August 23, 2012

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

FROM: Keith D. Crafton, Secretary
County Committee

SUBJECT: Cancellation of the September 5, 2012, Regular Meeting of the County Committee

The regular meeting of the County Committee scheduled for Wednesday, September 5, 2012, has been CANCELLED. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 3, 2012.

The following is an update of relevant information as of August 22, 2012

Staff Activities

- Staff is making preparations for the October 29, 2012 election of members to the County Committee, from the First, Fourth and Fifth Supervisorsial Districts. Staff will keep members apprised of details in upcoming separate bulletins.

- Staff continues to monitor Senate Bill 477, related to the proposed Wiseburn Unified School District, and is in discussions with representatives of the impacted districts and staff at the California Department of Education. Staff will keep the County Committee informed of developments.

- Staff continues to consult with the Los Angeles County Office of Education legal counsel to assess the impact of the California Voting Rights Act in Los Angeles County.

Newspaper Articles

- A July 25, 2012 article from the Glendale News Press—"Glendale Unified wades into review of district-based elections." (Attachment 1)

- A July 26, 2012 article from the Mercury News.Com—"Judge resets trail on San Mateo County’s besieged voting system until after fall election." (Attachment 2)
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• An August 9, 2012 article from the Press Enterprise—"SCHOOLS: Alvord board to vote on trustee areas.” (Attachment 3)

• An August 12, 2012 article from the sgvtribune.com—"Law firm’s legal battle takes toll on San Gabriel.” (Attachment 4)

• An August 15, 2012 article from the Press Enterprise—"MENIFEE: School board to study elections by area.” (Attachment 5)

• An August 16, 2012 article from Recordnet.com—"DELTA COLLEGE TRUSTEES FACE UPHILL FIGHTS.” (Attachment 6)

• An August 16, 2012 article from NOOZHAWK—"SBCC-Trustees Redistricting Bumps Out Long-Serving Incumbents.” (Attachment 7)

• An August 18, 2012 article from The Sentinel—"Kings still punished under Voting Rights Act.” (Attachment 8)

• An August 20, 2012 article from the Press Enterprise—"RIVERSIDE: School board delays trustee maps again.” (Attachment 9)

• An August 20, 2012 article from the Los Angeles Times—"Newton: Anaheim’s ballot battle.” (Attachment 10)

• An August 21, 2012 article from the Los Angeles Times—"Don’t rush Anaheim.” (Attachment 11)

Legislative Review

Attached is a review of pending legislation related to school district organization. (Attachment 12)

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 13)

• “Summary of Los Angeles County School District Reorganization Proposals (excluding those affecting the Los Angeles Unified School District).” (Attachment 14)

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

KDC/AD:ah
Attachments
Glendale Unified wades into review of district-based elections

July 25, 2012 | By Megan O’Neil, megan.oneil@latimes.com

Glendale Unified officials have initiated an examination into the possibility of moving from an at-large process for electing school board members to a district system.

“We just want to make sure we are doing our due diligence,” school board President Christine Walters said Tuesday. “Our obligation is to be in the process of discernment.”

In an at-large election, candidates can run and be elected, regardless of where they live within the area served by Glendale Unified, which roughly follows city boundaries. In a district-based system, candidates compete to represent specific geographic areas.

In November, Glendale Unified and Glendale Community College commissioned the consulting firm Redistricting Partners to conduct a $35,000 joint study to determine whether they should make the change.

It was preemptive move.

Cerritos Community College was sued last year by voters who claimed its at-large structure violates the California Voting Rights Act. Signed into law in 2002, the CVRA compels elected bodies to use districts in situations where an at-large system dilutes the voting power of a minority group.

The Community College League of California and political consultants warned of future, similar lawsuits. Under legal pressure, Mt. San Antonio College and Compton Community College, as well as Twin Rivers Unified, in Sacramento, have since converted to district systems.

In a series of meetings at the Glendale Community College earlier this year, Paul Mitchell of Redistricting Partners said that analysis of multiple local elections revealed some patterns of racially polarized voting. They could leave the campus vulnerable to an expensive lawsuit, he noted.

“There is enough evidence of racially polarized voting for the board to be concerned,” Mitchell said during a meeting in February. “Really, the next phase of discussion on that is to discuss the level of concern you have with your attorney.”
Glendale Community College trustees so far have held off on taking action on the issue.

Last month, Mitchell returned to Glendale and made the first of what is expected to be at least two presentations on redistricting to Glendale Unified board members. The K-12 and community college districts share boundaries, meaning that much of the data and findings were the same.

Board members said they have many additional questions they hope to have answered at a future meeting on the issue.

"We're taking a fairly methodical approach to this," Walters said. "We don't think this is an urgent issue. The five [current board members] are fairly well spread out through the community."

Among the biggest concerns about the prospect of moving to a district system would be fostering unproductive loyalties to certain schools or neighborhoods, Walters said.

"We as board members could potentially see the district very differently," Walters said. "We would be concerned mainly about our own schools. Today, we look at all the district schools equally. But if we switch into district, I am going to be potentially more concerned about the schools where my voters are."

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Twitter: @megankonell
Judge resets trial on San Mateo County's besieged voting system until after fall election

By Bonnie Eslinger Daily News Staff Writer San Jose Mercury News

Posted: 07/26/2012 03:00:00 AM PDT

A judge Wednesday granted San Mateo County's request to postpone a trial on the legality of its at-large system for electing supervisors, which critics contend is discriminatory because it dilutes the votes of minority residents.

