July 16, 2008

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

FROM: Daniel G. Villanueva, Secretary
       County Committee

SUBJECT: Cancellation of the August 6, 2008, Regular Meeting of the County Committee

The regular meeting of the County Committee scheduled for Wednesday, August 6, 2008, has been CANCELLED. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 3, 2008, at 9:30 a.m.

The following is an update of relevant information as of July 14, 2008:

Newspaper Articles

- A July 7, 2008, article from the Los Angeles Times-“Pact with Tejon Ranch Co. splits environmentalists.” (Attachment 1)

- A July 14, 2008, article from The Mercury News-“Small Sierra school districts consider merger.” (Attachment 2)

Legislative Review

Attached is a review of pending legislation related to school district organization. (Attachment 3)

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 4)
Cancellation of the August 6, 2008, Regular Meeting of
the County Committee
July 16, 2008
Page 2

- “Summary of Los Angeles County School District Reorganization Proposals (excluding those
  affecting the Los Angeles Unified School District).” (Attachment 5)

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

DGV/AD:mb
Attachments
Summary of Los Angeles Unified School District Reorganization Proposals

August 2008

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 July 14, 2008.

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

On May 1, 2007, the Los Angeles County Office of Education received a request to review a draft petition proposing the transfer of certain territory from the Compton USD to the Los Angeles USD. The territory is the portion of the City of Carson that is currently part of the Compton USD. The request was submitted by Ms. Linda Mann, Senior Analyst in the Office of the City Manager, City of Carson. Staff reviewed issues pertaining to the petition with Ms. Mann and she said she will submit a finalized version for review in the near future. When a petition is submitted, staff will forward it to the Office of the Los Angeles County Counsel to review its sufficiency.

Status: Final petition submission pending.

Status Date: June 26, 2007

OTHER INQUIRIES REGARDING REORGANIZATION (within the last six months)

Formation Proposals/Last Activity Date

None

Transfer of Territory Proposals/Last Activity Date

* Beverly Hills USD-Los Angeles USD/June 2008

* Los Angeles USD—Hawthorne SD/June 2008

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

August 2008

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 July 14, 2008.

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. 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 Union High SD 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 Union High SD. The County Committee further recommended that the election area be the entire Centinela Valley Union High SD.

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

* Indicates update from previous summary.
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.

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 the Wiseburn SD had once again withdrawn its petition for consideration before the SBE.

On August 31, 2004, staff received notice that Ms. Karen Steentoft, Chief Counsel for the SBE, recommended that certain waivers submitted with the Wiseburn USD 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 Union High SD 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 provide 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 will be placed before the electorate. The election will be held within the boundaries of the proposed Wiseburn USD. Should the electorate approve the proposal, the new district could become effective July 1, 2006.

On November 1, 2004, staff received a copy of a lawsuit filed by the Centinela Valley Union High SD 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. The Centinela Valley Union High SD, 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.

On Friday, December 10, 2004, in the case of Centinela Valley Union High SD (Petitioners) vs. the SBE, the Los Angeles Superior Court issued a preliminary injunction barring the conduct of the election.

* Indicates update from previous summary.
regarding the formation of the Wiseburn USD on March 8, 2005. 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 will consult with the court’s clerk to re-schedule. This was done 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, 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 Union High SD. On January 13, 2005, the CDE withdrew its approval of the Wiseburn USD petition and its request that an election be ordered. Staff at the CDE have informed us that they intend to redo the review process related to CEQA and to return the petition to the SBE for action (not to the County Committee).

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 Hayes and Associates, on behalf of the CDE. A comment period for the draft EIR was opened from July 7, 2008, to August 21, 2008, with a public hearing scheduled for July 22, 2008. Staff will keep the County Committee apprised of any additional developments.

*Status:* Petition under review by the SBE; draft EIR comment period opened; public hearing scheduled for July 22, 2008.

**Status Date:** July 14, 2008

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

On September 9, 2004, staff received a request for petition from a community group in Malibu. The group proposes to form a Malibu USD from territory currently within the Santa Monica-Malibu USD and in unincorporated portions of Los Angeles County. A final petition was approved by County Counsel and returned to petitioners for circulation to gather signatures from within the petition area.

