February 27, 2012

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

FROM: Matthew F. Spies, Secretary/Staff County Committee

SUBJECT: Regular Meeting of the County Committee—Wednesday, March 7, 2012

The next regular meeting of the County Committee will be held at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, March 7, 2012, in the Board Room of the Los Angeles County Office of Education, located at 9300 Imperial Highway in Downey. Reserved parking spaces will be available on the east side of the building just south of the main entrance for County Committee members.

Attached is the agenda for the meeting of March 7, 2012.

If you have any questions, please call me at (562) 922-6336.

MFS/AD:alh
Attachments
AGENDA

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

Regular Meeting

Los Angeles County Office of Education
Board Room
March 7, 2012
9:30 a.m.

I. Information
   D Discussion
   A Action
   * Sent to Committee

I. CALL TO ORDER—Chairperson Ms. Maria Calix

II. FLAG SALUTE—Ms. Calix

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

   The minutes of the regular meeting of the County Committee, held on
   January 4, 2012, will be submitted for approval.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS—Secretary, Mr. Matt Spies

   Correspondence

   • A February 15, 2012, letter from the Lawndale Elementary School
     District (SD) with an attached copy of a letter sent to Wiseburn SD and
     Centinela Valley Union High SD, concerning proposed legislation and a
     Joint Powers Authority allowing the Wiseburn SD to unify.
     (Attachment 1)

   Newspaper Article

   • A December 27, 2011, article from the Atlantic Cities—“Fixing a City
     By Dividing It Up.” (Attachment 2)

   • A January 21, 2012, article from the Press Telegram—“Assemblyman
     Mendoza criticizes ABC district’s voting process.” (Attachment 3)

   • A January 23, 2012, article from Lake Tahoe News—“School districts
     struggle to comply with Voters Rights Act.” (Attachment 4)

   • A January 25, 2012, article from the Signal—“COC reviewing voting
     process to ensure fairness.” (Attachment 5)

   • A January 25, 2012, article from the Mercury News—“Committee
     recommends at-large voting to boost number of minority candidates in
     Santa Clara; lawfirm threatens suit.” (Attachment 6)
• A January 27, 2012, article from the Sacramento Bee—“California school districts change board elections to avoid lawsuits.” (Attachment 7)

• A January 31, 2012, article from the UT San Diego—“Escondido responds to voting rights lawsuit.” (Attachment 8)

• A February 1, 2012, article from the Malibu Times—“School issues debated.” (Attachment 9)

• A February 8, 2012, article from the Contra Costa Times—“Mixed reaction to proposal to create Pomona school board trustee areas.” (Attachment 10)

• A February 8, 2012, article from the Daily Breeze—“Wiseburn school district begins lengthy separation process from Centinela Valley.” (Attachment 11)

• A February 16, 2012, article from the Daily Bulletin—“Latest Pomona USD expanded trustee areas meeting draws opponents in Diamond Bar.” (Attachment 12)

• A February 17, 2012, article from the Daily Bulletin—“Claremont Unified begins process to determine if it is in compliance with Voting Rights Act.” (Attachment 13)

• A February 17, 2012, article from the Glendale News-Press—“Officials balk at voting districts But they continue to look at study commissioned by schools.” (Attachment 14)

Informational Correspondence

• A February 15, 2012, Local Agency Formation Commission Notice to Subject/Interested Agencies concerning the City of Los Angeles Annexation 2011-27. (Attachment 15)

V. PRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Any persons present desiring to address the County Committee on any proper matter may do so at this time. (Form must be completed and submitted to the Secretary.)
VI. UPDATE ON THE PETITION PROPOSING TO FORM A WISEBURN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT (USD)  

The Secretary will update the County Committee on the petition to form a Wiseburn USD, including a review of recent legislative proposals and local discussions with impacted districts.

VII. UPDATE ON THE PETITION PROPOSING TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF TRUSTEES FROM FIVE TO SEVEN AND TO ESTABLISH TRUSTEE AREAS WITHIN THE POMONA USD  

The Secretary will update the County Committee on the petition for governance change in the Pomona USD, including a review of three recent public hearings held by the district. The Secretary will also poll members on possible public hearing dates for March 2012.

VIII. DISCUSSION OF THE CALIFORNIA VOTING RIGHTS ACT (CVRA) AND TRUSTEE AREA ISSUES  

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

IX. REVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION  

The Secretary will provide the County Committee with an overview of proposed legislation related to school district organization. The County Committee may take action to support or oppose the legislation or provide comments to the authors.

X. UPDATE ON LOS ANGELES USD REORGANIZATION PROPOSALS  

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Regular Meeting
January 4, 2012

The Los Angeles County Committee on School District Organization (County Committee) met on Wednesday, January 4, 2012, at the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) in Downey. The meeting was called to order at 11:04 a.m. by Chairperson Mr. John Nunez who lead the flag salute.

Members Present

Ben Allen
Frank Bostrom
Maria Calix
Ted Edmiston
Owen Griffith
Joan Jakubowski
Maurice Kunkel
John Nunez
Suzan Solomon
AJ Willmer

Members Absent

Frank Ogaz

Staff Present

Matt Spies, Secretary
Allison Deegan, Staff
Mary Bracamontes, Recording Secretary

Mr. Spies provided the election results of the Third and Fifth Supervisorsial Districts stating that Mr. Ben Allen had won for the Third and Ms. Solomon for the Fifth. He then introduced Mr. Allen and the winner of the run-off election of the At-Large seat, Dr. Ted Edmiston.

Mr. Nunez administered the oath of office to Mr. Allen (Third Supervisorsial District) and Dr. Edmiston (At-Large seat) and congratulated both new members.

Mr. Nunez called on Mr. Bostrom, chair of the nominating committee, to provide the committee’s recommendations for chairperson and vice chairperson for 2012.

Mr. Bostrom stated that the nominating committee’s recommendation for Chairperson was Ms. Calix and Mr. Willmer as Vice Chairperson.

Results of the Annual County Committee Election of Members Conducted on October 20, 2011

Administration of Oath of Office

Nominating Committee-New Officers
Mr. Nunez asked members to approve the nominating committee’s recommendation for the 2012 officers. Members present approved the committee’s recommendations unanimously.

Ms. Calix immediately assumed her duties as Chairperson and Mr. Willmer as Vice Chairperson.

Ms. Calix asked that agenda item XI be moved to the next agenda item in order to allow district personnel to address the County Committee. She then asked Mr. Spies to provide an overview of the proposal.

Mr. Spies provided an overview of the proposed petition to increase the number of trustees and to establish trustee areas in the Pomona USD. He stated that the chief petitioner submitted signed petitions and the petitions were forwarded to the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk’s (Registrar-Recorder) office for signature verification. Mr. Spies continued that the Registrar-Recorder notified LACOE on August 29, 2011, that the number of valid signatures was sufficient. He then explained that this type of proposal does not have the same time constraints as other proposals have, meaning that within 60 days of presenting the proposal to the County Committee that a public hearing be held, and within 120 days after the public hearing the feasibility study would have to be presented. Mr. Spies continued that the County Committee has received previous petitions of this type that have been denied, and discussion of the California Voting Rights Act (CVRA) regarding challenges that have occurred around the State to encourage districts to move to a by trustee area election method for the governing board. He went on to say that at this point in time discussion has been held concerning a conditional denial of the petitioners proposal provided that the district can demonstrate that they are out in front of the petition and moving towards implementing a by trustee area method of election. Mr. Spies stated that the district’s legal counsel has asked to address the County Committee regarding the status of the districts current process. He then introduced Mr. Kasey Haws, Mundell, Odlum & Haws, LLP law firm, and Pomona USD’s legal counsel.

Mr. Haws addressed the County Committee stating that the district understands the CVRA and has been watching it carefully by attending workshops and they feel that they are up to speed regarding the issues. He continued that the district board is looking into moving to trustee areas independent of what is going on with the petition and have hired a demographer who will be making a public presentation at Tuesday’s board meeting (January 10) where the criteria for selecting and drawing proposed trustee areas will be presented to the board. Mr. Haws went on to say that the board will then establish criteria for the actual drawing of the trustee areas, and there may be a request to draw five trustee areas as well as seven trustee areas to see which would be most representative of
the community. He continued that there may also be a plan to have several public hearings beyond that at the end of January and possibly early February so the district is moving forward thoughtfully in deliberate speed to make sure the process is done in a way that the public is fully apprised and has an opportunity to participate. Mr. Haws then thanked staff for their assistance and stated that staff's template would be very helpful to them once it is finalized for the public hearings, and they look forward to providing the district's status of their progress at the public hearings. He asked that the County Committee hold their public hearing the later part of February to allow the district to further their progress by holding their own public hearings and to get a closer determination of the board's resolution of how they will proceed. Mr. Haws then asked the County Committee members if they had any questions or comments.

Mr. Bosstrom asked Mr. Haws if the City of Pomona's Council is elected by district and are there five or seven?

Mr. Haws responded that yes the election is by district and there are seven.

Mr. Bosstrom stated that his concern is that if you live in a city where your voting for council members and voting for school districts, and the boundaries are different, it can be very confusing at election time so he hopes that this is being considered.

Mr. Haws responded that this is being considered, however, there is also another municipality within the Pomona USD which is Diamond Bar so the actual alignment with regard to the council districts and the school district will probably not be possible.

Mr. Bosstrom inquired about the public hearings and if they were going to be for trustee areas or for public preference concerning the number of trustee areas?

Mr. Haws responded that it will be for both.

Mr. Nunez asked Mr. Spies if the petition was for seven trustee areas?

Mr. Spies responded that the petition was for by trustee area and to increase from five to seven trustee areas.

Mr. Nunez asked that if the petition is to increase to seven, why is the district looking at five districts instead of seven districts? He continued that it seems the district is asking the County Committee to not look at the petition, yet there are community members who have signed this petition to request seven trustee areas, so how is the district dealing with this if they are discussing five trustee areas?
Mr. Haws responded that the district certainly wants to treat the petition with respect, but at this time the district wants to make sure whether five or seven will make the most sense as far as representation but right now the board feels that five is adequate representation.

Mr. Nunez reiterated that there is a petition that is requesting a change to seven trustee areas and the community wants the County Committee to make a decision, so how can they disregard this?

Mr. Haws responded that at this point the district is asking the demographer to come forward with a drawing that shows five and seven and there is no predisposition as to which is best in the public interest until they have multiple public hearings and invite the petitioner to be there and for him to provide analysis as to why seven is necessary and why seven would be better than five. He continued that there is history in the City of Pomona using districts and whether seven is advantageous to five, so he understands the members concerns and he will communicate them to the district.

Mr. Bostrom agreed with Mr. Nunez but felt that no action should be taken to deny or approve the community petition but to table any action on it because out of courtesy to the district they should have a chance to run their course which they would get rebuttal anyhow. He went on to say that if the County Committee tables any action on the petition and allows the district to proceed, the district could come back to the County Committee with a recommendation of seven trustee areas which would make it a win win situation all around.

Mr. Nunez asked what if the district comes back with a recommendation of five trustee areas?

Mr. Bostrom responded that then the County Committee will have to take action on the petition and make a decision.

Mr. Nunez asked Mr. Spies if the petition could be tabled?

Mr. Spies responded that there are no time constraints to make a decision on the petition and at no point in time does the County Committee give up its authority to decide which items or issues are important to them. He continued that if seven is a must variable then that can be conveyed to the district if they want to remain in control of setting the boundaries of the trustee areas and the committee will accept no less than seven, or it can be a decision factor in the decision-making process.

Mr. Willmer asked Mr. Haws for a timeline of when the district would have additional information available?
Mr. Haws responded that the criteria will be established at Tuesday’s board meeting when the demographer makes its recommendations and after, within three weeks, the district would be prepared to have the first public hearing and possibly two to three others, there after there are two board meetings a month so realistically the district should have enough information available by the end of February.

Mr. Willmer requested that the district keep LACOE staff apprised of any updated information as it comes forward as well as timelines.

Mr. Haws agreed that this will be done.

Mr. Willmer stated that at this point in time he feels that the petitioner has not made a compelling reason for the change in the past, and with CVRA the rules and criteria have changed, he felt that a better decision could be made on the petition once the district has an opportunity to process the issue in a timely manner.

It was **MOVED** by Mr. Nunez and **SECONDED** by Mr. Bostrom that any action on the petition be tabled until the County Committee’s March meeting.  

Mr. Bostrom asked whether a public hearing will be held in the Diamond Bar area?

Mr. Haws responded yes there will be a public hearing in the area.

The motion **CARRIED** unanimously.

Mr. Willmer suggested that staff as well as County Committee members attend the Pomona USD board meetings if their schedules allowed.

Mr. Bostrom agreed that staff should find out dates of these meetings to provide them to the County Committee members.

Mr. Spies responded that staff would look into the dates of any board meetings or public hearings and would provide the information to the members, and they will contact County Committee members regarding their availability.

Dr. Edmiston inquired about the districts election cycle and whether there are time constraints because of the election dates?

Mr. Spies responded that the district is in the odd-year election cycle and in order for the district to submit their plan to change their election method and have it in place for November 2013, the district needs to submit an approved plan to the Registrar-Recorder's office by October 15, 2012.
Ms. Deegan added that until the district has trustee areas in place and approved, the district remains vulnerable to liability under the CVRA.

Mr. Haws stated that the district is aware of the deadline dates and they are proceeding with the understanding that they want to meet those deadlines.

Mr. Bostrom commented that in the past when the petition was before the County Committee, the committee had to determine the election area but it seems to be defined by the district, is this correct?