But in agreeing to wait until after the Nov. 6 election, Superior Court Judge Beth Freeman said the trial wouldn't be moot even if residents approve a ballot measure to replace countywide supervisor elections with district elections.

As civil rights lawyers who sued the county argued in their legal papers, "it is highly unlikely that the entire case would be moot if the voters approve district elections," Freeman said in her ruling. "It is, however, quite clear that voter action would significantly affect the scope of the legal challenge and inform the court of the remedies remaining."

The lawsuit, filed in April 2011, contends that selecting supervisors countywide instead of by the districts they represent violates the California Voting Rights Act because that action weakens the voting power of Latino and Asian-American residents. Although each minority group makes up about one-quarter of the county's population, there's been only one Latino supervisor and no Asian-Americans since 1995, according to the lawsuit.

San Mateo is the only county in the state that elects supervisors countywide. The supervisors in June voted to put the question of district versus at-large elections on the ballot, after rejecting the idea two years earlier when it was suggested by a county charter review committee. Despite the about-face, a majority of supervisors said they still believe the current system better serves county residents because it forces them to consider everyone's needs, not just those of the ones in their district.

In their motion to continue the trial until after the election, the county's attorneys argued that if voters choose to switch to district elections, "this case will be rendered moot." And if voters decide to continue with the current system, the voting patterns in the election "may be relevant evidence" that could be used in the trial, they said.

Lawyers for the plaintiffs -- a group of six Asian-American and Latino residents -- argued against postponing the trial, saying the county is merely trying to stall without good reason and that regardless of how the ballot measure fares, the trial should proceed because ending the at-
large system would probably be only the first step in remedying "the underlying problem of vote dilution." They suggested that other changes, such as redistricting and ranked-choice voting, may be in order as well.

Plus, they argued, a court ruling against the at-large system would prevent the county from later returning to it and provide legal guidance for other pending lawsuits involving California Voting Rights Act violations.

In rescheduling the trial to Feb. 19, 2013, Judge Freeman noted that "a judicial determination shortly before the election may improperly influence the outcome of an election and be a waste of judicial resources."

County Counsel John Beiers said he was pleased that Freeman rescheduled the trial and maintained that either way the ballot measure vote goes, the county could legally defend its at-large system. "Our evidence concludes the minority votes are not impaired," he said.

Robert Rubin, one of the attorneys for the plaintiffs, said he too was pleased with the ruling. "If they convert to district, the case would still be live for purpose of implementing an appropriate remedy," he said.

The suit was jointly filed by the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, the Asian Law Caucus, Arnold & Porter LLP and Seattle University law professor Joaquin Avila.
SCHOOLS: Alvord board to vote on trustee areas

The Alvord Unified board will vote tonight on whether the expense to create trustee areas is necessary, social media use, costs for police officers based on campuses and more budget cuts if voters reject tax increases.

Most Inland school districts are grappling with or recently settled those topics.

The board will meet in closed session at 5 p.m. and discuss with one of the district’s lawyers the potential liability for continuing at-large elections. Then during the regular meeting, it will vote whether to spend $25,000 to $45,000 to carve the district up into trustee areas, from which future board members would be elected.

Riverside Unified is in the process of creating trustee areas to avoid a lawsuit under the California Voting Rights Act alleging Latino voters have been denied board representation through at-large elections that diluted their voice. Lake Elsinore Unified, Perris Union High and San Jacinto Unified school districts recently adopted trustee areas. Trustees in Jurupa, Hemet and Coachella Valley unified school districts must live in trustee areas but all district voters choose them. The Riverside County Board of Education has long been elected by trustee areas. Only voters registered in the trustee area choose the trustee to represent them.

While some districts have been active on social media websites, Alvord has not. The board will discuss appropriate use and concerns for staff and students’ privacy.
At previous meetings, some Alvord board members balked at costs to keep two Riverside police officers stationed at La Sierra and Norte Vista high schools when it is laying off teachers and staff, including campus safety supervisors. The city and school district historically split the cost for police on campus. Riverside City Councilman Steve Adams, whose ward is within Alvord, covered half the district’s share in 2010-11.

The proposed 2012-14 agreement is a 18.2 percent reduction, $121,604 a year. Having police on campus is seen as a deterrent to crime. It helps police offer positive role models to teens and encourages communication, police said at previous meetings.

Some Inland school districts adopted their 2012-13 budgets with reduced funding that assumed voters will reject temporary tax increases in November. Alvord, like Riverside Community College District, adopted a budget that assumes flat funding and will require further cuts if tax increases fail.

For Alvord, the loss would be $441 per student based on average daily attendance. Staff identified a list of $4 million worth of potential budget cuts, including 7.05 percent pay reductions for teachers, staff and managers, which the board will discuss.

The 2011-12 budget was almost $148 million. Revenue is dropping 7.6 percent to $132 million for 2012-13, even with tax increases.

Most school districts have been using their reserve funds and using one-time money to balance budgets so they don’t have to lay off as many teachers and staff or increase class sizes as much. If the tax increases fail, Alvord won’t have enough money left in reserve to cover all of 2012-13, according to a staff memo to the board.

Written by Dayna Straehley
Law firm's legal battle takes toll on San Gabriel

By Lauren Gold, SGVN twitter.com/laurengold
Pasadena Star-News
Posted: 08/12/2012 08:14:56 PM PDT

In May, the city signed labor contracts with the Police Officers' Association and Firefighters' Association, both represented by Lackie, Dammeier and McGill, after 13 months of bitter negotiations.

