was presented with a preliminary feasibility report concerning this proposal. The final feasibility report was presented to the County Committee at its regular meeting on May 1, 2002. At that meeting, the County Committee recommended approval and took action to recommend approval of the proposal to the SBE to form a Wiseburn USD from the existing boundaries of the Wiseburn SD within the Centinela Valley UHSD. The County Committee further recommended that the election area be the entire Centinela Valley UHSD.  

The County Committee’s plans and recommendations were transmitted to the SBE and the California Department of Education (CDE) on June 18, 2002. On June 19, 2003, the CDE requested additional statistical information from the impacted districts and notified LACOE staff that the petition would be heard in November 2003.  

On September 2, 2003, the CDE notified LACOE that the petition hearing before the SBE would be delayed until January 7-8, 2004. The CDE cited budget constraints and staff cutbacks as reasons for the hearing delay. On December 1, 2003, the CDE notified LACOE of a second delay for the petition hearing before the SBE, postponing it until March 10-11, 2004. The CDE cited current state fiscal circumstances as the reason for the further delay. On January 21, 2004, the CDE notified LACOE of a third delay for the petition hearing before the SBE, postponing it until May 12-13, 2004. On April 16, 2004, the CDE notified LACOE that the petition hearing would be held on May 13, 2004.  

* Indicates update from previous summary.
On April 27, 2004, LACOE received a copy of the CDE’s final feasibility study. On April 29, 2004, LACOE received notice from the CDE that the petition hearing had been delayed indefinitely at the request of the Wiseburn SD. Subsequently, the Wiseburn SD requested that the SBE hear the petition, along with its request for two waivers. A hearing was scheduled for July 7, 2004. On July 7, 2004, staff was notified by the CDE that Centinela Valley UHSD requested a delay in review by the SBE. Wiseburn SD agreed to withdraw its petition for consideration before the SBE to accommodate additional review requested by Centinela Valley UHSD. Subsequent to granting this delay, legal counsel to Wiseburn SD and Centinela Valley UHSD presented additional information (at the CDE’s request) regarding the legality of Wiseburn SD residents maintaining responsibility to pay Centinela Valley UHSD’s tax obligations following any unification of a Wiseburn SD.

On August 31, 2004, staff received notice that Ms. Karen Steentoft, Chief Counsel for the SBE, recommended that certain waivers submitted with the Wiseburn SD petition could be determined by the SBE at the time of the hearing. Subsequently, the CDE rescheduled the petition to be heard before the SBE on September 9, 2004.

On September 9, 2004, staff attended the SBE hearing. CDE staff recommended that the SBE adopt the proposal approving the petition to form a Wiseburn USD and to set the election area as the area of the Wiseburn SD only on the condition that the property owners within the Wiseburn SD retain current levels of responsibility for repayment of existing bonded indebtedness of the Centinela Valley UHSD upon successful formation of a Wiseburn USD. The SBE voted unanimously to approve the proposal and established that territory within the Wiseburn SD be the area of election. Statutory requirements provided that, following approval by the SBE, an election shall be called on the next available regular election date (March 8, 2005) in the territory determined by the SBE.

On October 19, 2004, at the direction of the SBE, the County Superintendent forwarded an order for special election to the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk’s (Registrar-Recorder) office, to be held in conjunction with the March 8, 2005, regular election. A ballot measure to approve or disapprove the formation of a Wiseburn USD and to elect a governing board was to be placed before the electorate. The election was scheduled to be held within the boundaries of the proposed Wiseburn USD. If the matter had received approval at that election, the new district would have been scheduled to become effective July 1, 2006.

On November 1, 2004, staff received a copy of a lawsuit filed by the Centinela Valley UHSD against the SBE, seeking to vacate approval of Wiseburn SD’s petition to unify based on lack of compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) regulations. On November 18, 2004, staff received a copy of a second lawsuit filed in this matter, citing flaws in the legality of the SBE’s decisions and naming additional parties, including the County Committee, as defendants in the matter. The Centinela Valley UHSD, Wiseburn SD, and SBE began negotiations to delay the election in order to revisit the issues underlying the petition and subsequent lawsuits. The SBE requested that the County Superintendent delay the election to allow for this negotiation process to run its course. Staff consulted with the Office of the Los Angeles County Counsel (County Counsel) and was advised that neither the County Superintendent nor the SBE could order a delay of the election.