Mr. Nunez responded that the County Committee still needs to define the election area even if the district defines their own and the committee accepts it or not.

Mr. Spies commented that the election would be district-wide if it goes to an election, and he reminded members that this is also an issue that an Education Code (EC) waiver could be sought and approved by the State Board of Education (SBE). He went on to say that once the County Committee approves the plan and submits it to the SBE there is no requirement to have an election.

Ms. Deegan added that most districts up and down the State have been waiving their election if they are moving to trustee areas to wait for approval.

Ms. Calix reiterated the County Committee’s direction to have staff stay informed regarding the district’s process and to keep them informed of any updates.

Ms. Deegan suggested that the County Committee discuss the next agenda item VII because it concerned the same issue of the CVRA.

Mr. Spies stated that the agenda item handled two issues: 1) the type of information staff is going to request from Pomona USD; and, 2) because of the CVRA elements staff has drafted a template for the County Committee to consider for the types of issues, which is not all inclusive nor does it mean every issue has to be addressed when a plan is submitted, but it gives you an idea of the types of things that should be considered if a proposal is submitted to change to a by trustee area election method. He continued that a draft of the template was in the member folders and asked that Ms. Deegan explain the template.

Ms. Deegan stated that the template relates to a previous Pomona USD trustee area petition which included the request for different information and issues the petitioner brought up, and it asks the district for very specific information. She went on to say that this template takes some of the analyses of the past Pomona USD proposals and now includes specific information concerning past and present board members as far as

Discussion of the California Voting Rights Act (CVRA) and Trustee Area Issues
when they were elected and where they are from, but it also includes a request from the districts to provide specific information concerning the CVRA and Pomona USD may be the first to use this template. Ms. Deegan continued that staff’s plan is to use the template for future trustee area and CVRA proposals submitted to the County Committee so that districts and petitioners are alerted that this is the type of information needed prior to the public hearings, and to make sure that all districts have the same information request. She asked that the County Committee review the template and provide any comments or suggestions.

Mr. Spies added that staff’s intent is to use this document as an attachment to a future LACOE bulletin to the districts as a follow-up to the June 2010 bulletin regarding the CVRA.

Mr. Bostrom asked what is the meaning of declaration or certification?

Ms. Deegan responded that the analogy is for outside consultants the districts may use to do their studies/plans so that the County Committee can possibly put more merit on this type of plan.

Mr. Spies referenced EC §5019 stating that it contained information regarding the criteria of establishing trustee areas and that they be of equal size and composition of the total district. The attesting to the information would be that they are attesting that the plan submitted to the County Committee meets that minimum requirement. He went on to say that staff is working with LACOE’s in-house legal counsel on the template before it is finalized.

It was MOVED by Mr. Bostrom and SECONDED by Mr. Nunez that the minutes of the regular meeting held on November 2, 2011, be approved. The motion CARRIED with abstentions from Mr. Bostrom, Dr. Edmiston, and Mr. Allen because they were not in attendance at the meeting.

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

Mr. Bostrom inquired about being proactive when there has been a lot of interest within certain areas and whether staff has been involved in the area of the Santa Monica-Malibu USD?

Mr. Spies responded that staff has had one meeting with the district, city council, city manager, district board and staff, and potential petitioners to discuss the issues behind the unification, and what we will be considering and the importance of a consensus of all parties that will be affected by this will be in agreement of the change. He continued that before today’s meeting, the superintendent of the Santa Monica-Malibu USD called to request an additional meeting.
There were no members of the public to address the County Committee.

The County Committee adjourned to closed session at 12:00 p.m. to discuss the evaluation committee’s recommendation.

The County Committee reconvened in open session at 12:06 p.m.

Ms. Calix announced that the evaluation of staff was very favorable and the County Committee would like to see on an agenda a “meet and greet” item to meet with new staff members, and to also meet new legal counsel assigned to the County Committee so they can provide background information of their experience. She went on to say that the County Committee would like to continue with legislation updates pertaining to school district organization so that, if needed, they can take a position on the legislation.

Ms. Solomon added that staff is very knowledgeable and they provide a lot of support for the County Committee in a timely manner as needed, and hold very high standards, and she thanked staff for their support.

Mr. Spies mentioned that the template discussed in agenda item XII, could possibly be used for the proposed boundary change plan submitted by the Centinela Valley Union HSD. He stated that the district has an at-large method of election and they submitted the plan to change boundaries but failed to address CVRA issues. Mr. Spies continued that if the CVRA is not a factor of the County Committee’s decision-making, they could be included in future law suits within Los Angeles County. He went on to say that staff’s intent with the template is to provide it to the district’s legal counsel so that when the public hearings are held, the district can be asked why the CVRA was not factored into the plan. Mr. Spies stated that there were no updates on Los Angeles USD reorganization proposals.

Mr. Spies stated that over the past few months discussions were held both internally as well as with the districts in the Centinela Valley Union HSD concerning a local solution, and prior to the holidays, he sent the Wiseburn SD superintendent an e-mail requesting an update. He then read the e-mail response which included, in part, that the districts have been meeting with legal counsel of the Centinela Valley Union HSD which have been very collaborative and productive, another meeting is scheduled on January 6, 2012, they are drafting proposed legislation to be introduced during the 2012 legislative session, Centinela Valley Union HSD’s legal team is working on a JPA, and the districts are willing to attend a future County Committee meeting once the proposed legislation is finalized and additional information concerning the JPA is available.
Mr. Bostrom commented that this is new territory for the County Committee and unique to this situation at the moment, but it has implications down the road for other community members, if the JPA is part of this compromise between the two districts its composition and how it is run is very important because when proposals are sent to the SBE, does the County Committee now have the power to suggest that other petitioners can do the same?

Mr. Spies responded that it could be possible but since the extent of the JPA is unknown at this time and the proposed legislation is unknown, no assumptions can be made until this is known.

Mr. Nunez responded that the initial Wiseburn proposal needs to come to a close and then let the district start again.

Mr. Willmer and Mr. Bostrom agreed with Mr. Nunez and suggested that County Counsel provide the County Committee with direction as to what to do.

Mr. Bostrom added that staff be directed to draft a letter to the SBE from the County Committee requesting that the Environmental Impact Report be adopted so that the petition process can come to a conclusion.

Mr. Spies commented that staff will contact the SBE staff concerning support of getting the item on an agenda and draft a letter.

There were no other additional communications, concerns, or items for the next agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.
February 15, 2012

Mr. Matt Spies  
Regionalized Business Services Coordinator  
L.A. County Committee on School District Organization  
9300 Imperial Highway, Room 204  
Downey, CA 90242-2890

Dear Mr. Spies:

The attached letter was presented to the Boards of Education of the Wiseburn and Centinela School Districts' at their respective Board meetings on February 7, 2012.

While the JPA between the two districts and proposed legislation allowing Wiseburn to unify may be beneficial for those two districts, it will be detrimental to the 20,000 students in the Lawndale, Lennox and Hawthorne School Districts.

Therefore, we urge you to please read the attached letter, and ask you to help us in reaching a fair and equitable agreement for all students.

Thank you in advance for your time.

Sincerely,

Ellen Dougherty, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

ED/kb

Enclosures
February 7, 2012

Board of Trustees of the Wiseburn School District
13530 Aviation Boulevard
Hawthorne, CA 90250-6498

Board of Trustees of the Centinela Valley Union High School District
14901 South Inglewood Ave.
Lawndale, CA 90260

Re: Proposed Joint Powers Agreement to Establish the Local Public Schools Funding Authority

Dear Board Members:

We are the Superintendents of the Hawthorne and Lawndale Elementary school districts. We are part of the Centinela Valley Union High School District, and our combined student attendance is over 14,000.

The proposed joint powers agreement (JPA) that is being presented to you this evening is part of an attempt to circumvent the process for deciding on the unification of Wiseburn. It leaves the residents of the Lawndale, Lennox and Hawthorne Districts frozen out of the decision, disenfranchising our voters and harming our students. We are opposed to the JPA and to legislation that is being drafted to undermine the traditional unification process.

You are all aware that the California Department of Education has recommended that the State Board of Education approve the Wiseburn unification proposal, provided all voters in the Centinela Valley Union High School District can be heard. The area wide vote is recognition that withdrawing Wiseburn from Centinela Valley reduces the high school district's assessed valuation. The JPA and the legislation are designed to make an end run around the State Board and the voters. We will continue to urge the State Board to require an area wide vote on unification as the CDE staff concludes is necessary and appropriate.

You, and local legislators, may have been told that our districts are in favor of the JPA and the legislation. This is not correct. We have been told that there is a plan to hold a parcel tax election in the current high school area and intent to share revenues among Wiseburn, the high school district and the three elementary districts. A careful review of the JPA and the legislation shows that this is not the case.

Lawndale and Hawthorne are not mentioned in the legislation. We are not proposed to be parties to the JPA. Indeed, Section 20 of the JPA says that no one is intended to be a third party beneficiary. This legalese has only one purpose—to make it impossible for any of our districts to enforce the JPA. Not only that, Section 11.4.1.7 of the JPA says that the high school district "may" allocate half of its share of a "special tax" (that means a parcel tax) to us.
May does not mean “will” or “shall.” In fact, as far as our districts are concerned, it means nothing. Clearly, any representation to us that we will be able to share in the parcel tax proceeds in order to assist in preparing our students for success in high school is undermined by the language of the agreement.

The proposed legislation recognizes that if Wiseburn is unified, Centinela Valley Union High School District will not have enough assessed valuation to support the bonds that the voters (including those in Wiseburn) have already approved. The CDE has recommended to the State Board that if Wiseburn unifies, it should continue to bear its share of the costs of high school bonds that have already been sold. This is only fair and right. However, CDE concludes that the State Board cannot require Wiseburn to assume its share of the costs of bonds voted but not yet sold. The proposed legislation follows this same approach. We would be required to oppose the legislation unless it provides that Wiseburn will assume its share of the costs of sales of already voted bonds as they are issued.

We request you do the following:

- Reject the proposed JPA or, in the alternative, table any action until the interests of all area districts have been discussed and addressed by all of us.
- Refrain from introducing any legislation until it is discussed with all boards, and the interests of all area districts have been addressed.
- If the unification is to proceed, provide that all voters in the total high school district territory are allowed to vote.

If there is to be a proposal that will actually benefit the students in our two elementary districts, it needs to be fully reflected and made irrevocable and enforceable in both the legislation and the JPA. We are willing to work with you in that regard and urge you not to act unilaterally.

Sincerely,

Elen Dougherty
Dr. Ellen Dougherty
Superintendent Lawndale Elementary School District

[Signature]

Helen L. Morgan
Dr. Helen Morgan
Superintendent Hawthorne School District

cc: Distribution list on the following page
Distribution List

Senator Roderick D. Wright
Assemblymember Steven Bradford
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich
State Superintendent Tom Torlakson
Los Angeles County Superintendent Dr. Arturo Delgado
Los Angeles County Committee on School District Organization
Lawndale City Council
Hawthorne City Council
Lennox City Council
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State Board Ms. Aida Molina
State Board Mr. James Ramos
State Board Ms. Patricia Ann Rucker
State Board Dr. Ilene Straus
State Board Caitlin Snell, Student Member
Education Legal Alliance
Residents in Escondido, California, want their local elected officials to be a little more local.

A group of voters filed a lawsuit calling on the city to divide the city into voting districts. As it stands now, city council members in Escondido are elected at-large, meaning there are no geographic restrictions for where candidates live in the city or who can vote for them. The plaintiffs in the lawsuit allege that this system of voting has disproportionally underrepresented the city’s Latin American population.

Nearly 49 percent of the city’s 143,900 residents are Hispanic or Latino, according to the 2010 Census. But as this article from the San Diego Union-Tribune notes, only one “openly Latino” council member has been elected in the city’s more than 120-year history. No member of the council lives in the city’s central, largely Latino core.
The lawsuit is being pushed by five locals and the State Building and Construction Trades Council of California, and it alleges that the city is in violation of both the Federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the California Voting Rights Act of 2001. The suit notes that "the City Council elected through Escondido's existing at-large system has aggressively pursued policies that have divided the community along racial and ethnic lines and given Escondido a national reputation as vigorously anti-Latino."

The city of Escondido has been somewhat more aggressive than its neighbors in addressing immigration issues. According to this article from the North County Times, Escondido has passed or proposed a number of policies focusing on illegal immigrants. The city has also worked closely with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to "detect and arrest illegal immigrants." A 2006 ordinance proposed by the city would have punished landlords who rented to illegal immigrants, but push back and criticism from civil rights leaders eventually caused the city to abandon the plan.

The lawsuit argues that the issue of illegal immigration has skewed the city's elected officials away from serving the needs of its Latino population. It notes that the number of hate crimes against Latinos doubled in Escondido between 2009 and 2010. The lawsuit also suggests that the city's leadership has a prejudice against the city's Latino population. As part of the campaign leading up to his election in 2010, Mayor Sam Abed issued a campaign flyer that, according to the lawsuit, depicted a group of Latinos trying to cross a highway with the tagline 'There is only one candidate we can trust to uphold the rule of law in Escondido.'

Abed has come out forcefully against the lawsuit, according to the San Diego Union-Tribune.

"It's not going to happen," Mayor Sam Abed said late last week about the demand to switch to geographic district elections. "I am happy to spend whatever it takes — $3 million, $5 million — to keep this city united."