Scott Grossberg, an attorney hired by the city to handle these legal issues, said he thinks there is a connection between the lawsuits and the recent labor negotiations.

"The city believes that it negotiated all the labor contracts in good faith and put all this behind us, but here we are," Grossberg said. "It makes me wonder what the real intent behind this is."

Among the filings against the city are a notice of intent to recall Councilwoman Juli Costanzo and two proposed ballot measures to repeal the city's retirement and utility users taxes if they do not meet certain public safety conditions.

Lackie, Dammeier and McGill also filed a lawsuit accusing city officials of misusing city employee retirement funds in what attorneys called "Bell-style corruption."

Most recently, the firm submitted a public-records request asking for documents relating to "potential unlawful" city trash fees, and another investigating a possible violation of the California Voting Rights Act because of the lack of Asian-American council members.

And, Grossberg said, he doesn't think the legal storm will be clearing anytime soon.

"My guess is there will be more," he said. "I'd like to believe that everybody will put their reasonable hats on ... and the city can get back on with its business, but I also know hope is not a strategy, so we're prepared for the worst."

But POA and FFA attorney Dieter Dammeier said his firm's claims are legitimate and are the only way he can get the city to negotiate with the unions.

"The place is screwed up," Dammeier said. "I represent police and fire groups in 130 different cities in Southern California, and most of them don't have any claims going. But you have
anomalies where cities rather than come to the table... they just thumb their noses at you and the only other option you have is to go to court."

Grossberg said all the claims are unfounded and the city is prepared to "defend each and every lawsuit." Plus, he said, the city can't afford to settle the lawsuits or pay the unions more money.

"San Gabriel has no intention of compromising its fiscal stability the way other cities have done," he said. "The city cannot be held hostage through initiatives or recall threats or litigation just to give people more money."

Dammeyer said he knows it is petty to file a claim against the city for $40 in parking fees, as his firm did last month, but he said the city won't respond to any other attempts to work out their problems.

POA President Fabian Valdez said the group ultimately wants a resolution, as some officers plan to leave San Gabriel for a department with "less turmoil."

"We are open to trying to navigate all of these issues between the POA and the city," Valdez said.

Douglas Johnson, a fellow at the Rose Institute of State and Local Government, said the Voting Rights Act has begun to surface as a "political tool" for unions, citing a similar case with a construction workers' union in Escondido.

"Voting-rights claims are clearly just angling for leverage or giving up on negotiations and trying to remove some of the council members," Johnson said.

He said changing to a vote-by-district system could "toss out" a number of council members, depending on how closely they live to one another. And, Johnson said, a lawsuit is "financially risk-free" because if a group loses, it is not required to pay the city's legal defense costs.

Dammeyer said the POA and FFA support the Voting Rights Act probe and the recall because they want a "change in leadership on the City Council." Councilmen David Gutierrez, Kevin Sawkins and Mario de la Torre are up for re-election in March.

Despite continuing allegations of misconduct and corruption, City Manager Steven Preston said he believes the city staff and council have made every effort to work with the unions and their lawyers throughout negotiations.

He said the legal battle has taken a toll on staff morale and diverted attention from other city projects. But in the end, Preston said, he still has a lot to be proud to report in this month's State of the City address.

"Everything we are going to do is going to be on the high road," he said.

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The Press Enterprise


MENIFEE: School board to study elections by area

/FILE PHOTO

Menifee Union school board Trustee Scott Mann.

STAFF WRITER

mklampe@pe.com

Published: 15 August 2012 06:34 PM

The Menifee Union School District will proceed with an effort to switch from at-large elections to voting by district.

A divided school board voted 3-2 Tuesday, Aug. 14, to move forward with the effort, which could be completed in time for the board’s next election in 2013. The next step, district officials said, is to hire a demographer to review the district’s enrollment, population and voting patterns.

School districts across the state have been changing how school board members are elected in an effort to avoid a costly lawsuit and ensure compliance with the California
Voting Rights Act. The 2001 law prohibits at-large elections when they hinder the ability of a “protected class” of people, such as Latinos, to elect candidates from their community.

Some school districts, after being sued under the law, have been forced to adopt “by district” voting systems. In those systems, residents vote for someone to represent a particular area or district.

Candidates must live in that area.

Lake Elsinore Unified, San Jacinto Unified and Perris Union are among districts that already have made the switch.

Menifee trustees Jerry Bowman, Robert O'Donnell and Randy Freeman voted in favor of the proposal.

Trustees Scott Mann and Ron Ulibarri voted against it.

Mann said Wednesday that he's not opposed to hiring the demographer to study the issue, but said he wasn't ready to say he supports moving to trustee areas.

He said he wants to review the district's enrollment, population and voting data before making a decision.

"We need to know what we're dealing with, then decide," he said.

Ulibarri said during Tuesday's meeting that he wasn't convinced the board needed to make the switch to elections by district.

"I just don't feel it's a necessity at this point," he said.

Follow Michelle L. Klampe on Twitter: @MichelleKlampe and read the education blog: blog.pe.com/schools
Recordnet.com


News

ELECTION 2012

DELTA COLLEGE TRUSTEES FACE UPHILL FIGHTS

By Alex Breitler, Record Staff Writer

August 16, 2012

The days appear to be over when re-election as a San Joaquin Delta College trustee was a virtual guarantee.

