

**SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
SAN DIEGO COUNTY COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION**

Minutes of the Special Meeting March 20, 2014 – 6:00 p.m.
Sweetwater Administration Center – Board Room
1130 Fifth Avenue
Chula Vista, CA 91911

I. OPENING PROVISIONS

- A. Call to Order and Roll Call – 6:00 P.M.

Members Present: Anderson, Hartley, Jones, Neylon, Robinson
Acting Secretary: Duzyk
Recording Secretary: Bowers

- B. Pledge Of Allegiance To The Flag

- C. Approval Of Agenda

MSC (Anderson/Jones) to approve the agenda. The motion passed by unanimous vote (5-0).

- D. Review Of Guidelines For Public Hearing

President Hartley welcomed the audience and read the guidelines that included procedures to be followed for the public hearing portion of the meeting. A Spanish-speaking translator (Ana Gomezgil-Hirsch) was introduced to the audience to assist anyone needing English/Spanish interpretation. Also present were sign language interpreters Hans Ferguson and Abel Cosentino.

- E. Collect Public Speaker And Comment Cards

Public speaker cards and comment cards were collected at this time and throughout the meeting.

II. CONVENE THE MEETING OF THE COUNTY COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION

- A. Open the Public Hearing on Draft Trustee Area Plans to be Used for the Election of the Governing Board of the Sweetwater Union High School District

Chairwoman Hartley opened the public hearing. San Diego County Office of Education's Assistant Superintendent of Business Services, Lora Duzyk, provided opening comments and recapped the community outreach efforts used to inform as many people as possible about the public hearings to encourage members of the Sweetwater community to express their opinions on the change in election system and all of the related issues. Outreach efforts included: (1) notices of public hearing published in the Union Tribune, the Chula Vista Star News, and LaPrensa newspapers; (2) printed notices posted at Sweetwater school sites and the district office, as well as on the Sweetwater District and San Diego County Board of Education websites; (3) notifications sent to the four feeder districts to inform superintendents and governing board members, and for posting on websites and at school sites; (4) a website www.sdcoe.net/sweetwaterupdates that was established specifically to provide information on the proposed change in the district's election system with draft trustee area plans; (5) a prepared auto-call/connectEd message in English and Spanish;

(6) Emails regarding tonight's public hearing sent to the Sweetwater superintendent, superintendents of the feeder districts, and 29 elected officials. All emails included documents that the recipients were encouraged to use to inform their constituents and others in the community.

Ms. Duzyk then discussed the proposal to change the election system for governing board members of the Sweetwater Union High School District from a trustee-at-large system to a by-trustee-area system that was approved by the County Committee at a regular meeting held on February 12, 2014. Under the proposed by-trustee-area system, the district would be divided into geographic areas, and one member residing in each trustee area would be elected by the registered voters in that area.

The Education Code requires that a proposal to change a district's election system must be submitted to the voters at the next election for governing board members, which, in this case, is November 2014. If voters approve the measure, the trustee areas would be used for the election of the district's governing board beginning with the November 2016 election, and the change would be complete at the 2018 election. An alternative to this timeline is that the State Board of Education has the authority to waive the requirement for an election. If a request for a waiver of election is approved by the State Board, no election on the proposal would be required, and the system of electing by trustee areas would be implemented beginning with the November 2014 election and would be completed in November 2016.

In order to submit a request for a waiver of election, the State Board requires that a public hearing be held to determine the level of support in the district. The State Board also requires that various groups in the district be consulted to determine their positions on the waiver request. Public hearings in the Sweetwater District were held on February 27, 2014 and March 6, 2014 to receive input on the waiver request. Public support was overwhelmingly in support of the waiver request. District bargaining units, advisory councils and school site councils were all contacted, as required by the State Board, and they, too, expressed their support of the waiver request. At its regular meeting on March 12, 2014, the County Board voted unanimously to submit a request for a waiver of election to the State Board of Education. It is expected that the State Board will consider the request at its May (7-8) meeting.

Approval of a proposal that creates trustee areas in the district requires that a plan be developed to establish the boundaries of those trustee areas. At a properly noticed public hearing held in the Sweetwater District on February 27, 2014, the public had an opportunity to express their views on what factors should be considered in establishing boundaries of the trustee areas. After considering public input (6 speakers; 5 comment cards), the County Committee adopted the final list of legal criteria and considerations to be used for drawing trustee areas. The County Committee engaged a demographic firm, National Demographics Corporation (NDC), to develop proposed trustee area plans. At a duly noticed public hearing held in the Sweetwater District on March 6, 2014, NDC presented three draft trustee area plans. Members of the public and members of the County Committee expressed their preferences and made recommendations for changes to the plans. Some preferences included keeping National City with similar neighborhoods in Chula Vista, respect of the historic community ties between Bonita/Hilltop/National City, and recognition of the division caused by the 805 in Chula Vista. Based on that input, NDC developed two additional draft plans that will be discussed at tonight's meeting.

B. Presentation by National Demographics Corporation

Justin Levitt, Vice President, National Demographics Corporation (NDC) reviewed the final list of legal criteria and other considerations adopted by the County Committee at the February 27, 2014 public hearing. At the March 6, 2014 public hearing, three (3) draft plans were presented for public comment (Plan 1, Plan 2, and Plan 3). Based on preferences and recommendations received from the public and the County Committee, NDC developed two additional plans (Plan 4 and Plan 5) that were reviewed at this meeting. Mr. Levitt also reviewed High School and Middle School attendance areas and elementary school district data as requested at the last meeting. All of the draft plans are available for public review at www.sdcoe.net/sweetwaterupdates.

C. Public Comment – Speakers Called from Cards

Sixteen public speakers addressed the County Committee. Cynthia Roncorani favored Plan 5. Patricia Mendoza favored Plan 1. Kathleen Cheers is not in favor of representation by zip code. Willie Harris favored Plan 5, asking that we compensate for variance and growth. National City Mayor Ron Morrison opposes the process and said their areas were not informed, and feels the process is being rushed. Roberto Rodriguez, President of Sweetwater Education Association's interest was in the waiver of election, but originally liked Plans 1 and 3. Michele Krug favored Plans 4 and 5. Francisco Tamayo favored Plan 5. Alberto Vasquez favored Plans 3 and 5. Olga Soltero favored Plan 2. Jaime Mercado favored Plan 5. Robert Russeli favored Plans 3 and 5. Paula Hall supports this process. Angel Estrada is in favor of the process, but didn't feel informed. Hector Martinez thanked the County Committee for their efforts in this process. Katina Rondeau supports the process. Additionally, four citizens submitted information cards with comments to be considered by the County Committee prior to taking any action on the proposal.

D. Questions from County Committee Members

The Board thanked the community for their interest and participation. At the conclusion of the public hearing, Chairwoman Hartley announced that the public could submit a green "ballot," listing first, second and third choices of preferred plans. The results would be shared with the County Committee for their information. For the record, the averaged ballot results were as follows: 8 votes for Plan 1, 14 votes for Plan 2, 13 votes for Plan 3, 14 votes for Plan 4, and 23 votes for Plan 5. Mrs. Hartley announced that the County Committee will approve a final trustee area plan at a regular meeting to be held on April 9, 2014, in the Joe Rindone Regional Technology Center at the San Diego County Office of Education located at 6401 Linda Vista Rd., San Diego, CA 92111.

E. Close the Public Hearing

There being no further speakers, Member Hartley closed the public hearing.

III. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.