But despite his wishful thinking, the city may still have to pay. Settlement of another voting rights case in Modesto, California, in 2008 cost the city $3 million. Irving, Texas, opted to settle a case in 2010 and change its voting system rather than spending upwards of $600,000 to appeal the decision.

It's a decision many other cities have had to make in recent years. A similar lawsuit was filed earlier this year in the southern California city of Whittier, and the possibility of adding at-large council members to the ballot in Tulsa had many in the city worried about civil rights lawsuits. Underrepresented minority populations have also been an issue for school districts, most of which in California had used at-large voting. But the passage of the state's Voting Rights Act has urged some to change in order to avoid lawsuits, and in the process cost state taxpayers millions in legal fees.

Though Escondido's mayor has pledged to pay the price to fight the voting change, the plaintiffs—including the relatively deep pockets of State Building and Construction Trades Council of California—are willing to fight as well. They're hoping to have the city's voting rules changed in time for the 2012 elections cycle.

Photo credit: John Gress/Reuters
Keywords: Minorities, Lawsuits, Voting, Escondido, Discrimination

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URBAN WONK
Why Planners Need to Take Agenda 21 Criticism More Seriously

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Assemblyman Mendoza criticizes ABC district's voting process

By Kelly Puentes Staff Writer  
Posted: 01/21/2012 12:21:07 PM PST  
Updated: 01/21/2012 03:33:03 PM PST

CERRITOS - A state congressman has criticized the ABC Unified School District’s process of electing school board members, saying its voting system leaves some of the district’s cities underrepresented.

Assembly member Tony Mendoza, D-Norwalk, is urging ABC Unified to abandon its at-large voting system and adopt a district area voting system to allow equal representation for the cities it serves.

Rather than electing candidates that live anywhere within the school district, the area would be divided into smaller districts and candidates would have to live within those districts.

ABC Unified serves Artesia, Cerritos and Hawaiian Gardens, along with portions of Lakewood, Long Beach and Norwalk. Students from Cerritos make up the largest population in the district.

Mendoza, an Artesia resident, said the district’s school board members have historically been mostly Cerritos residents. Currently, all of the school board members are residents of Cerritos.

"ABC Unified represents several cities and while Cerritos is the largest city, we still need to see representation from other cities," Mendoza said. "We'll never be able to outvote Cerritos under the current election system."

In December, the Cerritos Community College District Board of Trustees adopted a new plan to create seven trustee districts, a change from its previous at-large system, following a lawsuit filed in Los Angeles County Superior Court. The suit alleged the district violated the California Voting Rights Act because Latino voters were underrepresented.

Cerritos College's new voting system will start in November.

While the ABC Unified could explore other voting system options that will better represent its demographics, the school district is likely not in violation of the California Voting Rights Act, said Rob Richie, executive director of FairVote, a Maryland-based watchdog organization that specializes in voting rights.
Richie said the California Voting Rights Act is designed to protect racial minorities and does not include provisions for discrimination based on where a person lives.

ABC Unified Deputy Superintendent Mary Sieu said the district conducted a demographic study of its area with the help of legal council and determined that its voting process does not polarize voters.

Sieu said ABC Unified is a high-performing school district with a history of serving its area well. The district's Academic Performance Index score is 833, which is above the state goal of 800.

Sieu said ABC Unified has no plans to change its voting system.

"In our opinion, we serve our children and our families very well with our at large system," she said.

Mendoza, who also pushed for the change in the Cerritos College elections, said he'll continue to explore possible legal action.

"It's not a matter of something not being broken," he said. "It's a matter of allowing representation."

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School districts struggle to comply with Voters Rights Act

Posted by admin in Featured Articles, News on January 23rd, 2012 | 3 responses

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe Unified School District may be in violation of the California Voters Rights Act based on how board members are elected.

While the CVRA was enacted in 2002, the 2010 Census is forcing all elected bodies to look at how people get into office and if constituents are fairly represented. The federal Voting Rights Act also plays a roll.

Lake Tahoe Unified School District board members are expected to discuss the issue Feb. 14. LTUSD first broached the subject in January 2011. It’s expected to be an agenda item several times this year for LTUSD and Lake Tahoe Community College as they work through the process before their next board elections in 2013.

Lake Tahoe Community College board discussed the issue in October and December.

“The first step would be for the board to determine if it is in the best interest of the district to conduct a study to ensure compliance with the California and federal Voting Rights Acts,” Angie Keil, spokeswoman for LTUSD, wrote in an email to Lake Tahoe News.

Public hearings and approval from the county office of education are also required.

Earlier this month in a letter from attorney David Girard to El Dorado County Office of Education Superintendent Vicki Barber it says LTUSD is at-risk of violating the CVRA.

LTUSD had district elections when it first formed in 1950 until the mid-1960s. Each of the five board members represented a district. For history buffs, here is a list of LTUSD board members through the years.

South Lake Tahoe staff is aware of the CVRA, but the council has not discussed the issue in open or closed session.
"They have to make the argument we have a racially polarized electorate. I don’t believe our town is racially polarized,” Nancy Kerry, spokeswoman for South Lake Tahoe, told Lake Tahoe News.

Changing from at-large elections to district could have the unintended consequence of creating polarization.

To date, no complaints have been filed with the city, LTUSD or LTCC regarding representation to their boards.

"When you go to area elections in a small community like ours, sometimes you can’t get people to run. You are diluting down the voting base to an even smaller voting base. That is a concern for me,” LTCC President Kindred Murillo told Lake Tahoe News.

As it stands now for LTCC, LTUSD and South Lake Tahoe, the five members of each board could live on the same street. Everyone in their respective jurisdictions votes for all five electeds.

Changing to district elections would mean dividing the jurisdictions into five areas and one person would be elected from each area.

With LTUSD being further along in the study process, LTCC may be able to piggyback on the research the K-12 district has done and might do. Otherwise, it could cost LTCC $35,000 to conduct a study to determine if it should change how board members are elected.

"The board wants to make sure we are not creating racial polarization. We want to make sure everyone has a voice per the California Voting Rights Act,” Murillo said.

Besides wanting to do the right thing, districts also don’t want to be sued. CVRA lawsuits have cost school districts hundreds of thousands of dollars. Madera Unified’s bill was $1.2 million.

Some have equated the people going after the schools to the man who goes around suing businesses for questionable ADA violations. In other words, it’s about attorneys making a buck and not the greater good of the public.

If an entity is sued under the CVRA, successful plaintiffs can recover all legal costs.

“In order to be successful, the plaintiffs must only prove that racially polarized voting exists and that the subgroup could influence elections under a different system,” Redistricting Partners of Sacramento said in its analysis that was presented to the LTCC board in December.

Paul Mitchell with Redistricting Partners at the Dec. 13 meeting told the board, “It’s not clear you have racially polarized voting.”
He said of the college district’s population of 29,839, 25 percent are Latino and 63 percent are non-Hispanic white. The bulk of the Latinos live in a concentrated area. That could be the problem under the CVRA.

With about 90 percent of districts in California having at-large elections – like LTUSD and LTCC – many could be vulnerable to a lawsuit.

In Douglas County, the school board was presented with three redistricting options at its meeting this month. It was agreed the structure now in place that gives Lake Tahoe a representative to the seven-member board would remain. The board member has to live in the area she or he represents.

“There was some discussion if trends don’t shift, this may be the last time the board can justify an exclusive lake zone,” Superintendent Lisa Noonan told Lake Tahoe News.
College of the Canyons is reviewing its election process to determine if it blocks minorities or special-interest groups from serving on the governing board of the Santa Clarita Valley's only community college, officials said this week.

The Santa Clarita Community College District, which manages College of the Canyons, currently holds at-large elections. The five trustees are elected to specific seats, but the seats do not represent a specific local neighborhood of the 250,000-resident Santa Clarita Valley.

Across California, publicly elected government agencies have faced lawsuits for violations known as " racially polarized voting " as part of the 2002 California Voting Rights Act.

On the recommendation of the Community College League of California, College of the Canyons is joining other community colleges to make sure its election process is fair.

"Because there's a potential risk from litigation, I think what we're doing is erring on the side of caution by doing this analysis," Assistant Superintendent Sharlene Coleal said.

The study will look at the 2010 U.S. Census data for the Santa Clarita Valley, past voting trends and how voting patterns may have changed with a different election process.

For the Santa Clarita Valley, the study will focus primarily on the growing Hispanic and Asian populations and whether they have equal access to the election process.

The analysis should be ready within a few months and will cost the community college $30,000. The college already spent $5,000 on a preliminary study.

If the study finds any concerns, COC may have to redraw its boundaries so that specific seats are tied to specific neighborhoods, Coleal said.
"At this point, it doesn't really look like we have an issue," she said.

Trustee Joan MacGregor voted not to conduct the study, saying it could have been delayed so that COC could share the cost with other local school districts.

"All of the districts in our valley are affected by the California Voting Rights Act in the same way," MacGregor said.

http://www.the-signal.com/section/36/article/58726/
Committee recommends at-large voting to boost number of minority candidates in Santa Clara; lawfirm threatens suit

By Lisa Fernandez
Mercury News

Posted: 01/25/2012 02:59:12 PM PST

Updated: 01/25/2012 09:55:43 PM PST

Santa Clara should do away with its current election system and let the most popular vote-getters win a seat on the council, according to an advisory committee's recommendation at City Hall on Tuesday night.

But that proposed system, called at-large open voting, is no better than the current system of at-large-by-seat voting, charges a group of San Francisco civil rights attorneys, who plan to sue the city on behalf of minorities who they say aren't fairly represented on the city's dais.

The 2010 Census showed that in Santa Clara, 37 percent of the population is Asian, 36 percent is white and 19 percent is Latino. The seven members on the Santa Clara council are all white. In the past 10 years, four Asian and two Latino have run for office, and none of them won.

"No, this is not going to make it more fair," said Jessica Pittenger, a legal fellow at the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area whose firm got involved on behalf of at least one Santa Clara resident. "It makes no difference for minorities if you go from at-large-by-seat voting to at-large general voting. We're preparing to file a lawsuit very soon."

Her supervisor, attorney Robert Rubin, sent a letter to Santa Clara in June alleging that the city was in violation of the California Voting Rights Act.

That letter prompted the City Council to appoint a 16-member charter review committee, which met six times since August to evaluate the current voting system and review other options.

On Tuesday, the committee presented its recommendation to the council. A study session is scheduled for Feb. 28 to further analyze the proposal.

"The consensus of the group was that the most fair way would be to go to at-large voting where if there were four open seats, the four people who get the most votes would win," said former City Councilman Dave DeLozier, an insurance broker who chaired the Charter Review Committee. DeLozier was one of four committee members who voted against the committee's at-large recommendation. He said he likes the current at-large-by-seat system, where candidates pick a seat they think is most vulnerable and run for that, or choose a candidate they particularly want ousted and run against them. "I think the majority at-large system favors the incumbents," DeLozier said. "In the seat system, I can directly run against someone and showcase our differences."

Mohammed Nadeem, an Indian immigrant who ran for council in 2010 but lost by a slim margin and who also sat on the Charter Review Committee, said he thinks the current system is fair.

"I got 46 percent of the vote," he said. "That shows me the town is friendly and open-minded. The (ethnic) communities have to step up and serve the city on commissions and boards and prepare themselves for council."

Last week, he took out papers to run again this
November.

Still, Rubin's firm was eyeing two other election alternatives.

One is called cumulative voting where voters can cast all their votes to one candidate to show the intensity of their vote. The other is called district voting, which happens in cities such as Oakland and San Jose, where there are distinct neighborhoods of ethnic groups who can then vote for a representative from the area where they live.

DeLozier said the committee discarded those ideas, for now, because Santa Clara County does not have the software to tally cumulative voting and it's too expensive to implement in the immediate future. The committee members nixed district voting because they felt that for the most part, minorities live throughout the city, except for two neighborhoods, Rivermark and Westwood Oaks, which are on opposite sides of the city. "And if we redistricted, the lines would look really weird," DeLozier said.

Nadeem agreed that Santa Clara is too small to divide into districts.

But Pfisterer, from Rubin's firm, disagreed: "We've reviewed the Census and people do live in pockets."

There is no known research that states which election system is more fair for representing minorities. Some point to the city of Cupertino, which has large elections, as an example of fairness without lawsuits. Last year, the council had three Asian-American council members out of five; now there are two.

All sides agree that minorities need more training in politics and should attend local public service candidate schools, and governments should do a better job at recruiting and grooming ethnic residents to run for office.

DeLozier's group asked the city to spend money on a new program later this year to encourage minority residents to register to vote.

Staff writer Mike Rosenberg contributed to this report. Contact Lisa Fernandez at 408-920-5002 or follow her on twitter.com/jfernandez.
California school districts change board elections to avoid lawsuits

hsangree@sacbee.com

Published Friday, Jan. 27, 2012

In recent years, the rural Esparto Unified School District has eliminated teaching jobs and classes as it struggled to absorb state funding cuts.

So district officials, eager to avoid a costly legal battle with San Francisco civil rights lawyers, chose to change the way school board members are elected.

"When we heard districts were being sued, we decided we had no other option," said Esparto trustee Jane Stallings.

This week, Esparto Board of Education members voted for a plan in which trustees must run for seats in the places they live rather than in districtwide at-large elections.

With three schools and 1,100 students in western Yolo County, Esparto is the latest in a series of districts across the state to change the way it elects trustees.

Like others that have made the switch, Esparto feared being sued by the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area under the California Voting Rights Act of 2001. The law prohibits at-large elections if they dilute the voting influence of minority groups.