Four trustees catapulted into office in 2008 following bad publicity over mismanaged bond money. It was an unprecedented turnover, as board members who had served with little opposition for 20 or 30 years were shown the door.

Now, three of those four "new" trustees are themselves facing competition on the November ballot, at least in part because a union representing Delta's faculty has been actively seeking candidates to challenge them.

The California Teachers Association in May issued a statement blasting Trustee Teresa Brown, who had been endorsed by the union in 2008. This time the union is supporting Brown's challenger, Tracy planning commissioner Jass Sangha.

The union cited a number of issues. Brown was head of the search committee that picked Jeff Marsee, the college's failed former president, and she supported some painful and controversial cuts to Delta's budget over the years.

But perhaps the biggest concern for the union is board members' unwillingness to change the way in which they are elected.

Delta trustees are elected by voters throughout the district, which includes portions of five counties. Some faculty members want trustees elected by voters only in their represented areas.
Such a change has been discussed off and on over the years, and most recently was rejected by a split board last spring. The status quo, the union warns, could leave the college vulnerable to a lawsuit under the California Voting Rights Act.

"Essentially, we prefer the area voting (instead of district-wide) because I think it encourages democratic participation," said Wes Swanson, an instructor of history and a union representative. "The law, I don't think, is a joke. I don't want us to have another nuisance lawsuit and cough up a bag of money."

Brown, however, said the proposed change would be counterproductive because trustees should be accountable to voters throughout the college district. The union's interest in the issue, Brown said, is merely to make it easier to unseat incumbents.

"One of the most dangerous things for major turnover is you have an inexperienced board that is far more susceptible to influence by special-interest groups," she said. "It's no coincidence that union contracts are up for negotiation this next year."

Brown is the only trustee upon whom faculty have taken a formal position, Swanson said. Deliberations are continuing on the three other races.

However, Swanson did say the union will support only those candidates who favor changing the voting system.

Other races to watch this November at Delta:

» Trustee Steve Castellanos is challenged by consultant David Tanner, who in partnership with a Calaveras County property owner has long advocated for a campus near Valley Springs. Delta studied the proposal in 2010, but ultimately the board - including Castellanos - decided not to include it in the college's near-term plans.

Calaveras residents are paying for the college's $250 million Measure L bond but not receiving the benefits, Tanner said. Castellanos said he supports improvements at Calaveras, but said developing a campus there is a long-term process.

» Trustee Jennet Stebbins faces more competition than any other incumbent. She is challenged by business owner LeJames K. Melton and psychiatric technician Pablo V. Zapata.

» Trustee Mary Ann Cox will not seek a second term. Cox, 69, said she wants to spend more time with her family.

Cox, whose votes have largely aligned her with the employee unions, said she thinks more turnover would be a good thing. "I would like to see a new board that has a fresh start," she said. "I'm impressed
by the people that are running, and I'm impressed by the amount of energy the faculty are putting into trying to find candidates that really would be well prepared and totally involved."

Retired professor Elizabeth Blanchard and educator Claudia Moreno have filed papers to run for Cox's seat.

Contact reporter Alex Breitler at (209) 546-8295 or abreitler@recordnet.com. Visit his blog at recordnet.com/breitlerblog.
SBCC Trustees Redistricting Bumps Out Long-Serving Incumbents

Board candidates/members must live within the area they represent and will no longer be elected under an at-large model.

Under redistricting, each member of the SBCC Board of Trustees will represent one of seven geographic areas, instead of four, and be elected only by voters within that district. (Lara Cooper / Noozhawk file photo)

By Giana Magnoli, Noozhawk Staff Writer | @magnoli | Published on 08.16.2012 8:33 p.m.

Last year, the Santa Barbara City College Board of Trustees voted to redistrict its voting area and get rid of the at-large election model. Trustees now must live within the area they represent, and the new boundaries bump out two long-serving incumbents.

Candidates must reside in and be registered to vote in the area they want to represent as a trustee. Now, each SBCC trustee represents one of seven geographic areas — instead of four — and is elected.
only by voters within that district, instead of at-large elections in the district that spans from Gaviota to Carpinteria.

Redistricting combined with the 2010 election's ousting of long-serving incumbents will result in a board of new faces. As of Dec. 7 when the new terms start, the board's most experienced members will be halfway through their first terms.

"This means the entire SBCC board will have no more than two years of experience each, which represents a major change from the prior SBCC board history of long-term service," said Trustee Joan Livingston, who will be retiring after 19 years of service when her term ends in November. She lives in the newly drawn District 5, which will be held by Marsha Croninger until 2014.

Trustees with terms that expire first — including Livingston and Morris Jurkowitz — are the ones who leave office in the two cases where new districts have two people representing them, according to SBCC public information officer Joan Galvan.

District 1 is represented by board president Peter Haslund and Jurkowitz, whose term expires this year, and Haslund holds the seat until 2014. Since Jurkowitz lives in Montecito and Haslund in Carpinteria, one incumbent has no option for re-election this year.

"Morrie really has no choice to run anywhere else; that is where he lives," Galvan said.

Haslund says he isn't worried about the loss of institutional memory.

"It's good to have new blood, fresh looks at how we do business," he said. "I'm very confident in my colleagues' ability to ask penetrating questions and make decisions on the basis of what is in the best interest of the college long-term."

Trustees say they made the change to get more proportionate Latino representation. The new boundaries created more evenly sized districts — each with a population of about 28,000 people — and to help avoid lawsuit vulnerability under the California Voting Rights Act, according to the college.