On February 1, 2008, staff received a letter dated January 22, 2008, requesting that Ms. Sandy Thacker and Mr. Tom Sorce be removed from the petition process as chief petitioners, and that Ms. Colleen Baum and Dr. Laura Rosenthal be added as the new chief petitioners with Mr. Mitch Clarfield. Staff revised the petition to reflect the change and it was sent to the chief petitioners to continue the circulation process.

**Status:** Petition currently in circulation.

* Indicates update from previous summary.
FORMATTION—ALTADENA USD (CURRENTLY LIES WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE PASADENA USD)

On April 17, 2007, LACOE received a request for a petition from chief petitioners Mr. Steve Lamb and Mr. Justin Chapman, two 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. Staff reviewed the request and forwarded a draft petition to County Counsel on April 20, 2007, for a legal compliance review regarding format and content. Staff received notification on April 26, 2007, from County Counsel that the draft petition was legally sufficient regarding format and content.

The petition was mailed to the chief petitioners on April 30, 2007, for circulation within the petition area. Please note that this is a different petition from the one previously requested in March 2006 to form an Altadena USD. This petition retains the same petition area (as identified in the previous petition and refined in a map developed by the Registrar-Recorder and rationale as the one submitted previously, but it was submitted by a different group of petitioners. Regarding this petition area, the Registrar-Recorder has previously estimated that approximately 7,000 valid signatures will be necessary in order to meet the criteria set forth in EC §35700(a).

Upon receipt of the signed petitions, staff will forward them to the Registrar-Recorder for signature verification. If the petitions contain a sufficient number of valid signatures, staff will present the petition to the County Committee and commence a feasibility study.

Status: Petition in circulation.

Status Date: May 11, 2007

FORMATTION—LA MIRADA USD (CURRENTLY LIES WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE NORWALK—LA MIRADA USD)

On February 15, 2007, Ms. Dayna Kruger, chief petitioner, requested a petition to form a La Mirada USD, from territory currently within the Norwalk–La Mirada USD, pursuant to EC §35700(a). With her request, the chief petitioner submitted a territory description and map that were not sufficient. Staff conferred with her and advised her to consult with the Registrar-Recorder to determine with specificity which territory was within or outside the proposed petition area. On March 13, 2007, the chief petitioner submitted an amended petition with a new description and map. This petition was deemed sufficient by County Counsel and forwarded to the chief petitioner for circulation on March 20, 2007.

Status: Petition in circulation.

Status Date: March 20, 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 COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT (CCD)

* Indicates update from previous summary.
On December 7, 2006, LACOE received a request for a petition pursuant to EC §5019(a) and (c) to increase the number of trustees from five to seven, to establish trustee areas, and to require trustee area voting, within the Mount San Antonio CCD. The request was submitted by chief petitioner Mr. John Mendoza. The petition was forwarded to County Counsel to determine its legal compliance regarding format and content. On January 11, 2007, County Counsel notified staff that the petition was sufficient. On January 17, 2007, the petition was forwarded to the chief petitioner for circulation.

Please note that this is an additional petition, separate from other petitions requested by Mr. Mendoza, although it requests the same changes within the Mount San Antonio CCD (the addition of two governing board members and the creation of trustee areas with trustee area voting).

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

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

On December 7, 2006, LACOE received a request for a petition pursuant to EC §5019(a) and (c) to increase the number of trustees from five to seven within the Pomona USD, retaining the at-large voting method. 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 January 11, 2007, County Counsel deemed the petition sufficient. Staff returned the petition to the chief petitioner on January 17, 2007, for circulation.

Please note that this is an additional petition, separate from other petitions requested by Mr. Mendoza, some of which request the addition of two governing board members and some of which request the creation of trustee areas.

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

On September 20, 2006, LACOE received a request for a petition pursuant to EC §5019(a) and (c) to increase the number of trustees from five to seven, to establish trustee areas, and to require trustee area voting, within the Mount San Antonio CCD. 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 September 29, 2006, County Counsel notified staff that the petition was sufficient. On October 2, 2006, the petition was forwarded to the chief petitioner for circulation.