The Lawyers' Committee has used this argument to file claims against cities and school districts with at-large elections.

The city of Modesto, the Madera Unified School District and the Hanford Union School District made big payments to settle the group's claims that Latino voters there had been disenfranchised.

Other Central Valley school districts – in Ceres, Gustine, Turlock and elsewhere – changed their voting systems under threat of litigation. The Lawyers' Committee is suing the city of Tulare and San Mateo County.

In Sacramento, former Assemblyman Alberto Torrico, who has a private law practice and consulted with the Lawyers' Committee, sent the Twin Rivers Unified School District a letter demanding it switch to trustee area elections.

Esparto school officials decided they couldn't afford to wait to receive a demand letter. They moved to switch after experts advised them to set aside $1 million for potential litigation costs, said Superintendent Aida Buelna.

In comparison, the fee for a demographer to draw up trustee areas seemed relatively
affordable, she said.

"We're trying like other districts around California to not be sued by San Francisco attorneys," Buelna said. "The only protection is to go by trustee area."

Buelna and Stallings both said they would like to see a Latino win election to the school board in the district, where the majority of students are Latino. Currently there are no Latino trustees. Drawing districts with many Latino voters might change that, they said.

But they said they didn't appreciate having to act under fear of litigation.

Jessica Pfisterer, a legal fellow with the California Voting Rights Institute at the Lawyers' Committee, said that's the way her group wants it.

"We prefer districts that say they will comply without a lawsuit," Pfisterer said. "If they don't change, I don't have a lot of sympathy. It's not a new law. We are just enforcing it."

The group's tactics seem to be working.

California Department of Education officials said Esparto is one of a growing number of school districts seeking waivers to switch from at-large elections to trustee-area voting.

Just this month, 25 districts asked the department for waivers. That's more than the state received from school districts in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 combined.

"A lot of them are coming in from threats of lawsuits," said Larry Shirey, who works in the department's district reorganization office.

Shirey said many of the districts seeking waivers have received letters from the Lawyers' Committee citing violations of the Voting Rights Act.

Experts differ on whether the shift is ultimately harmful or beneficial for schools and communities.

Douglas Johnson, a fellow at the Rose Institute of State and Local Government at Claremont McKenna College, is an expert on school redistricting. As president of National Demographics Corporation, he advises school districts on the transition from at-large to area elections.

Johnson said the vast majority of districts in California still elect at-large representatives. The voting method is a product of turn-of-the-century reforms that sought to avoid the corruption of the ward system that once dominated Chicago and East Coast cities.

At-large voting "has been essentially the rule for cities and school districts for 100 years now," Johnson said.

The move to area voting has come about only in the past five or six years, since appellate courts rejected challenges to the Voting Rights Act, he said. It's been a useful tool in some areas to empower minority voters, he said.

In 2010, the Madera Unified School District was ordered to pay $162,500 in attorney fees to the Lawyers' Committee, which originally sought $1.8 million. The district agreed to abandon at-large voting and drew up trustee areas.

The result was an increase in the number of Latinos on the school board, he said. "There was one Latino on the school board and now there are four," Johnson said.

But change for its own sake may not be worth it, he said. In its battle with the Lawyers' Committee, the city of Modesto paid about $4.7 million in legal fees. But drawing districts didn't result in greater Latino representation on the City Council, Johnson said.
"It was a lot of money over a battle that did not get a new voice on the council," he said.

The Sacramento City Unified School District moved from at-large voting to trustee-area elections in 2006, with strong support from the local teachers union.

Rick Jennings, a former trustee, said he still doesn't agree with the move. "If a union wants to control (area) elections, it's easier to do – you don't have to spend as much money," he said.

In addition, he argued, neighborhood elections make trustees beholden to a smaller group of voters – not to the entire district. Decisions over school closures have been affected, he said.

"I believe it's very hard for you to look at the welfare of the entire district ... rather than just focusing on your area " he said.

Justin Levitt, a professor at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, studies elections and redistricting.

He said the Voting Rights Act and the Lawyers' Committee's actions may not be popular among district officials. But like previous civil rights measures - and the people who enforced them - they are prompting needed change, he said.

"It's an outside force providing impetus," he said. "To some it may feel like bullying. To others it may feel like a fresh wind."

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Call The Bee's Hudson Sangree, (916) 321-1191.
Escondido responds to voting rights lawsuit

By J. Harry Jones

Tuesday, January 31, 2012

ESCONDIDO — Escondido has filed its initial response to a lawsuit brought last month that seeks to change the way residents vote for City Council members in order to give the Latino population a greater voice.

The lawsuit challenges the city’s at-large election system, saying it violates the California Voting Rights Act of 2001 and the Federal Voting Rights Act of 1965 by discriminating against Escondido’s majority Latino population.

The suit’s intent is to force the city to hold district elections like the city of San Diego does now.

The city filed a challenge to the lawsuit last week, saying that one of the plaintiffs, the State Building and Construction Trades Council of California, represents almost 200 labor unions or trade councils of which only two have some members that vote in Escondido and therefore it should have no standing to bring a civil action.

“The State Council, a nonprofit labor federation, is not a ‘voter’ because it is not a person, is not a citizen 18 years of age or older, is not registered, and it does not vote or possess the ‘qualifications necessary for voting.’”

The lawsuit actually lists five Latino Escondido residents as plaintiffs as well as the trades council. The first date set in the case is March 16 in Vista Superior Court.

The majority of the Escondido City Council has said it will fight the lawsuit.

“This is the issue that’s going to make or break this community,” Mayor Sam Abed said. “Either we choose to unite or to divide.”

Abed said he will spend millions of dollars to fight the lawsuit because he believes district elections will make relations between the Latino and white populations of the city more tense.

The city has hired an outside legal firm from Costa Mesa.

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School Issues debated

Malibu residents on Monday questioned school district officials regarding Malibu representation on the school board and why the district will not be paying the full cost of field lighting at Malibu High School.

By Knowles Adkisson and Angelique LaCour / The Malibu Times

School district officials got an earful Monday night at the annual State of Our Schools address from locals regarding Malibu representation on the school board and the cost of field lights at Malibu High School.

The address, which took place at Malibu City Hall, featured presentations from each of the public schools in Malibu, as well as Superintendent Sandra Lyon.

But in a Q&A following the talks, residents asked School Board President Ben Allen and district Chief Financial Officer Jan Maez why the school district would not pay for the entire cost of permanent field lighting at Malibu High School. The Coastal Commission last October approved the lights on a limited basis after previously rejecting them. At its last meeting, the school board approved $225,760 to pay for so-called "soft costs" for the project, including design work and CEQA environmental studies. The project is projected to cost $665,000 in total. A private group in Malibu is reportedly raising money to make up the difference.

Allen and Maez noted that the Environmental Impact Report for the much broader campus improvement project for the high school and middle school was only finalized last week. They said that project had been delayed previously due to the original controversy over field lights, and said the decision was made not to include the lights in the project. If that had not been done, they estimated the campus improvement project would have been delayed another two years.

Some residents also questioned why Malibu could not be given a permanent non-voting seat on the Board of Education. Each of the seven members of the board currently lives in Santa Monica, and Malibu has been without a representative since Kathy Wisnicki left the board in 2008.

The school district officials responded that the school board had met previously with members of Advocates for Malibu Public Schools (AMPS), a citizen group that seeks an independent Malibu school district, to discuss the proposal. After that meeting, the proposal was placed on the agenda for the school board's Feb. 2 meeting.

However, the board also has a tentative meeting scheduled for March 1 with the Los Angeles County Office of Education about the feasibility of Malibu and Santa Monica breaking off into separate districts. Allen said AMPS members requested that any discussion item by the board on adding a non-voting Malibu member wait until after the board's meeting with the county.

Superintendent Sandra Lyon, who succeeded Tim Cuneo last summer, also spoke about ballot measures scheduled to go before California voters this fall that will result in either raised taxes or major automatic cuts to schools. Lyon said the ballot measures will not be finalized until May, which will hamper the
district's budgetary planning for next year. She quoted Mark Twain: “Prediction is difficult, especially when it involves the future.”
Mixed reaction to proposal to create Pomona school board trustee areas

Monica Rodriguez, Staff Writer

Posted: 02/08/2012 12:33:48 PM PST
Updated: 02/08/2012 06:27:36 PM PST

POMONA - To some people, creating trustee areas in the Pomona Unified School District and expanding the size of its school board is a good idea and a chance to improve the existing electoral system, but to others it's a bad idea that will create problems.

Such were the opinions of some of the more than 20 school district residents who gathered in the gym of Fremont Academy of Engineering and Design Tuesday night.

This was the first of three hearings designed to collect testimony on the districts studies expanding the school board from five to seven members and establishing trustee areas.

The hearings are prompted in part by the efforts of resident John Mendoza, who presented the proposal to the Los Angeles County Office of Education.

Should trustee areas be established and the school board expanded from five to seven, the district would be divided into seven areas and voters from each would elect a candidate from their area.

Some residents said establishing trustee areas will lead to an environment similar to the one involving the Pomona City Council.

Council members are elected by district and that has created an environment in which council members tend to focus on what happens within their districts rather than taking a wider interest in what happens across the city, residents such as Virginia Madrigal said.

School district residents are apathetic and that is a problem, she said. "There are things that are problems but clearly this is not the answer," Madrigal said.

Resident M. Joyce Baker smith said a group of city residents has worked to place a ballot initiative before voters calling for moving toward a system where all city voters vote for council members.

She added she is concerned that school district residents are being pressured to change the school district election system using the threat of litigation.

Tommas Ursua, a past Pomona councilman who worked in favor of establishing council districts, said there are advantages to creating trustee areas.

"Establishing trustee areas will not harm the district but would offer opportunities for more district residents to become involved in the electoral process," he said.

Juan Murillo, a parent active at Garey High School, had concerns establishing trustee areas could have a negative impact on students.

What would happen if an area didn't have qualified candidates, he asked.

"My concern is a group of people want to change things around," he said, adding that establishing trustee areas "seems very, like, divisive."

"The students I represent need help from people who care about them," Murillo said, adding those people aren't always available.

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Some parents asked if the district had considered how it would justify having two additional board members when the district has had to lay off teachers.

Resident Alejandra Martinez and her husband are active parents at Vejar Elementary.

She sees the potential changes as an opportunity.

"Greater representation is needed," she said in Spanish. "If a door is closed to us we complain and if they open a door to us we complain."

The next hearing will be at 6 p.m. today at Cortez Mathematics and Science Magnet School, 1300 Dudley St. in Pomona.

A third hearing is at 6 p.m. Wednesday at Lorbeer Middle School, 501 Diamond Bar Blvd., Diamond Bar.

Reach Monica via email or call her at 909-483-9336.
Wiseburn school district begins lengthy separation process from Centinela Valley

By Rob Kuznia Staff Writer

Posted: 02/08/2012 07:12:45 PM PST
Updated: 02/08/2012 07:43:06 PM PST

After more than a decade of being stuck in what has resembled a bad marriage, the Wiseburn elementary school district serving part of Hawthorne and the wider Centinela Valley high school in which it sits are crafting the equivalent of an amicable divorce.

This week, in a remarkable move given their history of mutual hostility and legal battles, both the Centinela Valley school board and the Wiseburn school board separately passed a resolution that essentially begins the process of allowing Wiseburn to officially extricate itself from the Centinela high school district (composed of Hawthorne, Lawndale and Leuzinger high schools) and become its own unified K-12 school district.

Tuesday's move was only the first step in what is expected to be a 2 1/2 year process at a minimum, but the accord stands in striking contrast from the discord that has characterized the relationship of the two school districts.

"I have new respect for their attorneys," said Tom Johnstone, superintendent of the Wiseburn school district, speaking of Centinela's legal team. "Rather than us trying to defeat them and them trying to defeat us, our attorneys all worked together attacking a common problem."

However, while the former adversaries are finally on the same page, a new set of opponents has emerged: the other three elementary districts that feed into Centinela - Hawthorne, Lawndale and Lomaxx. Officials from these school districts want their residents to have a say in the matter.

At the core of the complex web is a simple enough notion espoused by the Wiseburn camp: ensuring fair taxation. Taxpayers, they say, shouldn't have to subsidize schools that their children aren't attending, especially if the community has demonstrated a willingness to create its own K-12 district.

(In a move seen as a referendum on unification, Wiseburn voters in November of 2010 overwhelmingly passed a ballot initiative to build a new public high school from the ground up.)

Under the current setup, families in the Wiseburn district - which consists of the Hawthorne neighborhood of Holly Glen and unincorporated Los Angeles County neighborhoods of Del Aire and Wiseburn - must pay into construction bonds to build new schools in Centinela Valley.

(Even though students from Dana Middle School in Wiseburn are officially supposed to matriculate into one of the three Centinela schools, only about 5 percent actually do. The...
majority attend either Da Vinci charter high school in the Wiseburn neighborhood or one of the beach city high schools.)

But complicating the matter is a host of legal monkey wrenches.

First off, some fear that Wiseburn's departure could potentially cause taxes to go up for residents in Hawthorne, Lawndale and Lennox, as they would have to make up for Wiseburn's absence.

And then there is the issue of the extremely lucrative El Segundo business corridor. Composed of corporate giants such as Meitl, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon, AIG, Xerox and others, this pot of gold is officially part of the Wiseburn school district. In theory, this means that if Wiseburn leaves, it could take its pot of gold with it, reducing Centinela's tax base by more than a third.

Finally, school officials are concerned that the more affluent Wiseburn district would poach the best students from Leuzinger, Lawndale and Hawthorne high schools.