The SBCC district's population is 32 percent Latino, but only one trustee — Luis Villegas — is Latino, according to redistricting information packets. Villegas, who has served since 2003, has not filed papers to run again with the Santa Barbara County Elections Office as of the Aug. 15 deadline.

Haslund said there is a Latina candidate — Veronica Gallardo — being appointed in lieu of election, for the district that includes Santa Barbara's downtown, Eastside and Westside.

The boundary maps available are still vaguely drawn, but the college is working on more detailed ones, according to Galvan.

Redistricting was brought up by the past board and former president Andreea Serban, Haslund said. The college contracted with Sacramento-based Redistricting Partners and the Community College League of California to do a study last summer, which recommended redistricting to avoid the possibility of facing some voting-related lawsuits.
SBCC’s board approved the group’s newly drawn map for districts in December, Haslund said, adding that the board didn’t want to draw the boundaries themselves and be accused of gerrymandering.

New district areas 2, 3 and 4 are up for election on Nov. 6.

Newcomers are unopposed for two of the seats and will be appointed in lieu for election. Marianne Kugler is a retired education administrator, instructor and SBCC Continuing Education student, and will be serving for District 2 (Goleta). She also served on the 16-person search committee for current SBCC Superintendent/President Lori Gaskin, who joined the campus July 1.

Local teacher Veronica Gallardo will be serving for District 3 (downtown, Eastside, Westside of Santa Barbara), an area created with Latino representation in mind, Haslund said.

District 4 has nonprofit board president Craig Nielsen going up against Brian Fay, a social services administrator for People Creating Success. This area covers parts of Santa Barbara and the unincorporated areas north of Goleta.

District 6 (Santa Barbara and Isla Vista) is represented by Lisa Mackler and District 7 (the Mesa area of Santa Barbara) is represented by Marty Blum, whose terms are up in 2014.

In 2008, Jurkowitz, Livingston and Villegas were elected without opposition, or even going to the ballot. Jurkowitz has served since 2003, and Livingston and Villegas have served as trustees since 1993.

Before the last election in 2010, a Citizens for SBCC group gathered support after upheaval from the Adult Ed program and changes in the parent-child workshops. Community support brought Blum, Croninger, Haslund and Mackler onto the board, unseating four incumbents in the process: Kay Alexander, who had served as trustee since 1965, Joe Dobbs, Sally Green and Desmond O’Neill.

After the new board majority was elected, trustees conducted reviews of Serban in closed session and placed her on paid administrative leave through June 30, 2012, the end of her contract. It was seen by many as follow-through on their election promise to clean house, and many people spoke on Serban’s behalf during public meetings.

Controversy has surrounded the current board ever since, culminating with an Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges investigation that placed SBCC on warning status early this year, as a result of complaints about the board. The ACCJC report said the board didn’t follow its own policies, micromanaged school administrators and needs to better understand the Brown Act and its role in decision-making.

SBCC has to submit a response by March 15, 2013, and show it corrected the deficiencies found in January’s report and implement some recommendations: be trained by outside experts on the appropriate roles of the board and superintendent, revise its code of ethics policy and “redirect its focus to creating an environment for empowerment, innovation and institutional excellence.”
Though Haslund says he isn’t worried about the loss of institutional memory, Livingston feels the opposite.

“Prior to 2010, SBCC had two of the longest-serving trustees in the entire state — Kay Alexander and Joe Dobbs,” she said. “The 2009 accreditation report highlighted the prior stability and longevity of the SBCC board as one of the key elements to its reputation for good governance.”

— Noozhawrk staff writer Giana Magnoli can be reached at gagnoli@noozhawk.com. Follow Noozhawk on Twitter: @noozhawk, @NoozhawrkNews and @NoozhawrkBlz. Connect with Noozhawk on Facebook.

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Kings still punished under Voting Rights Act

Recent Merced County escape from federal scrutiny highlights issue again

Merced County recently got out from under longtime Voting Rights Act sanctions, winning a decision that ended federal government scrutiny for signs of voter discrimination.

No such luck for Kings County officials. They remain subject to the 1965 law, which was designed to end discrimination against blacks in the South.
The act was applied nationwide. It pulled in four California counties with military bases — Kings, Merced, Yolo and Monterey. They were included because they fell below 50 percent voter turnout in the 1972 presidential election.

That was enough for the U.S. Department of Justice to assume discrimination. Since then, every proposed electoral change — a shift in district boundaries, redistricting, basically anything — has been subject to a 60-day review by federal officials.

Kings County officials say the only violation they have ever been cited for since 1972 is submitting late information. They say the sanctions are costly, burdensome and unnecessary.

"Every boundary change, everything else that is done, it comes in the form of lost staff time," said Larry Spikes, Kings County administrative officer.

"I wouldn't mind getting out from under it," said Supervisor Joe Neves. "That's a stigma that Kings County has. We didn't do anything wrong."

Not everybody holds that opinion, however. Take Corcoran Mayor Ray Lerma, for instance. Lerma likes the scrutiny as a way of protecting minority voters from possible discrimination.

"I don't think we had the same issue as Merced County," Lerma said. "I think there's a lot of issues still out there."

Kings and Merced officials say the only real "violation" is having a military base. Since military employees are typically registered to vote outside the county, but are still counted in the county's total population, it ends up making voter turnout look lower than it really is.

The argument is supported by the fact that the only California counties to run afoul of the act have military bases.