Please note that this is a separate petition, distinct from the other petitions requested by Mr. Mendoza, although it requests the same changes within the Mount San Antonio CCD (the addition of two governing board members and the creation of trustee areas with trustee area voting).

* Indicates update from previous summary.
PROPOSED INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF TRUSTEES FROM FIVE TO SEVEN AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TRUSTEE AREAS WITHIN THE POMONA USD

On March 21, 2006, LACOE received a request for a petition pursuant to EC §5020 and §5030 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 March 23, 2006, County Counsel deemed the petition sufficient. Staff returned the petition to the chief petitioner on April 11, 2006, 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 §5020 and §5030 and requires valid signatures from ten percent of the registered voters within the petition area (approximately 6,000 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).

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

On March 21, 2006, LACOE received a request for a petition pursuant to EC §5019(a) and (c) to increase the number of trustees from five to seven, to establish trustee areas, and to require trustee area voting, within the Mount San Antonio CCD. 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 March 23, 2006, County Counsel notified staff that the petition was sufficient. On March 28, 2006, the petition was forwarded to the chief petitioner for circulation.

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

* Indicates update from previous summary.
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).

Upon receipt of the signed petitions, staff will forward them to the Registrar-Recorder for signature verification. If the petitions contain a sufficient number of valid signatures, staff will present the petition to the County Committee and commence a feasibility study.

**Status:** Petition in circulation.

**Status Date:** March 21, 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

* Indicates update from previous summary.
Summary of Los Angeles County School District Reorganization Proposals (excluding those affecting the Los Angeles Unified School District) August 2008
Page 8

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

OTHER INQUIRIES REGARDING REORGANIZATION (within the last six months)

Unification Proposals/Last Activity Date

None

Transfer of Territory Proposals/Last Activity Date

None

Formation Proposals/Last Activity Date

None

* Indicates update from previous summary.
LOS ANGELES COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION (LACOE)  
DIVISION OF BUSINESS ADVISORY SERVICES  

LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION  
(COUNTY COMMITTEE)  
LEGISLATIVE REVIEW-AUGUST 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BILL NUMBER/AUTHOR:</th>
<th>INTRODUCTION DATE:</th>
<th>LAST ACTIVITY/DATE:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assembly Bill (AB)</td>
<td>02/20/08</td>
<td>07/07/08: Read third time; passed; to Assembly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2057/Committee on Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DESCRIPTION OF BILL
This bill is authored by the Committee on Education (Mullin, Chair; Garrick, Vice Chair). In relevant part, it corrects a reference in Education Code (EC) §35535 regarding the process of lapsation for a school district. The current reference indicates that a county board of education orders the assignment of lapsed territory to other districts. The corrected text indicates that this process is done by a county committee, referring to the County Committee.

POTENTIAL IMPACT OF BILL ON COUNTY COMMITTEE, SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION PROCESS AND/OR LOS ANGELES COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS
Under current law, the lapsation process is conducted by a “county board of education.” The corrected text directs that the process be conducted by “a county committee.” This change would impact LACOE directly, as the entity that provides staffing to the County Committee. In addition, the Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools serves as the designated Secretary to the County Committee.

Should this legislation pass, the County Committee is fully qualified and prepared to carry out the duties related to lapsation of a school district.

RECOMMENDED POSITION
Staff recommends the following position:

- [ ] Watch  Bill should be monitored by County Committee staff, but no action should be taken at this time.
- [ ] Approve The County Committee supports the bill’s concept, but will not actively work for passage.
- [ ] Support The County Committee actively supports the bill.
- [ ] Oppose The County Committee actively opposes the bill.
- [ ] Disapprove The 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 Daniel Villanueva, Secretary to the County Committee, at (562) 922-6144.
BILL NUMBER/AUTHOR:  
AB 2243/Carter

INTRODUCTION DATE:  
02/20/08

LAST ACTIVITY/DATE:  
07/01/08: Withdrawn from Committee on Education; re-referred to Committee on Environmental Quality

DESCRIPTION OF BILL.