To get around these and other sticking points, the so-called "joint powers agreement" approved Tuesday night by both the Centinela Valley and Wiseburn school boards is seeking to come up with a solution that is palatable to both parties. This means sides both must give a little.

Wiseburn, for starters, would agree to continue paying its share of two school construction bonds passed in 2008 and 2010. In total, that amounts to about $87 million, or nearly half of the amount levied by the sum of those two bonds.

Wiseburn also would agree to share the business corridor with Centinela.

To address the concern about poaching the best students, Wiseburn would agree to accept no more than 450 students from the Centinela Valley district.

On the other side of the ledger, Centinela Valley would agree to forfeit the tax dollars it receives from the residential portion of Wiseburn in future bond initiatives. This would reduce its take-home by about 9 percent. (The last bond, passed in 2010, reaped $98 million. A similar one would therefore yield about $90 million.)

Underscoring the mind-numbing complexity of the process is how Tuesday's agreement is just one of three prongs to the plan. The other two involve passage of a piece of state legislation that would essentially codify Wiseburn's concessions and then approval from the California Department of Education.

And the process wouldn't stop there. The next step would involve allowing the voters of the Wiseburn district to approve unification. If all goes as planned, it would all be finished sometime in the year between July 2014 and July 2015.

The leaders of the dissenting elementary districts have several gripes. Chief among them is the idea that Wiseburn would be able to separate without the say of voters in Hawthorne, Lawndale and Lennox.

http://www.dailybreeze.com/fdcp?unique=1329256065963
"I think it should be an area-wide vote," said Ellen Dougherty, superintendent of the Lawndale school district. "There are 20,000 other students that will be affected."

Helen Morgan, superintendent of the K-8 Hawthorne school district, said she also worries that the terms of the current agreement could change under new leaders.

"I don't think anybody here is trying to pull one over," she said. "I think the intention of the Wiseburn community is to honor the bonds that have been passed. But I can't predict the future."

Wiseburn nearly succeeded in extricating itself in a much less compromising way many years ago. In 2004, three years after the process was initiated, the California Board of Education unanimously approved Wiseburn's request to ask its voters to unify. But Centinela Valley gummed the gears by suing the state board on the grounds that Wiseburn hadn't conducted the proper environmental studies.

In 2008, the studies were done and the state board took up the issue again. This time, it ruled that unification would have to be approved by all voters in the Centinela Valley. Wiseburn considers this an impossible hurdle, and the current process is an attempt to satisfy all parties.

rob.kuznia@dailybreeze.com

Follow Rob Kuznia on Twitter at http://twitter.com/RobKuznia

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http://www.dailybreeze.com/fdcp?unique=1329256065963 2/14/2012
Latest Pomona USD expanded trustee areas meeting draws opponents in Diamond Bar

Monica Rodriguez, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin
Created: 02/16/2012 06:25:38 AM PST

DIAMOND BAR -- About 30 people gathered in the gym of Lorbeer Middle School Wednesday night to give their opinion on the concept of establishing trustee areas in the Pomona Unified School District.

About one-third of the audience spoke at the meeting, all of whom said they opposed creating trustee areas which would change the method used for electing school board members.

Under the current system, school board members are elected at-large by district voters, which include those from Pomona and a portion of Diamond Bar.

With the trustee area system, the district would be divided into geographic areas and the candidates would run for the seat representing the area in which they live.

They would be elected by the voters of that area.

Another thing being considered is the idea of expanding the board from five to seven members.

Diamond Bar resident Richard Barrios said he has concerns about the concept and believes switching to trustee areas will have a negative effect on students.

Having school board members elected by trustee area will result in establishing areas based on ethnicity, he said.

Barrios said doing that would be wrong and would also create a situation where board members would fight for the schools in the area they represent and not have the same interest in the rest of the district.

"I'd much rather see people voted in because they are interested in students" in the entire district, he said.

Pomona resident Paul Robinson said rather than giving time to a concept that will create divisions across the district, residents should concentrate on getting the Legislature's attention and push them to allocate much needed resources to school districts including Pomona Unified.

"They keep taking more money and trying to divide our school districts," he said.

Others said that at a time when the district is having to cut resources it shouldn't consider expending the board and spending on compensating two more board members.

The move to talk about the creation of trustee

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areas and expansion of the school board was prompted by Pomona resident John Mendoza.

Last summer Mendoza presented a proposal to the Los Angeles County Office of Education calling for the expansion of the district's school board and the establishment of trustee areas.

The Office of Education's Committee on School District Organization will conduct a hearing on the matter sometime in the later part of March, said Matt Spies, assistant director of the Office of Education's division of Business Advisory Services.

After the hearing, district Superintendent Richard Martinez said the PUSD will organize an additional meeting in the coming weeks and make an effort to get the word out in various ways to get more residents to participate.

The meeting, where district residents will again be able to express their opinions on trustee areas and a board expansion, will take place well before the county's meeting.

Consultants for the district this week began work that will result in multiple trustee area map options for five- and seven-member boards, he said.

Martinez said the district wants the opinions of district residents on the matter.

If residents can't attend a hearing, they can submit their opinions as well as their ideas of how trustee areas boundaries should be drawn via the district's website.

Residents can go to http://www.pusd.org go to Notice of Public Hearings and click on Take Questionnaire where they can answer a few questions about the trustee areas and board expansion concepts and leave their comments.

Residents can also attach maps as PDFs with their suggestions on trustee area boundaries,
Claremont Unified begins process to determine if it is in compliance with Voting Rights Act

Wes Woode II, Staff Writer

Created: 02/17/2012 08:33:55 AM PST

CLAREMONT - The Claremont Unified School District approved a contract up to $4,500 to conduct a demographic analysis to see if the district is in compliance with the California Voting Rights Act.

Former board president Beth Bingham told board members Thursday night that the analysis of the rights act was important because the adjacent Pomona Unified School District was could face "major turbulence" over the same issue.

"I just want to speak in favor of this," Bingham said in her first appearance back at a school board meeting since deciding to not run after her term ended in late 2011.

The act, according to a district report, prohibits the use of an "at large" election system if it "impairs the ability of a protected class to elect candidates of its choice or its ability to influence the outcome of an election."

There is also no clear guidance in the act on how the broad term "racially polarized voting" will be interpreted or how much or how little a plaintiff will have to prove for a court to find a government entity to be in violation of the act, according to the report.

The report said the act grants a winning plaintiff the right to reasonable attorneys fees and expert witness fees and plaintiffs have claimed they are entitled to the fees the moment a school district receives a demand letter alleging a school district is in violation of the act.

There have been lawsuits filed against the cities of Compton and Escondido, San Mateo County and the Cerritos Community College District, according to the report.

Pomona Unified is undergoing a process considering whether to create trustee districts in terms of elections and possibly expand the board to seven members.

Interim Claremont Superintendent Gloria Johnston said the $4,500 figure was the first step in the process and hopefully the last. If the district is found to be not in compliance with the act, additional steps would need to be undertaken to prevent a possible lawsuit down the road.

The board also voted to approve a local educational agency plan, related to the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The plan is a requirement for receiving federal funding subgrants for the NCLB and has specific descriptions and assurances as outlined in the NCLB including student academic services to increase student achievement, a needs assessment and more.
The board voted 4-0 on the educational agency plan but board member Steven Llanusa abstained from the vote despite being happy with most of the plan.

Llanusa abstained because he felt the plan didn't specifically address English language learners but Johnston and other board members disagreed.

"I'm not sure how to help you," Johnston said to Llanusa. "The focus on English language learners is a district-wide community goal."

Llanusa said he was upset because the item was listed as a goal but not as a focus area. He added a recent report from Summer Elementary School officials did not refer to the progress of English language learners in a recent update. Officials said the school was trying to be brief in its report to the district.

In other news, the board:

- Approved a matching requirement for the Claremont High School performing arts program's $1.5 million CTE grant. The Theatre Renovation Committee has raised $371,000 to date but has not reached the $1.5 million goal. The funds will come from the district's Capital Outlay Fund to reach the matching grant goal. In addition, a portion of proceeds from sale of the district's 2080 N. Mountain Ave. property will repay the Capital Outlay Fund.

- Honored Katherine T. Fortson, a Claremont High School National Achievement Scholarship finalist

- Honored Claremont High School National Merit Scholarship finalists Storm Dowd-Lukesh, Pranay Reddy Yeturu and Joshua J. Yu

- Honored Esther Cisneros, Keith Flores and Karla Navarrette who are Claremont High School students as 2011-2012 National Hispanic Recognition Program Scholars or honorable mentions. Reach Wes at via email, call him at 909-483-8649, or find him on Twitter @ClaremontNow.
Officials balk at voting districts
But they continue to look at study commissioned by schools.

February 17, 2012
By Brittany Levine, brittany.levine@latimes.com

About a year ago, Councilman Ara Najarian moved four miles south from his home on a quiet, tree-lined street in the Montecito Park area in North Glendale to the denser city center.

"I see the parking issue first-hand. I see the noise issue first-hand. I see the large-item pick-up issue first hand," said Najarian, who was first elected to the council in 2006. "I've heard about these before, but until you're actually living there, you don't feel the pain that the others have."

In the past three decades, records show, only one council member has lived below the Ventura (134) Freeway at the time they were elected — and that was in Adams Hill, a neighborhood filled with architecturally-rich homes and vintage lampposts.

The other four current City Council members live north of the freeway, an area of the city known for its historic and more affluent neighborhoods. The area south of the freeway is home to much of the city's industrial and commercial activity and contains considerably less open space, as well as most of Glendale's multi-family housing. In addition, the densest Latino and Armenian populations reside south of the freeway.

Glendale elects its office holders at-large, meaning elected officials can live anywhere within the city limits. However, a study commissioned by Glendale Unified School District and Glendale Community College may challenge the status quo.

The California Voting Rights Act mandates districts if a particular racial group has been traditionally disenfranchised by an at-large system, said Paul Mitchell, of Sacramento's Redistricting Partners, who conducted the study.

He lists two possible plans splitting Glendale into five districts. Each plan would lump most current and former council members since the 1980s into one district.

The four most Latino neighborhoods — Pacific-Edison, Riverside-Rancho, Grand Central and Tropico — have not elected anyone to office in the past three decades, records show. About 30% of the population of those neighborhoods are Latino.

Though considerably smaller in population than Glendale, Pasadena adopted election districts several years ago over concern of federal rules protecting minority votes.

But city and education officials in Glendale have balked at the study's findings. They say Glendale, despite being the third largest city in Los Angeles County, is too small for districts, which would fracture the city and possibly lead to vote swapping and the disenfranchisement of Glendale's largest minority, Armenians.

Douglas Johnson, founder of National Demographics Corporation in Glendale, said the city is in a gray area based on size.

"At some point, cities become too big to have at-large [elections]," he said, noting that those with populations of less than 175,000 tend to have at-large voting, while those greater than 250,000 have districts. Those in between, like Glendale, at about 190,000 people, often begin weighing the pros and cons.

Mitchell and Johnson agreed that Glendale's voting patterns don't appear to be particularly racially polarized. In the hypothetical districts shown in Mitchell's report, one precinct would be
made up of about 25% of Latino residents of voting age. But demographic experts disagree on whether that's enough to prompt a Voting Rights Act violation.

Some say the minority percentage should be closer to 50%.

"Glendale's certainly not high on the list of hot targets like Escondido or Compton," Douglas said.

But Mitchell said that shouldn't keep attorneys for Glendale's two education systems from reviewing legal vulnerabilities. Cerritos Community College District is being sued over racially polarized voting.

Schools tend to look at the race issue more often than cities, but it's not often that a school's study prompts the entire city to follow suit, Mitchell said.

City Atty. Mike Garcia said Glendale hasn't reviewed the legal implications of its voting patterns, but is reviewing the schools' study.

The redistricting question has cropped up many times in Glendale's history. Some residents in the past have started signature-gathering efforts to get the issue on the ballot, but they've all failed, said former Councilman Bob Yousofian.

If the city were split into districts, the strong Armenian vote, which has grown since the 1990s, would be diluted since Armenians couldn't vote in as solid a bloc as they can now, officials said.

Asians tend to live in the Foothills, while Latinos reside in Southwest Glendale, according to the schools' study. But Mitchell said there weren't enough Asians to create an Asian-majority district. Districts should be equal in size, he said. Armenians have higher concentrations in South Glendale, but are spread throughout the city.

"The bottom line is that districting will reduce choice for voters," said Mayor Laura Friedman.

Councilman Rafi Manoukian, who lives in the Chevy Chase neighborhood nestled between the San Rafael Hills and Scholl Canyon in North Glendale, swept the city's southern voting precincts in last year's election. Anglo candidates, including former Councilman John Drayman and Councilman Dave Weaver, took home most of the northern precincts.

Officials also point to how diverse the City Council dais is now, compared to years past, when all-white, all-male City Councils were the norm. The City Council currently consists of two Armenians, one Latino, one white woman and one white male.

"The majority of Glendale is pretty well represented on council," Manoukian said.

But Mitchell said evidence of past diverse elections can't be a rationale for not having districts if racially polarized voting exists.

"If you look at the history of civil rights cases, that argument has been used a lot and, generally, it's been unsuccessful," he said.
NOTICE TO SUBJECT/INTERESTED AGENCIES

Office of Supervisor Antonovich
Los Angeles County Auditor-Controller
Los Angeles County Chief Executive Office
Los Angeles County Department of Public Works
Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning
Los Angeles County Office of the Assessor
Los Angeles County Office of Education
Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk
Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department – Enforcement Bureau
Consolidated Fire Protection District of Los Angeles County
Sanitation Districts for Los Angeles County
City of Los Angeles – City Clerk
City of Los Angeles – Planning Department
Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District
Los Angeles Unified School District

LAFCO File: City of Los Angeles Annexation 2011-27.