In a blistering op-ed piece, Merced County Counsel James Fincher said the county would get out from under the "guilt by association."

"We will erase the stigma we endure, which not only places burdens on the county but also discourages businesses and development from coming to Merced, pushing them to neighboring counties instead," Fincher wrote.

But it wasn't easy for Merced County to achieve success. It took two years and an unknown amount of lost staff time and extra expenditures.

Merced County officials couldn't be reached for comment.

Kings County tried to get out from under it, too, back in 2006, when Congress was considering reauthorizing the Voting Rights Act.
Kings tried to get an amendment inserted that would grant an exemption. The effort failed. Officials ultimately abandoned the struggle as too costly, preferring instead to live with the extra staff time required to comply.

Fincher estimated it cost Merced County more than $1 million in the last 10 years to meet the requirements. Neves said he hadn't estimated the corresponding cost burden for Kings County. But he did say the county spent close to $100,000 on the 2006 lobbying efforts.

"We pursued that and spent some money and it just got to where it was pretty costly," Neves said. "We need an expanded jail. We need a whole lot of other things."

But Merced County's success may inspire Kings County to try again.

"I'm happy that they were able to get out, and I think it does perhaps provide us a road map," Spikes said.

One of the issues raised in Kings County has been at-large voting versus district voting. Some minority advocates have argued that at-large voting dilutes minority votes and that district elections give disadvantaged groups a better chance at having influence.

Spikes and Neves said they believe that federal oversight of the issue isn't necessary. Neves said he thinks it's already covered under the California Voting Rights Act, passed in 2001.

"I think federal oversight is a redundancy," Neves said. "I think California is way ahead when it comes to protecting the rights of voters."

Interestingly, the first lawsuit to arise under the law was in Hanford.

Latino voters sued the Hanford Joint Union High School District in 2004, pointing out that under at-large elections, there hadn't been a Hispanic on the board of trustees in 20 years despite a 38 percent Hispanic population.

The school district settled by switching to single-member trustee districts and paying the plaintiff's attorney fees. This fall, many local districts have no candidates running, which some officials have said is a direct result of the change.

Where Kings County goes from here depends on whether the supervisors want to fight one more time to overturn the federal sanctions.

"The last direction we got was, 'Don't bother with it at this time,'" Spikes said. "At some point, we may want to get into that again."

_The reporter can be reached at 583-2432._
The Press Enterprise

RIVERSIDE: School board delays trustee maps again

DAYNA STRAEHLEY/STAFF PHOTO

The Riverside Unified School District board displays all eight trustee area maps drawn by staff and consultants. The board discussed various maps' merits Monday night, Aug. 20, but delayed a decision again.

STAFF WRITER
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Riverside Unified School District officials and citizens who want to elect their trustees by geographical area had not resolved their differences by Monday night, Aug. 20, so school board members postponed a vote on the issue for two weeks.

Still undecided are the boundaries of a proposed trustee area in which a majority of voting-age residents are Latino.

Civil rights attorney Robert Rubin, representing a group of residents, said the school board and residents are getting closer to reaching some agreement.
Rubin and his clients had threatened the district with a lawsuit under the California Voting Rights Act if it continued its past practice of at-large elections. The board agreed in June to establish five trustee areas for future board elections.

The district has had at least monthly public meetings on the proposed trustee areas since May.

The latest boundary proposal — Scenario H — was released Monday afternoon, hours before the meeting. The latest map, relying on additional demographic data, is only slightly different than the earlier Scenario G. A section bordered by University Avenue, Third Street, Highway 91 and Market Street was switched from Trustee Area 3 to Area 5. A few blocks on the southwest side of Chicago Avenue and Martin Luther King Boulevard changed from Trustee Area 1 to Trustee Area 3.

Under both maps, a slight majority of citizens old enough to vote are Latino in Trustee Area 3.

Some residents said they wanted more time to consider the maps. Others, including Gilberto Esquivel, president of the League of United Latino American Citizens, and resident Tom Schultz said they want the Trustee Area 3 proposed by Rubin to be left intact.

They and others said the Casa Blanca and Eastside neighborhoods and the Highgrove area should be kept together because they share a common language and socioeconomic interests, which they said are different from Riverside's downtown residents. In the district's latest maps, Highgrove and the northeast part of the district are split between Trustee Areas 2 and 3.

Deputy Superintendent Mike Fine said Trustee Area 3 in Rubin's maps is reflected in the district's Scenarios G and H. He said the changes the district made to that area are minor. Although the maps prepared by the district have eastern parts of Highgrove in Trustee Area 2, he said most of those areas are uninhabited, including the slopes of Box Mountain.

District officials want to keep incumbents in separate areas. They also want each high school attendance zone to be represented by at least two trustees.

Follow Dayna Straehley on Twitter: dstraehley_PE
Newton: Anaheim's ballot battle

The city needs to change its at-large voting system to adapt to today's world.

Jim Newton

August 20, 2012

When Disneyland first opened to the public on a sweltering July day in 1955, the city of Anaheim wasn't much more than an orange grove. It had all of 15,000 residents and was known mostly for its Halloween parade.

More than half a century later, almost everything has changed. Disneyland helped spur a development boom that has made the city California's 10th largest. Once a suburban and almost entirely white town, it now is 53% Latino and about 15% Asian. Whites make up about 27% of the city's population.

But one thing hasn't changed. The city continues to elect its representatives just as it did in 1955: Four council members and a mayor all are elected by the city at-large. The result: Four of the city's five elected leaders live in the wealthy, and predominantly white, area known as Anaheim Hills. Only one comes from the center of Anaheim, and none lives in the poorer, denser western part of the city.