This bill would authorize a county committee to approve a petition to create one or more new school districts if specified conditions are met. Those conditions include the granting of approval authority by each county superintendent of schools acting as secretary to the county committee with jurisdiction, the governing board of each of the affected school districts consents to the petition, and the secretary of the county committee designated the lead agency for purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as specified, enters into an agreement on behalf of the county committee for any or all affected school districts to share among those districts the costs of complying with specified requirements related to reviewing reorganization petitions and serving as the lead agency.

This bill would also allow county committees to comply with school district organization timelines after compliance with CEQA requirements, if applicable. The bill would apply the requirements described above regarding approval of petitions to transfer territory, notification of the county superintendent, and calling an election to petitions to create one or more new school districts pursuant to the bill.

The last update of this bill also made it an urgency bill, which would become effective immediately upon passage.

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

Under current law, the State Board of Education (SBE) is the lead agency for school district organization petitions involving unifications or the creation of new school districts. The County Committee serves as the lead agency for petitions involving transfers of territory and changes in governance structures. If this bill is adopted, it could increase the number of petitions for which the County Committee serves as the lead agency.

The CEQA process, which can sometimes require extensive environmental impact review (and costs associated with such review), has become a complex component of the review process for school district organization petitions. If environmental review is required, it can be a long and costly process. Currently, for petitions involving unification and the creation of new districts, the SBE is the lead agency, and thus responsible for any environmental review costs. If this bill is approved, the County Committee, LACOE, and impacted school districts could be responsible for all potential environmental review costs associated with the school district organization process.

This bill also addresses the sufficiency of current timelines for completing the school district organization process. If CEQA review is required, this bill would grant county committees a waiver from compliance with school district organization timelines until that environmental component is completed. For petitions that involve territory in more than one county, this bill outlines a process for sharing costs and designation as the lead agency. The Los Angeles County Committee may still need to seek waivers through the Los Angeles County Board of Education.
Staff is currently developing practice templates designed to bring a measure of uniform application of CEQA review standards to the school district organization petition process. However, it will not be a complete barrier to unpredictable costs associated with CEQA. If this bill is passed, staff will adapt any practice templates to conform to mandates and requirements.

RECOMMENDED POSITION
Staff recommends the following position:

☑ Watch Bill should be monitored by County Committee staff, but no action should be taken at this time.
☐ Approve The County Committee supports the bill’s concept, but will not actively work for passage.
☐ Support The County Committee actively supports the bill.
☐ Oppose The County Committee actively opposes the bill.
☐ Disapprove The 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 Daniel Villanueva, Secretary to the County Committee, at (562) 922-6144.
BILL NUMBER/AUTHOR:
Senate Bill 1445/Harman

INTRODUCTION DATE:
02/21/08

LAST ACTIVITY/DATE:
04/16/08: Set, second hearing.
Failed passage in committee.
Reconsideration granted.

DESCRIPTION OF BILL
This bill would require all school districts serving the City of La Palma (Orange County) upon the request of a parent or guardian who resides within the city limits, to enroll the child of the parent or guardian in one of its schools located in that city, without regard to the attendance boundaries of the school district.

POTENTIAL IMPACT OF BILL ON COUNTY COMMITTEE, SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION PROCESS AND/OR LOS ANGELES COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS
This bill could impose a priority of city boundaries over school district boundaries for purposes of determining where a student may attend school, characterizing the current system in the City of La Palma as “the antiquated school district boundaries.” Although it is only applicable to residents of one city, it could set a precedent for establishing that city residents should attend schools within city boundaries, regardless of school district boundaries. It could impact the school district organization process and the rights of school districts to manage and maintain their own boundaries, and to have some degree of predictability regarding student enrollment.

RECOMMENDED POSITION
Staff recommends the following position:

☐ Watch  Bill should be monitored by County Committee staff, but no action should be taken at this time.
☐ Approve  The County Committee supports the bill’s concept, but will not actively work for passage.
☐ Support  The County Committee actively supports the bill.
☐ Oppose  The County Committee actively opposes the bill.
☐ Disapprove  The 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 Daniel Villanueva, Secretary to the County Committee, at (562) 922-6144.