Notice is hereby given that an application for the proposed annexation listed above has been received by the Local Agency Formation Commission. The application proposes to annex 297.42 acres of uninhabited land to the City of Los Angeles. The project site is located east of Browns Canyon Road and northwest of Mason Avenue, in the unincorporated area adjacent to the City of Los Angeles.

The proposed application, map, and legal are attached for your review. Please submit comments, if any, to the LAFCO office by March 15, 2012.

If you have any questions about this proposal, please contact this office at (626) 204-650.

Doug Dorado
Local Government/Information Systems Analyst

Date: February 15, 2012
EXHIBIT "B"
LEGAL DESCRIPTION
ANNEXATION NO. 2011-27

Lots 1, 2, 7 to 10 of Section 31 and lots 6 and 7 of Section 32, Township 3 North, Range 16 West, San Bernardino Meridian, all according to the official plat of said land filed in the district land office June 29, 1897, that portion of the Rancho Ex-Mission De San Fernando, as per map recorded in Book 1 pages 605 and 606 of patents, and parcels 1 to 4 of Parcel Map No. 14061, County of Los Angeles, State of California, as per map filed in Book 158 pages 79 to 81 of parcel maps, in the office of the County Recorder of said county.

Being more particularly described as follows:

Beginning at the Northwest corner of lot 2 of said Section 31 being a found County Engineer monument per C.S.B. 5475; thence along the north line of said lot and also lot 1,

1st (L1) North 89°50'52" East, 2481.31 feet to the northeast corner of said Section 31 being a found monument per C.S.B. 5475 and lot 1; thence along the East line of said Section and said lot 1,

2nd (L2) South 00°19'39" East, 1325.75 feet to the Northwest corner of Lot 6 of said Section 32; thence along the North line of said lot 6,

3rd (L3) South 89°17'32" East, 1309.86 feet to the Northeast corner of said lot; thence along the East line of lot 6,

4th (L4) South 00°19'39" East, 855.86 feet to the Southeast corner of said lot 6 also being the northerly line of Rancho Ex-Mission De San Fernando; thence along the South line of said lot and the northerly line of said Rancho,

5th (L5) South 77°43'55" West, 647.39 feet to the westerly line of said Rancho; thence along said westerly line,

6th (L6) South 13°27'12" West, 3816.40 feet to the Easterly prolongation of the south line of said Section 31; thence along said prolongation,

7th (L7) North 88°32'51" West, 143.14 feet; thence leaving said prolongation,

8th (L8) North 13°33'57" East, 1221.35 feet to the Southeast corner of Parcel Map No. 14061; thence along the South boundary line of said parcel map,

9th (L9) North 58°47'50" West, 237.25 feet; thence,

10th (L10) North 73°53'51" West, 266.95 feet; thence,
11th (L11) North 40°00′00″ West, 68.11 feet; hence,

12th (L12) South 46°29′53″ West, 107.31 feet; hence,

13th (L13) South 43°24′53″ West, 138.13 feet; hence,

14th (L14) South 71°00′53″ West, 284.39 feet to the beginning of a non-tangent curve, concave to the Southwest, having a radius of 302.50 feet a radial line to said curve bears North 76°28′58″ East; hence,

15th (C1) Northerly 114.36 feet along said curve through a central angle of 21°39′37″ to a tangent line of said curve; hence along said line,

16th (L15) North 35°10′39″ West, 224.92 feet to the Southwest corner of said parcel; hence North along the westerly boundary line of said parcel,

17th (L16) North 00°40′19″ West, 694.25 feet to the Northwest corner of said parcel also being the Southeast corner of Lot 10 of said Section 31; thence along the southerly line of said lot,

18th (L17) North 89°48′10″ West, 1227.46 feet to the southwest corner of lot 10; thence North along the West lot line of lot 10,

19th (L18) North 01°01′33″ West, 3881.88 feet to the point of beginning.

Total area of annexation contains 12,955,495 s.f. = 297.42 acs

All parcels being annexed APN No.: 2821-008-031, 2821-008-035
  2701-001-028, 2701-001-029
  2821-023-002, 2821-023-004
  2821-023-005, 2821-023-006
APPLICATION TO INITIATE PROCEEDING FOR CHANGE OF
ORGANIZATION/REORGANIZATION/SPECIAL REORGANIZATION
(Pursuant to the Coitese-Knox-Hertzberg Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000,
Division 3, Title 5 Commencing with Section 56000, of the Government Code)

LAFCO PROPOSAL DESIGNATION NO: | Annexation No. 2011-27

| AFFECTED AGENCIES | RELATED JURISDICTIONAL CHANGES |
| Cities and/or Special Districts | (Annexation, Detachment, Sphere of Influence Amendment, etc.) |
| 1. City of Los Angeles | 1. Annexation to Los Angeles City |
| 2. | 2. |
| 3. | 3. |
| 4. | 4. |

PROPOSAL INITIATED BY: | RESOLUTION | LANDOWNER/REGISTERED VOTER PETITION

APPLICANT: Forestar Real Estate Group and Kim and Helen Schulte

TITLE: Authorized Rep: Forestar Real Estate Group CITY/DISTRICT/CHIEF PETITIONER: Mr. John Polito

ADDRESS: 960 South Westlake Blvd., Suite 202

CITY: Westlake Village STATE: California ZIP CODE: 91361

DESIGNATED CONTACT PERSON: Mr. John Polito TELEPHONE: 805-494-0864

E-MAIL ADDRESS: PolitoLand@aol.com
By submitting this Application to Initiate Proceedings, the applicant acknowledges receipt of the "Instruction for Filing Application for Change of Organization/Reorganization/Special Reorganization" and agrees to be bound by same, including, but not limited to the provisions contained therein regarding filing and processing fees, and defense and indemnification of the Commission.

INDEMNIFICATION / LEGAL DEFENSE

As a condition of any LAFCO approval, the applicant shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless LAFCO and its agents, officers, and employees from any claim, action, or proceeding against LAFCO or its agents, officers, and employees to attack, set aside, void, or annul the approval of LAFCO concerning the processing of the proposal or any action relating to, or arising out of, such approval. At the discretion of the Executive Officer, a deposit of funds by the applicant may be required in an amount sufficient to cover the anticipated litigation costs.

SIGNATURE: ___________________________ DATE: __________

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL LOCATION:

Describe the location of the proposal area including major street and highways that border the project area.

Bordered by Mason Avenue on the East and North and Browns Canyon Road to the West. Property is contiguous to the border of the City of Los Angeles to the South and East of property.

TOTAL ACREAGE OR SQUARE MILES OF TERRITORY:

Is the proposal area inhabited (having 12 or more registered voters residing within the territory)?

☐ Yes
☒ No
GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION

1. PROPOSAL AREA: Give a detailed description of the proposal area and what it consists of (e.g. Existing commercial corridors, residential communities, existing redevelopment area, public utility right-of-way, relevant structures, etc.)

   This will be a community of which 163 will be single family residential units, 25 equestrian residential units, a public park and an equestrian facility.

2. TOPOGRAPHY: Describe the topography, physical features, (rivers, drainage basins, etc.) and natural boundaries of the subject territory.

   The terrain to the West, North and East is steep, hilly and mountainous. The area that will be developed is relatively flat. The Southern terrain is slightly hilly.

POPULATION AND HOUSING

1. What is the current population of the subject territory? 0

2. If the proposal includes development, what is the estimated population of the proposed area?
   550 (2.92 per dwelling unit at buildout)

3. Number of registered voters within the proposed territory.
   Approximately 550

4. Number of landowners within the proposed territory.
   2

5. What is the proximity of the subject territory to other populated areas?

   The City of Los Angeles is immediately East and South. Porter Ranch immediately to the East.
6. What is the likelihood of significant growth in the area; and in adjacent incorporated and unincorporated areas within the next ten years?

Projected growth is expected to be very slow. All property to the immediate North is very mountainous. Due East, there is significant development remaining in the Porter Ranch Project. South of the site, development is anticipated to be minimal, and west of the property is protected conservation lands.

7. Number and type of existing dwelling units:

None to the North and West. One residence to be reconstructed as part of the Equine facility.

8. Give a summary of regional housing needs and to what extent will the proposal assist in achieving its fair share of regional housing needs as determined by SCAG?

This project would be 4.5% of the housing needed. In accordance with Item #6, above growth will be very little to none for the next 10 years, required housing needs will assist in achieving fair assessment of housing.

9. To what extent will this proposal promote “environmental justice” (fair treatment of people of all races, cultures and income) with respect to the location of public facilities and provision of public services?

This development is open to all persons as required by California Code Section (Government Code 56668(0),"The fair treatment of all races, cultures and incomes with respect to the location of public facilities and the provision of public services.

LAND USE AND ZONING

1. What is the assessed land valuation of the subject territory (give source and date of information)?

Purchase price $1,000,000.00 (1999) See attached Property Profiles (tax rolls)

2. What is the current land use and zoning designation within the subject area?

Los Angeles County, non-urban A-2-1 zoning.

3. What is the proposed planned land use of the subject area?

Open Space (OS) 19.4 acres, Residential (RA-1) 35.9 acres, Non-Urban (A-1) 115.3 acres, Residential (RE11-14) 114.5 acres
4. Describe any proposed change in land use and zoning as a result of this proposal (including, if applicable, pre-zoning by an affected city).

Existing Los Angeles County Zoning is A-2-1 described in Item #3 above. 163 RE-11, 25 RA-1 Zoning is min - minimum density, VL-1 - very low density 1, VL-2 - very low density II, O.S. - open space, A-1 - Agricultural zone, RA-1 - suburban zone, RE-II-1 H residential estate zone.

5. What is the land use in the surrounding area? Be specific.

Open Space, Los Angeles County. North - open space, West - Michael D. Antonovich Regional Park, South - Browns Canyon Road, several ranches, equine facilities located on Browns Canyon Road, East - Porter Ranch and open space.

6. If annexation to a city is involved as a part of this proposal, what is the city’s general plan designation for the area?

None

7. Is the proposal consistent with city or county general plans, specific plans, and or other adopted land use policies?

The project as proposed is consistent with the City of Los Angeles general plan framework element, the Chatsworth-Porter Ranch Community Plan and the City of Los Angeles zoning code and impacts would be less than significant.

8. Will this proposal result in development of property now or in the near future? Describe the type of development proposed (type of business or industry, single-family or multi-family residential, etc., and number of units or facilities).

Yes, generally 188 single family residences with equestrian usage, 163 single family residential units, 25 single family equestrian, 19 acres - public park, 114 acres - Open Space, 12 acres - Equestrian Facilities

9. What effect would denial of this proposal have on the proposed development, if any?

148 single family homes under current county zoning, due to lack of infrastructure, would require the project to be served by septic tanks and water wells.
10. Is the subject territory currently within a redevelopment area or proposed to be included within a redevelopment project area upon completion of this proposal?

No

11. Are there any agricultural or open-space lands within the proposal area? What is the effect of this proposal on agricultural or open-space lands?

Not identified as significant agricultural resource. Site not designated as important farmlands by State Department of Conservation, and there are no significant agricultural resources identified with the property. No agricultural use on the site.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Explain in detail the reasons for this proposal and why it is necessary.

Expand range of housing types in the Northwest portion of the San Fernando Valley, by providing, large lots and equestrian horse keeping lots and expand by the addition of a 19 acre public park and a 120 horse equine facility, with additional 115 acres of open space. Also, provides infrastructure for enhanced fire fighting capacity, and road extension provides emergency access for Browns Canyon and Porter Ranch residences.

2. What will be the effect of the proposal and of alternative actions on the following: (Include the names of other local agencies having the authority to provide the same or similar services as those proposed.)

a. Adjacent areas:

None. No effect. Traffic mitigated with no significant impact identified in the EIR.

b. Mutual social and economic interests:

Housing density in proposed project is equivalent to adjacent projects in Porter Ranch community. Currently, Los Angeles county has no infrastructure to provide services to this area.
c. The local government structure of the County:

No county area council

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

"Government services" refers to governmental services and whether or not those services would be provided by the local agencies subject to the proposal. It includes public facilities necessary to provide those services.

1. Estimate the present cost and describe the adequacy of government services and controls in the area.

Present cost, site is undeveloped and no government services provided at this time.

2. Estimate the probable future need for government services (including public facilities) or controls in the area.

Public Safety - Police, Fire
Water and Utilities (LADWP)
Los Angeles City Sanitation
All services will be provided by the City of Los Angeles.

3. If the proposal includes incorporation, formation, or annexation, what will be the effect of this proposal or exclusion and of alternative courses of action on the cost and adequacy of services and controls in the proposed area and adjacent areas?

Presently there are very limited services provided by the County of Los Angeles. There are no alternative courses of action to provide services to this area.
4. If, as a result of this proposal, increased service demand exceeds the existing capacity, describe what will be done by the service provider to increase capacity of services.

The City of Los Angeles has the capacity to meet all expected demand.

5. List any assessments, fees, or other charges to be levied as part of this proposal and or that may be levied in the near future.

None

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

Provide the following information if the proposal requires a sphere of influence amendment.