Mayor Tom Tait, an earnest Republican who has attempted to infuse Anaheim government with, as he puts it, "the core values of kindness and freedom," recognizes the stresses that Anaheim's election system has placed on its geographic and social fabric. Faced with an ACLU lawsuit challenging the city's election rules, and convinced that reform is needed, Tait introduced a motion that would have allowed Anaheim residents to consider a ballot measure in November to create council districts and move their city into, if not the 21st century, at least the 20th. Districts, he said, would make for more effective representation, especially given Anaheim's peculiar geography — it stretches more than 20 miles east to west while being compact from north to south, so council members who live at the far western end of the city are far from their constituents in the east — both geographically and socioeconomically.
"The vastness of the city," he explained, "makes it hard to cover."

And yet, by a vote of 3 to 2, he lost.

Tait's colleagues protested, unconvincingly, that they're not opposed to creating districts, just that they weren't ready to endorse this particular proposal. Instead, they voted to appoint a committee to study the matter. At the same time, some have complained that districts would distort the city's politics, replacing officials whose concern is for the overall welfare of Anaheim with more narrowly focused council members, inclined to defend their constituents at the expense of the city's larger interests.

The crux of the matter is really self-protection. Because the Anaheim City Council was elected on an at-large basis, moving to districts almost certainly would cost some of those members their part-time jobs. Although the jobs pay only $18,000 a year, they also have good benefits, including a car allowance, and public officials aren't often eager to give up power voluntarily.

But even if holding citywide elections makes short-term political sense for the current crop of council members, it's bad public policy, legally risky and manifestly unfair. The lawsuit challenging at-large voting in Anaheim recites the city's sometimes unsavory past in matters of race: In the 1940s, nonwhites were only permitted to swim in Anaheim public pools the day before they were cleaned; until 1957, Anaheim continued to segregate Latinos into so-called Mexican schools, even though California had legally outlawed such schools 10 years earlier. More recently, the Anaheim Planning Commission in 2002 opposed letting a Mexican grocery chain open a Gigante supermarket in a redevelopment project because it was felt to be "too Hispanic," according to the lawsuit. The City Council eventually approved the project, but only after public outcry.

Racial tensions still divide Anaheim, which has been the scene of protests in recent weeks, as residents, many of them Latino, have claimed mistreatment at the hands of the city's police. Tait's proposal offered an opportunity for the council to demonstrate sensitivity to those concerns, but self-interest trumped broad-mindedness. "We have issues of people not feeling a sense of belonging," the mayor said. "This would have been a great first step."

It also would have saved the city what could be a costly and fruitless legal battle. Morgan Kousser, a Caltech professor and nationally recognized expert on voting rights, predicted that Anaheim will have a difficult time defending at-large elections and will have to spend heavily to do so. A similar case in Florida a few years ago ended up costing the defendants $2 million. "Does a municipality even as large as Anaheim want to spend $2 million in these times?" he asked.

Indeed, Anaheim leaders might consider the fate of Compton. The Anaheim lawsuit closely resembles a suit filed in 2010 against Compton, where an African American leadership was resisting district voting that might create more opportunities for Latinos, now the majority in that town. Compton resisted the litigation for more than a year, then eventually agreed to a settlement that put the matter before Compton voters. In June, nearly two-thirds of Compton voters approved the districts.
Jim Newton's column appears Mondays. His latest book is "Eisenhower: The White House Years." Reach him at jim.newton@latimes.com or follow him on Twitter: @newton_jim.

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Jim Newton's assertion in his column Monday that members of the Anaheim City Council acted in their own self-interest in voting down a proposed ballot measure to create voting districts is false. Over the past several weeks, there has been a very public dialogue questioning how Anaheim is governed and whether the current system, in which all four council members and the mayor are elected at-large, should be changed. Newton's column echoes the sensational news reports on the Aug. 8 special meeting that the council's rejection of the plan amounted to some kind of power grab by entrenched incumbents who wanted to keep their jobs.

In reality, what went on was much more complex.

In June, the city was sued by the ACLU, which claimed that Anaheim's at-large voting system marginalizes the city's Latino majority and is not in compliance with the California Voting Rights Act. The city was in the process of responding to that litigation when the officer-involved shootings of two suspected gang members in July ignited the recent unrest in our streets.

There are still many questions to be answered surrounding those shootings, and several independent investigations are already underway to do so. Although some have asserted that there may be a correlation between the two issues, the city would be irresponsible to undertake wholesale change of its entire electoral system without first providing an opportunity for extensive citizen dialogue, careful legal analysis and consideration of the options available to meet voters’ concerns for fair representation.

Following the lengthy special meeting Aug. 8, the council's 3-2 majority found that the ballot initiative proposed by the mayor was deeply flawed and that rushing a single option to the
November ballot and giving voters fewer than three months to make their decision was simply not fair.

Mayor Tom Tait's initial proposal called for four districts and a mayor elected at-large. But the day before our meeting, he changed his proposal to six districts and a mayor. At the Aug. 8 meeting, members of the public in attendance wanted eight districts. The mayor's plan was one of many; approving it for the ballot would have excluded all other options and voices in our community. These decisions must not be taken lightly, and I cannot support rushing one of the City Charter amendments onto the ballot when there are other choices that deserve careful consideration.