* Indicates update from previous summary.
On Friday, December 10, 2004, in the case of Centinela Valley UHSD (Petitioners) vs. the SBE, the Los Angeles Superior Court (Court) issued a preliminary injunction barring the conduct of the March 8, 2005, scheduled election regarding the formation of the Wiseburn USD. The Petitioners also contacted the Court and requested that the Motion for Preliminary Injunction (Injunction) scheduled for December 13, 2004, vs. the County Committee and County Superintendent, be taken off the calendar. The Petitioners stated that they would consult with the Court’s clerk to re-schedule. This action was taken because the Petitioners received the Injunction that day. A hearing on the motion was scheduled for March 30, 2005. Staff received notice from County Counsel that both the County Committee and the County Superintendent were dropped as parties to the lawsuit in which they were named.

On January 6, 2005, County Counsel met with the County Committee in closed session to discuss the lawsuit. Later at the same meeting, Dr. Don Brann, then Superintendent of Wiseburn SD, appeared before the County Committee to inform them that the SBE would withdraw its approval of the petition, pending a negotiation with Petitioners and attorneys for Centinela Valley UHSD. On January 13, 2005, the CDE withdrew its recommendation to the SBE to approve the Wiseburn USD petition and order the election to be conducted within the territory of the Wiseburn SD. Staff at the CDE informed LACOE staff that they intended to redo the review process related to CEQA and to return the petition to the SBE for action at a later time (not to the County Committee). Subsequently, the SBE rescinded its previous approval of the Wiseburn SD’s unification petition.

On March 13, 2007, the California Department of General Services issued a Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), under CEQA. The CDE held a CEQA scoping hearing on March 28, 2007, within the Wiseburn SD. Staff attended this meeting. A comment period was set by the SBE for March 13, 2007, to April 12, 2007. On April 24, 2007, staff was notified by the SBE that the CEQA comment period had been extended to May 15, 2007, due to a request made at the scoping hearing.

On July 7, 2008, staff received a copy of the draft EIR from Terry A. Hayes Associates LLC, prepared on behalf of the CDE, which is the lead agency for CEQA reviews and thus responsible for completing any environmental review. A comment period for the draft EIR was opened from July 7, 2008, to August 21, 2008. A public hearing on the EIR was held on July 22, 2008, in the Wiseburn SD.

On April 15, 2009, staff provided follow-up information to the CDE regarding the financial status of the Centinela Valley UHSD. The CDE included this material in its updated feasibility study for the SBE.

On October 22, 2009, the CDE notified LACOE that the petition hearing before the SBE was scheduled for the SBE’s January 7-8, 2010, meeting. On December 8, 2009, the CDE notified LACOE that the petition hearing before the SBE would not be heard until March 11, 2010. On January 6, 2010, the CDE notified LACOE that the petition would not be heard until some time in July 2010. On March 25, 2010, the CDE notified LACOE that the petition would be heard at the May 12-13, 2010, meeting of the SBE. On April 30, 2010, the CDE issued its revised feasibility study on the Wiseburn SD unification petition. On May 3, 2010, the Wiseburn SD requested that the SBE remove the review of the petition from its May 2010 agenda. Presently,

* Indicates update from previous summary.
there is no date set for this petition to be reviewed by the SBE. The EIR contained in the revised petition has not yet been adopted by the SBE.

On July 23, 2010, Superintendents from the Wiseburn, Hawthorne, Lennox, and Lawndale SDs submitted a request to the County Superintendent to host a joint meeting where they could discuss a local solution to the school district organization issues within the area. The first of these meetings took place on August 19, 2010, with representatives from the four districts in attendance, along with the County Superintendent and LACOE staff serving as facilitators and observers.

On September 16, 2010, LACOE was notified of a change in the chief petitioner for this petition. Mr. Daniel Juarez was replaced by Ms. Shavonda Webber Christmas as one of the chief petitioners for the Wiseburn SD unification petition.