1. Is the proposed area within the existing sphere of influence of the annexing agency?

   Yes ✓ Name of Agency City of Los Angeles   No   

2. List any communities of social or economic interest within the proposed area or immediately adjacent. To what extent will any of those communities of interest be affected by the proposal?

   Porter Ranch Development to the East. Will not be affected to a great extent by this development.

3. If the proposal includes a request for a city sphere of influence update, provide a written statement on whether an agreement on the sphere change between the city and the county was achieved. Please provide a copy of the written agreement pursuant to Government Code Section 56425(b).

   Not applicable
BONDED INDEBTNESS

1. Do the agencies whose boundaries are being changed have any existing bonded debt?
   
   No

2. Will the proposal area be liable for payment of its fair share of this existing debt?
   
   No

3. To what extent will landowners within the proposal area be liable or remain liable for any existing indebtedness of the city or district?
   
   None

4. In the case of detachment requests, does the detaching agency propose that the subject territory continue to be liable for existing bonded debt?
   
   Not applicable

NOTIFICATION

1. List the name and address of any person(s), organization, community group, or agency known to you who may wish notification, or who may be opposed to this proposal.

   Name                  Address                        Telephone
   Mr. John Pello/Forestar Real Estate Group  980 S. Westlake Blvd., Suite 202, Westlake Village, California 91361  805-390-2886
   Mr. and Mrs. Kim and Helen Schulte         12100 Browns Canyon Road, Chatsworth, California, 91311  805-633-1000
   Ms. Phyllis Winger                        Los Angeles City, District #12 Valley Office, 16017 Nordhoff St., Ste. B, Northridge, CA, 91324  818-756-8601

2. Provide the names and addresses of up to three persons who are to receive notice of hearing, staff report, and minutes.

   Name                  Address                        Telephone
   Mr. Mel Mitchell      PRNC, P.O. Box 7337, Porter Ranch, California, 91327  818-217-0279
   Ms. Phyllis Winger   Los Angeles City, District #12 Valley Office, 16017 Nordhoff St., Ste. B, Northridge, CA, 91324  818-756-8501
APPLICATION FOR CHANGE OF ORGANIZATION— ATTACHMENT “A”

Plan for Municipal Services

Pursuant to Government Code 56653, any local agency submitting an application for a change in organization must also submit a plan for providing services to the subject territory. Please provide information for provision of services. (*Special districts need only submit those pages of this application that apply.)

1. Describe how his proposal will result in the provision of new services and changes in existing services, including location from which such services are or will be provided, service level or capacity (i.e., sewer line capacity, average response time for emergency vehicles, etc.) and how services will be financed.

The project site is undeveloped at this time with the exception of the existing Mountain Meadows Equestrian Facility at 12100 Browns Canyon Road located on the southernmost portion of the site. A replacement equestrian center is included in the Hidden Creeks Estates Project. Annexation to the City of Los Angeles is proposed. The City of Los Angeles would be extending municipal services to this new residential neighborhood from the adjacent Porter Ranch Residential Community, located southeast of the project site. See the responses below for information on the services to be provided by the City.

Fire and Emergency Services

1. Which fire protection agency currently provides fire protection and emergency medical service in the subject territory? Give a brief description of how this service is provided and to what extent.

The Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACoF) currently provides fire protection and emergency medical service to the site and surrounding unincorporated territory. The nearest LACoF station is located in Chatsworth approximately 7.2 miles to the south of the site. Current response times to the site from this station are in excess of 15 minutes.

2. Is annexation to a County Fire Protection District part of this request? Yes ☑ No

3. What agency will be providing services to the subject territory as a result of this request? Provide a description of the level and range of services that are to be provided. Indicate if there are any changes in service level.

The City of Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) will provide fire protection and emergency medical services to the site. Please see the attached Supplement for additional information.

4. What is the approximate date in which those services will be made available? Fourth Quarter Year 2013

5. Provide information on how those services will be financed (i.e. assessment district, general property tax, developer fees, etc.).

General property tax.

6. Will there be any upgrading or transfer of facilities as a result of this request? Yes ☑ No
Flood Control Services

1. Give a brief description of how flood control service is currently provided and by which agency.
   
   The project site is currently undeveloped, with the exception of the Mountain Meadows Equestrian Facility, and drains into Browns Canyon on the west and Mormon Canyon to the east. No flood control services are currently provided by any public agency.

2. What agency will be providing flood control services to the subject territory upon approval of this request? Provide a description of the level and range of services that are to be provided. Indicate if there are any changes in service level.
   
   Please see the attached Supplement for this information.

3. What is the approximate date in which those services will be made available? Fourth Quarter 2013

4. Provide information on how those services will be financed (i.e. assessment district, general property tax, developer fees, etc.).
   
   All storm drain facilities will be built as part of the Hidden Creeks Estates project by the project developer and maintained by the project Homeowners Association. No services will need to be provided by the City of Los Angeles.

Library Services

1. Give a brief description of how this service is currently provided and by which agency.
   
   As the project site is currently unincorporated, services are provided by the County of Los Angeles. Since the site is undeveloped, with the exception of the existing Mountain Meadows Equestrian Facility, little or no service is presently needed.

2. What agency will be providing library services to the subject territory upon approval of this request? Provide a description of the level and range of services that are to be provided. Indicate if there are any changes in service level.
   
   The City of Los Angeles Public Library system will provide services upon approval of this request. Please see the attached Supplement for additional information.
3. What is the approximate date in which those services will be made available? [Fourth Quarter 2013]

4. Provide information on how those services will be financed (i.e. assessment district, general property tax, developer fees, etc.).

   Developer would pay the City's $200 per dwelling unit library services fee to the Department of Building and Safety in accordance with the Dwelling Unit Construction Tax. These funds will be used for books, computers, and other library materials.

5. Will there be any upgrading or transfer of facilities as a result of this request? [Yes]

   If yes, please give details.

   

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Park and Recreational Services

1. Give a brief description of how park and recreational service is currently provided and by which agency.

   The project site is vacant and undeveloped at this time, with the exception of the existing Mountain Meadows Equestrian Center. No parks and recreation services are currently be provided by any agency.

2. What agency will be providing park and recreational services to the subject territory upon approval of this request? Provide a description of the level and range of services that to be provided. Indicate any changes in service level.

   The City of Los Angeles Recreation and Parks Department would provide park and recreational services upon approval of this request. Please see the attached Supplement for additional information.

3. What is the approximate date in which those services will be made available? [Fourth Quarter 2013]

4. Provide information on how those services will be financed (i.e. assessment district, general property tax, developer fees, etc.).

   The new 15.8 acre City park will be built by the project developer as part of the development of the Hidden Creeks Estates project. Maintenance of the park will be funded by general property tax.

5. Will there be any upgrading or transfer of facilities as a result of this request? [Yes]
If yes, please give details.

Police Services

1. Which police protection agency currently provides service to the subject territory? Provide a brief description of how this service is provided and to what extent.

   The Los Angeles Sheriff's Department (LASD) provides law enforcement service to the project site and the surrounding unincorporated areas of the County.

2. What agency will be providing law enforcement services to the subject territory upon approval of this request? Provide a description of the level and range of services that are to be provided. Indicate if there are any changes in service level.

   The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) will provide law enforcement services upon approval of this request. Please see the attached Supplement for additional information.

3. What is the approximate date in which those services will be made available? Fourth Quarter 2013

4. Provide information on how those services will be financed (i.e. assessment district, general property tax developer fees, etc.).

   General property tax and motor vehicle registration fees.

5. Will there be any upgrading or transfer of facilities as a result of this request? Yes  Yes  No

If yes, please give details.
Road Maintenance Services

1. Give a brief description of how road maintenance service is currently provided and by which agency.
   Current access to the subject territory is from Brown's Canyon Road, which is maintained by the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works.

2. What agency will be providing services to the subject territory upon approval of this request? Provide a description of the level and range of services that are to be provided. Indicate if there are any changes in service level.
   The Los Angeles Department of Public Works Bureau of Street Services will provide road maintenance services upon approval of this request. Please see the attached Supplement for additional information.

3. What is the approximate date in which those services will be made available?  
   Fourth Quarter 2013

4. Provide information on how those services will be financed (i.e. assessment district, general property tax developer fees, etc.)
   General Property Tax and State Gas Tax.

5. Provide information on any roads, facilities or capital improvements that will be transferred, as a result of this request.
   Road maintenance services will be the responsibility of the LADOT upon annexation of the project site.

Solid Waste Services

1. Give a brief description of how solid waste service is currently provided and by which agency.
   The project site is undeveloped at this time with the exception of the existing Mountain Meadows Equestrian Facility. Solid waste disposal services are currently provided to this existing use by a private contractor.

2. What agency will be providing services to the subject territory upon approval of this request? Provide a description of the level and range of services that are to be provided. Indicate if there are any changes in service level.
   Solid waste service will be provided by the City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works Bureau of Sanitation. Please see the attached Supplement for additional information.

3. What is the approximate date in which those services will be made available?  
   Fourth Quarter 2013
4. Provide information on how those services will be financed (i.e. assessment district, general property tax, developer fees, etc.).

   General property tax.

Special Assessment District Services

1. Provide information on any special assessment districts within the subject territory. Give a description of services provided.

   N/A

2. Will the subject territory be included in an assessment district and be subject to any new assessments upon approval of this request?

   N/A

3. Provide information on any special charges, fees or taxes that will be levied as a result of approval of this request.

   N/A

Street Lighting Services

1. Give a brief description of how street lighting service is currently provided and by which agency.

   The project site is undeveloped at this time with the exception of the existing Mountain Meadows Equestrian Facility and no street lighting service is currently provided by any public agency.

2. What agency will be providing services to the subject territory upon approval of this request? Provide a description of the level and range of services that are to be provided. Indicate if there are any changes in service level.

   The City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works Bureau of Street Lighting will maintain the street lights on the Mason Avenue extension upon approval of this request. Please see the attached Supplement for additional information.

3. Provide information on how those services will be financed (i.e. assessment district, general property tax, developer fees, etc.).

   General property tax.
Water Services

1. Is annexation of water service part of this request? [ ] Yes [ ] No
   If yes, provide details.
   The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) will provide water service to the project site. The project applicant will enter into a water supply agreement with LADWP. This agreement will include measures to minimize the amount of water used by the project and provide for additional water supplies to LADWP to meet the needs of the project.

2. Will this request result in an increase in water usage upon approval of this request or in future development of the proposal area? What are the projected needs and availability of water supplies?
   Please see the attached Supplement for this information.

3. What agencies will be providing water service to the affected territory upon approval of this request? Provide a description of the capacity level and range of services to be provided and the approximate date in which those services will be made available.
   The LADWP will provide water to the affected territory upon annexation. Water service will be extended from existing facilities in the adjacent community of Porter Ranch. A new pump station will be built adjacent to an existing pump station in Porter Ranch and a service line extended along Mason Avenue to the new water tank to be built as part of the Hidden Creeks Estates project.

4. Provide information on how those services will be financed (i.e. assessment district, general property tax, developer fees, etc.).
   The project developer will purchase or lease water acceptable to LADWP from an existing available source and convey to LADWP's existing water distribution system pursuant to the water supply agreement to be entered into with LADWP.

Wastewater Services

1. Give a brief description of how wastewater service is currently provided and by which agency.
   The project site is undeveloped at this time with the exception of the existing Mountain Meadows Equestrian Facility, which is served by a septic tank system. No wastewater service is currently provided by any public agency to the subject area.

2. What agency will be providing services to the subject territory upon approval of this request? Provide a description of the level and range of services that are to be provided. Indicate if there are any changes in service level.
   Please see the attached Supplement for this information.
3. What is the approximate date in which those services will be made available?  
   Fourth Quarter 2013

4. Is annexation to a County Sanitation District part of this request or a future request?  
   [ ] Yes  [ ] No

   If yes, provide details.

5. Provide information on how those services will be financed (i.e. assessment district, general property tax developer fees, etc.)

   The project applicant would pay sewage connection fees based on the number of plumbing fixtures associated with the project and would construct the new and upgraded sewer collection lines as required by the City.

6. Will there be any upgrading or transfer of facilities as a result of this request?  
   [ ] Yes  [ ] No

   If yes, provide details.

   The project applicant would construct new and upgraded sewer collection lines as required by the City to ensure adequate wastewater service for the project.
Supplement to
Attachment “A” Plan for Municipal Services

Fire and Emergency Services

3. What agency will be providing services to the subject territory as a result of this request? Provide a description of the level and range of services that are to be provided. Indicate if there are any changes in service level.

The City of Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) will provide fire protection and emergency medical services to the site. LAFD Station 28 is located 2.6 miles from the site in the adjacent community of Porter Ranch; LAFD Station 8 is located 3.6 miles from the site in Porter Ranch; and LAFD Station 107 is located 4.3 miles from the site in Chatsworth. Response time would improve to approximately 5 minutes due to the closer locations of these stations to the site. Access from these stations to the project site will be provided by the planned extension of Mason Avenue north and then west to provide access to the site. No new facilities or other service enhancements are required for the City to provide adequate fire protection and emergency medical services to the site.

In addition, improvements are proposed that will enhance the ability of the Los Angeles City and County Fire Department to provide fire protection services to homes and other uses located in Brown’s Canyon that will remain under County jurisdiction. These improvements include a fire department staging area at the southern edge of the project site adjacent to Brown’s Canyon Road with an additional fire hydrant; an emergency access gate at the northern end of the new equestrian center to provide access through the project site for emergency access; 1 million gallons of additional water storage in the project water tank for fire-fighting purposes; a new helipad in the project constructed to meet other City and County Fire Department standards; and annual brush clearance on the project site adjacent to Brown’s Canyon Road as directed by the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

Flood Control Services

2. What agency will be providing flood control services to the subject territory upon approval of this request? Provide a description of the level and range of services that are to be provided. Indicate if there are any changes in service level.