Instead, the council approved the establishment of the Citizens Committee for Elections and Community Involvement in Anaheim to engage residents in a discussion. It will consider all possibilities and make a recommendation that will have passed careful public scrutiny. Districts sometimes achieve the goals that Anaheim is setting out to (the Madera Unified School District is one example), but sometimes they do not (such as the city of Modesto). Other options include "cumulative voting" -- which allows voters to select more than one choice in contests with multiple seats and was suggested as a possibility for Anaheim by one of the authors of the California Voting Rights Act -- and the "residency-based districts" system used in Newport Beach and Santa Ana, where each council member must live in a given district but all residents continue to cast votes for all members of the council.

The point is that Anaheim should do its research, hear from members of many ethnic groups and engage the residents in crafting a proposal to change the city's government before asking them for their yes-or-no votes on a single plan. It beats going forward with a proposal by a single City Council member with zero public input.

Some have expressed skepticism that the Citizens' Committee will do little more than study the issue and effectively kill any chance for change before 2014. The skepticism is misplaced. The committee is set to form immediately and its recommendations could be before Anaheim voters in time to ensure any changes are in place for the 2014 election. The mayor's initiative would not have brought change to Anaheim any faster.

The Anaheim City Council is equally committed to full electoral participation and addressing the tragic events of the last few months. But we must be willing to work together to unite Anaheim again. Changing the way Anaheim elects its leaders demands careful consideration of the issues before us, with all diverse parts of the community participating. As I have said all along: If we are going to make significant change to how the residents of Anaheim are governed, engaging the people of Anaheim first before any option goes before the voters is the right thing to do.

*Kris Murray is a member of the Anaheim City Council.*

*If you would like to write a full-length response to a recent Times article, editorial or Op-Ed and would like to participate in Blowback, here are our FAQs and submission policy.*

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LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION  
(COUNTY COMMITTEE)  
LEGISLATIVE REVIEW-SEPTEMBER 2012

<table>
<thead>
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<th>BILL NUMBER/AUTHOR:</th>
<th>INTRODUCTION DATE:</th>
<th>LAST ACTIVITY/DATE:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Senate Bill 477/Wright</td>
<td>02/18/11</td>
<td>08/20/12: Read second time. Amended 06/11/12 Ordered to third reading.</td>
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DESCRIPTION OF BILL

This bill specifies the manner in which the liability for taxation, bonding capacity, permitted use of existing bond proceeds, and the allocation of authorized but unsold bonds, will be administered among the Wiseburn School District (SD) and the Centinela Valley Union High School District (UHSD) after the Wiseburn SD is reorganized to form the Wiseburn Unified School District (USD). Under this bill, after the formation of the Wiseburn USD, the Centinela Valley UHSD shall retain the right to bond based on the assessed valuation of all non-residential property within the Wiseburn USD. Residential property within the Wiseburn USD will remain part of that district’s bonding capacity assessed valuation. In addition, the Wiseburn USD will receive a payment of $4,000,000 from the Centinela Valley UHSD for approved but unissued bonds, and will retain liability for bonds issued before January 2012.

The bill authorizes the creation of the Local Public Schools Funding Authority (LPSFA), a joint powers authority created by the Centinela Valley UHSD and the Wiseburn SD (and post-reorganization, by the Wiseburn USD) to issue bonds pursuant to laws governing the issuance of school facilities construction bonds by school districts.

This bill would also determine the blended revenue limit per average daily attendance (ADA) for the newly formed Wiseburn USD upon reorganization.

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

This bill will impact the Wiseburn SD, which will cease to exist and become the Wiseburn USD after reorganization. It will also impact the Centinela Valley UHSD, as it alters that district’s physical territory. Potential financial impacts on the Centinela Valley UHSD are addressed directly in the legislation.

This bill may also impact the Hawthorne, Lawndale and Lennox SDs, given that their territories are also part of the Centinela Valley UHSD. However, those districts have formed an additional joint powers authority to address any potential impacts.

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 Crafton, Secretary to the County Committee, at (562) 922-6144.
Summary of Los Angeles Unified School District Reorganization Proposals

September 2012

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 August 22, 2012.

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)

September 2012

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 August 22, 2012.

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 Steentofte, 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 UHSD, 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 favor of the unification proposals reviewed to date (including the proposed legislation circulated

* Indicates update from previous summary.
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 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.

* Indicates update from previous summary.
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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 currently seeks 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. On June 29, 2012, the County Committee sent a letter to the SBE expressing support.

The amended version of SB 477 passed several Assembly committees in August, 2012 and indications were that it would soon be scheduled for floor votes. Staff requested that the districts keep them informed of any progress and to report back to the County Committee when more is known about the unification petition and related legislation (including agendizing a review of the petition before the SBE). In addition, the other JPA, called the Local Classrooms Funding Authority (LCFA), was formed upon approval by the boards of all five of the local districts. The LCFA placed its first parcel tax measure on the upcoming November 6, 2012 ballot.

*Status:  Petition on hold at the SBE; Centinela Valley UHSD, and Hawthorne, Lawndale, Lemnox, and Wiseburn SDs participating in LCFA JPA; legislation to facilitate formation of the Wiseburn USD moving through Assembly.

Status Date:  August 22, 2012

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).

* Indicates update from previous summary.
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

* Indicates update from previous summary.
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

* Indicates update from previous summary.
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

* Indicates update from previous summary.
OTHER INQUIRIES REGARDING REORGANIZATION (within the last six months)

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

- None

* Indicates update from previous summary.