On October 5, 2010, the Superintendent for the Wiseburn SD contacted LACOE to request additional assistance to facilitate a meeting among all five of the impacted school districts (the Centinela Valley UIUSD, Hawthorne, Lawndale, Lennox, and Wiseburn SDs), this time including the Centinela Valley UHSD. The second joint meeting, at which all five districts were in attendance, was held on December 9, 2010. At that meeting, district representatives discussed the history of school district organization efforts within the region and agreed to meet again at a later time for further discussion. A LACOE staff member facilitated this meeting.

On January 11, 2011, staff was notified that a third meeting was scheduled among the five districts in the region. On February 25, 2011, staff met with representatives of the Wiseburn SD to discuss the petition status.

On March 17, 2011, all five districts attended another regional meeting at the Hawthorne SD. LACOE staff attended to observe and facilitate. At that meeting, representatives from the Wiseburn SD discussed the possibility of a legislative solution, whereby Wiseburn SD would unify and allow all of its commercial property to continue to be assessed within the Centinela Valley UHSD. They also discussed the option of Wiseburn SD residents continuing to pay on any outstanding debt obligations to the Centinela Valley UHSD.

On April 4, 2011, LACOE received a copy of draft legislation proposed by Wiseburn SD, which was circulated to all five districts via e-mail from Wiseburn SD’s Superintendent, Mr. Tom Johnstone. Staff discussed this proposed legislation with the County Committee at its April 6, 2011, regular meeting. The County Committee directed staff to prepare correspondence to each of the five impacted districts to convey its concerns about the length of time that has elapsed since the original petition and initial approval by the SBE.

On May 9, 2011, staff received a copy of a letter from attorneys for the Centinela Valley UHSD to the Wiseburn SD stating that Centinela Valley UHSD was not in agreement on the proposed legislation and would require any future proposal to be put before all of the voters in the impacted districts (meaning all four feeders and Centinela Valley UHSD), and not just before voters from the Wiseburn SD. The five districts scheduled another regional meeting for May 19, 2011, but it was cancelled due to scheduling conflicts. It is anticipated that another regional meeting will be scheduled and that it will be facilitated by LACOE staff.

* Indicates update from previous summary.
On June 22, 2011, County Committee Chairperson Mr. John Nunez, sent a letter on behalf of the County Committee to the Superintendents of the Centinela UHSD, Hawthorne, Lawndale, Lennox, and Wiseburn SDs, alerting them to concerns about the progress of the petition process. The County Committee requested replies from all districts before August 1, 2011, on how they intended to proceed related to the petition to form a Wiseburn USD.

On July 6, 2011, representatives from the Centinela UHSD, Hawthorne, Lawndale, Lennox, and Wiseburn SDs, addressed the County Committee at its regular meeting. The representatives discussed their role in the process to review the unification petition, related some history of the region and the petition, discussed issues that the districts have been working on together (such as curriculum articulation), and their intent to supply the County Committee with formal responses to its queries by August 1, 2011. Several district representatives and their attorneys alluded to discrepancies in County Committee minutes, activity summaries, and in the letter sent in June 2011, and stated that they intended to correct the record as they see it when they respond by August 1, 2011.

On August 3, 2011, the County Committee received a written response from the Centinela Valley UHSD, dated July 25, 2011. That response addressed several of the issues raised by the County Committee’s prior letter and referred to the information provided by district representatives in person to the County Committee at its July 6, 2011, meeting. On July 26, 2011, the County Committee received written responses from Hawthorne, Lawndale, and Lennox SDs. On August 23, 2011, the County Committee received a written response from the Wiseburn SD. These responses reiterated the positions presented at the July County Committee meeting, including Wiseburn SD’s intention to move forward with a legislative solution.

On August 26, 2011, representatives from all districts (including administrative staff and governing board members), supported by their legal and legislative advisors, met to discuss Wiseburn SD’s legislative solution. A representative from the County Committee and several LACOE staff members also attended. This meeting, held at the offices of the Centinela Valley UHSD, was aimed at furthering discussion on a regional solution.