The proposed Hidden Creek project includes a new storm drain system to collect storm runoff and convey it to a retention basin to be constructed at the southern end of the project site. These facilities will be maintained by a Homeowners Association (HOA). The City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works would provide flood control services after annexation but as new storm drain facilities will be built as part of the Hidden Creeks Estates project and maintained by the HOA, there will be no effect on the City’s level of service.
Library Services

2. What agency will be providing library services to the subject territory upon approval of this request? Provide a description of the level and range of services that are to be provided. Indicate if there are any changes in service level.

The City of Los Angeles Public Library system will provide service from the existing Porter Ranch and Chatsworth Branch Libraries, located 4.5 and 3.6 miles, respectively, from the project site. There would be no changes in service level.

Park and Recreational Services

2. What agency will be providing park and recreational services to the subject territory upon approval of this request? Provide a description of the level and range of services that to be provided. Indicate any changes in service level.

The City of Los Angeles Recreation and Parks Department would provide recreational services. There are four existing City parks located within 2 miles of the project site. As part of the Hidden Creeks Estates Project, the project developer will develop a new 15.5-acre public park with active and passive recreational opportunities at the eastern end of the project with access from Mason Avenue. As only 2 acres of additional parkland would be needed to meet the City’s park planning standards for the 550 new residents associate with this project, no changes in service level will occur. The amount of parkland being provided will help the City meet the needs of existing residents in Porter Ranch and other residential areas in this portion of the San Fernando Valley. The project also includes a new 15.8-acre equestrian facility that would replace the existing Mountain Meadows Equestrian Facility. This new facility will be larger and accommodate a greater number of horses than the current facility. Connections will be provided to existing trails and a new equestrian staging area will be provided with parking available for trailers, providing greater access to the area for horse owners.

Police Services

2. What agency will be providing law enforcement services to the subject territory upon approval of this request? Provide a description of the level and range of services that are to be provided. Indicate if there are any changes in service level.

The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) will provide law enforcement services. The Devonshire Division within the Valley Bureau of the LAPD has an average response time of approximately 8 minutes for calls for service. The project site would incorporate defensible space and other crime prevention features to minimize demands on LAPD service levels. The new residential community will also be gated and this would reduce the number of calls for police service. Some increase in the number of calls for service would result. The general property tax and motor vehicle registration fees generated by the project would provide the funding needed to provide services to the project.
Road Maintenance Services

2. What agency will be providing services to the subject territory upon approval of this request? Provide a description of the level and range of services that are to be provided. Indicate if there are any changes in service level.

The Los Angeles Department of Public Works Bureau of Street Services will provide road maintenance services upon approval of this request. The residential streets within the Hidden Creeks Estates residential community will be private streets maintained by the project Homeowners Association (HOA). The City of Los Angeles will only need to maintain the extension of Mason Avenue to the site.

The project HOA will also maintain Brown's Canyon Road from the southerly access point to the site to Desoto Avenue on an as needed basis to maintain all weather access for emergency vehicles pursuant to an agreement with the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

No changes in level of service will result.

Solid Waste Services

2. What agency will be providing services to the subject territory upon approval of this request? Provide a description of the level and range of services that are to be provided. Indicate if there are any changes in service level.

Solid waste service will be provided by the City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works Bureau of Sanitation. The Bureau of Sanitation stated it can provide service to the new uses proposed and would be establishing a new solid waste collection route to serve this territory upon approval without any effect on existing service levels.

Street Lighting Services

2. What agency will be providing services to the subject territory upon approval of this request? Provide a description of the level and range of services that are to be provided. Indicate if there are any changes in service level.

The Hidden Creeks Estates Homeowners Association will maintain all street lighting on the private streets within the new residential community. No changes in existing service levels will result.

Water Services

2. Will this request result in an increase in water usage upon approval of this request or in future development of the proposal area? What are the projected needs and availability of water supplies?

The project would result in an increase in water usage upon approval of this request. The amount of water needed for the land uses planned for the proposal area is estimated at approximately 380 acre-feet
per year by LADWP. The project water supply agreement with LADWP will ensure adequate supplies are available to meet the needs of the project.

Wastewater Services

2. What agency will be providing services to the subject territory upon approval of this request? Provide a description of the level and range of services that are to be provided. Indicate if there are any changes in service level.

Wastewater collection and treatment services will be provided to the subject area upon annexation by the City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works Bureau of Sanitation. New wastewater collection lines to be constructed by the developer of the Hidden Creeks Estates project will connect to the City’s existing sewer system in the adjacent community of Porter Ranch. The project sewer line would be extended in Mason Avenue to connect to the existing sewer system in Porter Ranch. The existing sewer system in the Porter Ranch consists of three 8-inch pipelines beneath Via Galileo, Via Medici, and Via Cellini. Sewage then flows into a 10-inch line along Via Cellini, followed by a 10-inch line below Via Donatello which connects to an 8-inch line along Porter Ranch Drive and then a 12-inch line below Mariposa Bay Lane. Finally, sewage flows to an 18-inch line below Rinaldi Street. The project applicant would install any required upgrades to the existing sewer system including a secondary line connecting to the nearest 18-inch line. With the upgrades there would be no changes in service level.

Wastewater from the proposal area will be conveyed to the City’s Hyperion Wastewater Treatment Plant, which has an average flow of 340 million gallons per day (gpd). The project would generate less than 0.1 percent of the Hyperion Plant capacity. This plant has adequate capacity to serve this area. No changes in the existing level of service would result.
LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION  
(COUNTY COMMITTEE)  
LEGISLATIVE REVIEW-FEBRUARY 2012

BILL NUMBER/AUTHOR: Assembly Bill 1252/Davis  
INTRODUCTION DATE: 02/18/11  
LAST ACTIVITY/DATE: 05/03/11: In committee: Set, first hearing. Hearing canceled at the request of author.

DESCRIPTION OF BILL
Existing law authorizes the county committee on school district organization, upon petition of the governing board of any community college district, to provide for the establishment, rearrangement, or abolition of trustee areas in any community college district.

This bill would establish a separate procedure for the election of the trustees of the Los Angeles Community College District (CCD). The bill specifies that a candidate for election must reside in, and be registered to vote in, the trustee area he or she seeks to represent.

The size of the board, nomination of candidates, and term length, would be determined, as specified. This bill would require the governing board to set the boundaries of each trustee area before March 1, 2012, to reflect the population enumerated in the federal 2010 decennial census. If the governing board fails to timely set the boundaries, then the county committee on school district organization shall do so before April 30, 2012.

Because this bill would impose new duties on the Los Angeles CCD, it would impose a state-mandated local program. In addition, this bill would make legislative findings and declarations as to the necessity of a special statute for the Los Angeles CCD. The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement. This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions.

POTENTIAL IMPACT OF BILL ON LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMITTEE, SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION PROCESS AND/OR LOS ANGELES COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS
This bill requires the Los Angeles CCD to establish trustee areas. If successful, this bill seeks compensation as a mandated local program for any costs associated with this directive.

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. Matthew Spies, Secretary to the County Committee, at (562) 922-6336.
Summary of Los Angeles Unified School District Reorganization Proposals

March 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 February 23, 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

South Gate SD-Los Angeles USD/October 2011

Transfer of Territory Proposals/Last Activity Date

None

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

March 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 February 23, 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 Steentoft, Chief Counsel for the SBE, recommended that certain waivers submitted with the Wiseburn SD petition could be determined by the SBE at the time of the hearing. Subsequently, the CDE rescheduled the petition to be heard before the SBE on September 9, 2004.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

On October 5, 2010, the Superintendent for the Wiseburn SD contacted LACOE to request additional assistance to facilitate a meeting among all five of the impacted school districts (the Centinela Valley 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 its 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.

*Status: Petition on hold; Wiseburn SD negotiating legislation and agreement with Centinela Valley UHSD.*

**Status Date:** February 23, 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 August 18, 2010, LACOE received a request for a petition pursuant to EC §5019 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 its legal compliance regarding format and content. On August 27, 2010, County Counsel deemed the petition sufficient. Staff returned the petition to the chief petitioner on August 30, 2010, 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(c) and, based on the number of registered voters in the Pomona USD, requires valid signatures from at least 500 registered voters within the petition area. If valid and certified by the County Committee, this petition would trigger a feasibility study, public hearing, and ultimately a vote by the County Committee.

On August 15, 2011, the chief petitioner submitted signed petitions for review. On August 16, 2011, staff conveyed the signed petitions to the Registrar-Recorder for signature verification. On August 29, 2011, the Registrar-Recorder reported that the petitions contained 697 valid
signatures, out of 753 signatures submitted. The Registrar-Recorder also reported that the number of registered voters in the Pomona USD was 63,963. Under the guidelines of EC §5019(c), the petition contains enough valid signatures to move forward to review at a public hearing and a vote by the County Committee.

The petition was presented to the County Committee at its November 2, 2011, regular meeting. The Secretary communicated that the Pomona USD was currently studying the issue of trustee areas in light of the California Voting Rights Act (CVRA) and may develop a plan to implement them prior to any public hearing on this petition. The Secretary communicated this information to the chief petitioner as well. Staff informed the County Committee of the district’s progress at its January 4, 2012, regular meeting, where a district representative provided details about recent activities and coming plans to conduct demographic studies, hold public hearings, and present alternative trustee area plans in compliance with the CVRA. Staff informed the chief petitioner of developments and advised him of the status of the petition review by the County Committee, as well as upcoming agenda items for review by the Pomona USD governing board.

Pomona USD held three public hearings on this matter on February 7, 9, and 15, 2012, at local schools within the district. At the hearings, staff presented overview information about the County Committee and the CVRA as it impacts the current petition. District staff and their attorney presented additional information and answered questions from attendees in the audience. The chief petitioner was present and spoke at all of the hearings.

Staff will poll the County Committee for availability for a public hearing currently anticipated to take place in March 2012. The County Committee will review the district’s progress on the issue and determine whether to review the petition or wait for district action.

*Status: Pomona USD public hearings completed; district studying petition and CVRA requirements pending board review.

Status Date: February 23, 2012

PROPOSED TRANSFER OF TERRITORY FROM THE MOUNT SAN ANTONIO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT (CCD) TO THE NORTH ORANGE COUNTY CCD

On September 6, 2011, LACOE staff received notice of a petition to transfer certain territory currently within the Mount San Antonio CCD to the North Orange County CCD. The petition was presented via resolutions by the board of trustees of both colleges. Under EC §74104, if a territory petitioned for transfer contains less than five percent of the adult age population of a district, it is considered a “minor” transfer of territory and does not require review by the County Committee. The Education Code requires a review by the County Superintendent and the petition is then forwarded directly to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) for both impacted counties (in this case, Los Angeles and Orange Counties). Staff discussed this petition with the County Committee at its November 2, 2011, regular meeting to provide information on its progress. Staff submitted the petition to the Los Angeles County BOS on November 7, 2011. It is expected that the petition will be heard by the Los Angeles County BOS on November 15, 2011.

* Indicates update from previous summary.
Status: Petition was approved by the Los Angeles County BOS on November 15, 2011.

Status Date: November 15, 2011

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

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

On February 10, 2006, LACOE received a revised request for a petition. Staff reviewed the request and forwarded a draft petition to County Counsel on February 22, 2006, for a legal compliance review regarding format and content. We received notification on March 6, 2006, from County Counsel informing us that the draft petition was legally acceptable.

On March 7, 2006, staff forwarded the draft petition to the Registrar-Recorder for verification that the description of the proposed boundaries of the Altadena USD was sufficiently clear (so that registered voters residing within the proposed petition area could be identified with specificity). The Registrar-Recorder confirmed that the description was sufficient on March 10, 2006.

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

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

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

Status: Petition insufficient; chief petitioners may gather additional signatures.

Status Date: December 5, 2011

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

On July 13, 2009, LACOE received a request for a petition pursuant to EC §5019 and §5020 to increase the number of trustees from five to seven and to establish trustee areas within the Pomona USD. The request was submitted by chief petitioner Mr. Mendoza. The petition was forwarded to County Counsel to determine its legal compliance regarding format and content. On August 7, 2009, County Counsel deemed the petition sufficient. Staff returned the petition to the chief petitioner on August 11, 2009, for circulation.

Please note that this is a separate petition, distinct from the other petitions requested by Mr. Mendoza, and requests some of the same changes within the Pomona USD (the addition of two governing board members and the creation of trustee areas). It was submitted under EC §5019 and §5020 and requires valid signatures from ten percent of the registered voters within the petition area (approximately 7,000 signatures in the case of the Pomona USD). If valid and certified by the County Committee, this petition would trigger a ballot initiative (as opposed to a reference report and vote by the County Committee).

Status: Petition in circulation.

Status Date: August 20, 2009

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

Status: Petition currently in circulation.

Status Date: February 21, 2008

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

Status: Petition in circulation.

Status Date: May 11, 2007

* Indicates update from previous summary.
FORMATION—LA MIRADA USD (CURRENTLY LIES WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE NORWALK – LA MIRADA USD)

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

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

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

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

* Indicates update from previous summary.
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

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

• None

Formation Proposals/Last Activity Date

• None

Trustee Areas and Governing Board Size/Last Activity Date

• None

* Indicates update from previous summary.