At this meeting, many longstanding issues were discussed, including student achievement, fiscal issues, the primacy of soliciting input from all voters in the broader region, and the individual concerns of all districts. During this discussion, the group discussed Wiseburn SD’s legislative proposal, which would form a Wiseburn USD. That new unified district would retain its current K-8 assessed valuation and Wiseburn residents would continue to be obligated to pay any currently issued outstanding bond obligations owed to the Centinela Valley UHSD. However, the assessed valuation for the current high school district would be retained by Centinela Valley UHSD (91 percent) after the new Wiseburn USD is formed. The group reiterated the importance of voter input on all stages of this process, should it move forward. At the conclusion of the meeting, representatives from all of the districts agreed to discuss the proposal with their respective full governing boards and report back to the group in October.

On October 7, 2011, staff was notified by representatives of the Wiseburn SD that the Hawthorne, Lawndale, and Lennox SDs had communicated to Wiseburn SD that their boards have decided not to participate in any additional regional meetings, and that they were not in

* Indicates update from previous summary.
favor of the unification proposals reviewed to date (including the proposed legislation circulated by the Wiseburn SD). The three districts submitted an October 19, 2011, letter to the County Committee reiterating this decision. During the following week (October 10-14, 2011), staff was notified by representatives of the Wiseburn SD and the Centinela Valley UHSD that they are continuing to hold discussions regarding a proposed agreement and possible legislation supporting unification. Staff requested that district or board representatives communicate any agreements and/or decisions in writing to the County Committee and to LACOE.

On January 6 and 10, 2012, staff discussed developments with representatives from the Wiseburn SD and the Centinela Valley UHSD. District representatives stated that discussions about legislative solutions were ongoing and that they would update the County Committee at the March 2012 meeting.

On February 17, 2012, LACOE received a copy of a February 7, 2012, letter, issued jointly by the Superintendents of the Hawthorne and Lawndale SDs, which was addressed to the boards of the Wiseburn SD and the Centinela Valley UHSD. The letter stated that neither Hawthorne nor Lawndale SD was in agreement with the proposed legislation and pending joint powers agreement among the Wiseburn SD and the Centinela Valley UHSD. The letter raised concerns about distribution of potential revenue sharing under the proposed legislation and agreement.

At the March 6, 2012, meeting, Wiseburn SD Superintendent Dr. Tom Johnston addressed the County Committee and explained the status of the district’s negotiations on legislation with the Centinela Valley UHSD. Dr. Johnston stated that no agreement was finalized at this point and that he would keep staff informed. Dr. Ellen Dougherty, Superintendent of the Lawndale SD, also addressed the County Committee. She stated that her district had not been included in the negotiations and was not supportive of them if critical concerns of the feeder districts could not be addressed. The County Committee reviewed several documents, including recent drafts of the legislation and rationale behind it, as well as the response of the Wiseburn SD to the prior letter circulated by the other feeder districts in opposition of any legislative plan that does not include them and provide for an area-wide approval vote.

The County Committee also discussed the viability of the CEQA study already completed, which has not yet been formally adopted by the SBE. The committee directed staff to draft a letter to the SBE requesting that the CEQA study be adopted before its viability is no longer valid. The County Committee also requested updates from the impacted districts as they continue their negotiations on the legislative solution and on intra-area relations.

At the May 2, 2012, County Committee meeting, representatives from the Centinela Valley UHSD, Hawthorne, Lawndale, and Wiseburn SDs were present to provide an update on the petition and negotiations among the districts. The County Committee was informed that the Lennox SD Superintendent was unavailable to attend meeting. The districts stated that they had pursued further negotiations across several all-hands meetings and had reached two agreements in principal. The agreements would provide for the creation of a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) entity to collect and distribute parcel tax funds among the districts, and the other JPA would relate to the formation of a Wiseburn USD and reallocation of bonded indebtedness and assessed valuation among Wiseburn SD and Centinela Valley Union HSD. These agreements would

* Indicates update from previous summary.
require specific legislation, as proposed earlier this year. District representatives stated that all of their boards had already approved the agreements or were scheduled to do so that week.

Given the update, the County Committee discussed delaying sending a letter to the SBE to request an adoption of the EIR and to place the Wiseburn USD petition on an upcoming agenda. Prior to the June 6, 2012 County Committee meeting, all five districts reported the approval by their boards of the development of the relevant JPAs.

On June 11, 2012, Senate Bill 477 was amended by Senator Rod Wright to address the petition to create a Wiseburn USD. The bill language sought to create a Wiseburn USD (pending approval by the voters who currently reside within the Wiseburn SD), along with the creation of a revenue sharing JPA as described above. The Wiseburn SD requested that the County Committee submit a letter to the SBE expressing support of the pending local solution and legislation.

The amended version of SB 477 passed both the Senate and the Assembly. On September 28, 2012, the Governor signed the bill. He included a signing message advising the parties to introduce clean-up legislation that addresses concerns about the revenue limit formula for the new Wiseburn USD included in the legislation, as well as the commitment that the Centinela Valley Union HSD is supportive of the limited election area for the unification vote.

At the October 3, 2012 regular meeting, representatives from all five impacted districts appeared before the County Committee at its invitation. They provided an update on the clean-up legislation, how they are working together to develop articulation processes, and their commitment to continue to build on their local solution so that all districts and their students thrive. They alerted the County Committee to the fact that the JPA called the Local Classrooms Funding Authority (LCFA), which was formed upon approval by the boards of all five of the local districts, placed its first parcel tax measure on the November 6, 2012 ballot. The County Committee agreed to send a letter of support to the SBE, which was distributed on October 23, 2012.

On November 6, 2012, the LCFA ballot initiative was passed by voters from the five impacted districts. The Wiseburn SD is currently in discussions with the CDE regarding adoption of the CEQA report.

On December 5, 2012, staff met with representatives of the Wiseburn SD and their environmental consultants, Terry A. Hayes and Associates, along with a representative from the CDE, to review the procedures needed to facilitate the SBE's adoption of the EIR previously developed for the Wiseburn unification petition. The environmental consultants will follow CEQA procedures and advise all parties on the steps necessary to align the adoption of the EIR with the SBE's review of the unification petition.

On December 12, 2012, SB 41 was introduced to clean up the revenue limit aspect of the original legislation approving the Wiseburn unification. If passed, this urgency bill would take effect immediately and would allow for the unification petition to be agendized by the SBE. In light of this legislation, staff is working with LACOE financial staff to develop the blended revenue limit for the Wiseburn USD (when formed), in consultation with the CDE. Staff is also assisting

* Indicates update from previous summary.
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(excluding those affecting the Los Angeles Unified School District)
March 2013
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LACOE financial staff in the gathering of documents the CDE requested related to the Wiseburn SD and the Centinela Valley UHSD.

At the January 9, 2013, meeting of the County Committee, the committee discussed its continued support for the Wiseburn Unification and directed staff to review the options for communicating that support to the SBE prior to their consideration of the matter (currently expected to be in May 2013).

*Status: Legislation to facilitate formation of the Wiseburn USD signed by the Governor; process to adopt EIR underway with CDE; clean-up legislation introduced December 12, 2012; petition scheduled for review by the SBE in May, 2013; LACOE staff currently developing blended revenue formula for new Wiseburn USD.

Status Date: February 19, 2013

PROPOSED UPDATE OF TRUSTEE AREAS AND INSTITUTION OF TRUSTEE AREA VOTING WITHIN THE DOWNNEY USD

On January 31, 2013, LACOE received a request for a petition pursuant to EC §5019 to update the trustee areas and institute trustee area voting within the Downey USD.

The proposal was initiated by the adoption of a resolution of the Board of Trustees of the Downey USD. Downey USD has had trustee areas with at-large voting (referred to as a hybrid voting structure) for many years and the district is seeking to add trustee area voting. In addition, the district reviewed and seeks to update its existing trustee areas. This issue will be introduced at the March 6, 2013 regular meeting of the County Committee, and a public hearing on the issue will be held immediately following the meeting. Public hearing materials will be distributed to County Committee members under separate cover.

*Status: Petition to be introduced at the March 6, 2013 County Committee meeting; public hearing scheduled for the same day, immediately following the meeting.

Status Date: February 19, 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.

* Indicates update from previous summary.
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.

* Indicates update from previous summary.
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

* Indicates update from previous summary.
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

* Indicates update from previous summary.
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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

- 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

* Indicates update from previous summary.