

ORANGE COUNTY COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION  
MINUTES  
Special Meeting and Public Hearing  
April 29, 2020

1. CALL TO ORDER ORANGE COUNTY COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION  

The Special Meeting and Public Hearing of the Orange County Committee on School District Organization was called to order by Chairperson Sheila Benecke at 6:02 p.m., April 29, 2020 via Zoom due to Covid-19.
2. FLAG SALUTE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Ms. Laurie Weiss, OCDE staff member.
3. ROLL CALL  

*Present:*

Sheila Benecke, Chairperson	Jo-Ann Purcell
Marilyn Buchi	Francine Scinto
Meg Cutuli	Suzie Swartz
Jackie Filbeck	Josephine "Joey" Van Camp
Karin Freeman	Virginia Wilson
Kathryn Moffat	

*Absent:*  
None
4. ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA

Motion by Joey Van Camp, seconded by Suzy Swartz, and carried by a unanimous roll call vote of all members present to adopt the agenda as presented.
5. OATH OF OFFICE

Chairperson Benecke administered the Oath of Office to Virginia Wilson.
6. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Motion by Karin Freeman, seconded by Suzie Swartz, and approved by a unanimous roll call vote of all members present to approve the County Committee minutes of the March 4, 2020 meeting as presented.
7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairperson Benecke asked if there was any public comment. Ms. Weiss explained the opportunity the public was given to submit a public comment card by April 28<sup>th</sup> at 4:00pm and that she did not receive any comment cards. Mrs. Ruth Brewda, Legal Counsel for the County Committee asked if we have any members of the public present via Zoom or with representatives from the school district. Los Alamitos Unified School District Superintendent, Andrew Pulver, Ed.D, noted that he was aware that there were at least two members of the public were present. Chairperson Benecke explained the opportunities available for public comment.

## 8. NEW BUSINESS

### A. Staff Report

Chairperson Benecke asked Mr. Dean West to provide a staff report.

Mr. West reported that the purpose of the meeting is to conduct a public hearing, on the Los Alamitos Unified School District's proposal to establish trustee areas and change the method of election to a by-trustee area election process, in accordance with Education Code requirements and the County Committee Bylaws. Education Code Section 5019 requires that the County Committee call and conduct at least one hearing in the District. Due to COVID-19, the Orange County Committee on School District Organization is conducting the public hearing in Los Alamitos Unified School District via teleconferencing and Zoom pursuant to Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-29-20, which suspends certain requirements of the Ralph M. Brown Act, in order to protect public health.

At the conclusion of the public hearing, the County Committee must either approve or disapprove the District's proposal.

Mr. West explained that should the County Committee approve the District's proposal to establish trustee areas and change the method of election to a by-trustee area election process, and the State Board of Education grants a waiver of the election requirements, as requested by the District, the District would forgo the required election, and move forward with the by-trustee area method of election at the next general election for governing board members in November 2020.

Mr. West indicated that the Education Code does not provide specific criteria to apply in determining whether to approve or disapprove the District's proposal to establish trustee areas, resulting in broad discretion by the County Committee. The role of the County Committee is to approve or disapprove the District's proposed by-trustee area map and the change to a by-trustee area election process. The County Committee cannot make changes to the District's proposed plan.

### B. Public Hearing

Chairperson Benecke explained the format of the hearing as set forth in the County Committee Bylaws.

Chairperson Benecke opened the public hearing at 6:15 p.m. Chairperson Benecke invited the representatives of the Los Alamitos Unified School District to come forward to introduce themselves and begin their presentation.

District representatives present for the public hearing included: Andrew Pulver, Ed.D, Los Alamitos Unified School District Superintendent; Dr. Justin Levitt, Vice President at National Demographics Corporation, and; Ronald D. Wenkart, Partner at Atkinson, Andelson, Loya, Ruud, and Romo.

Dr. Pulver began the presentation with a brief description of the Los Alamitos Unified School District, which serves students in the areas of Los Alamitos, Cypress, Rossmoor, and Seal Beach. The school district serves just under 10,000 students in their six elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. Los Alamitos Unified's motto is igniting unlimited possibilities for students.

Dr. Pulver explained that they took this transition process seriously and thoughtfully. The school district did not receive a demand letter, instead they went into the process willingly and were able to spend about five months beginning in the middle of August and concluding in January. The school district was able to cover every corner of the district and engaged different communities. The school district also engaged Leisure World, which is a retirement community located within the school district boundaries, in the process, but by their own public charter prohibits children from living in the community, and are carved out from having to pay school bond measures for the school district. Dr. Pulver reported that the school district held 36 meetings, 6 public hearings, and drafted 11 different maps. It created booklets, sent out letters, held community outreach meetings, wrote press releases in the Orange County Register and social media and created a website. National Demographics developed a robust online interactive map that was posted on the school district website.

Dr. Levitt explained the districting criteria used based on the 2010 census data. He indicated that they identified a portion in the northern area of the school district, in the city of Los Alamitos, that had more elementary schools in a more diverse area that they decided to keep together in all of the draft maps. Dr. Levitt also described other considerations such as a large Naval Weapons Station in the middle of the school district boundaries and different community college districts. He reviewed the different maps that were drafted and described the feedback they received from the community about the draft maps. Dr. Levitt explained how the Adopted Map – Green 4 kept a 6.8% deviation with a non-white majority in Trustee Area 1. Additionally, Trustee area 4 includes all of College Park East that links with Seal Beach, and includes Parkewood. He also mentioned that in regards to the 2020 elections, Trustee areas 2, 4, and 5 would be up for election and in 2022 Trustee areas 1 and 3 would be up for election.

Dr. Pulver explained that the Adopted Map – Green 4 breaks up Leisure World into four areas so that parents in the community would have a voice. Dr. Pulver indicated that the Board did not protect their incumbency in the adopted maps, and two board members whose term is up in the 2020 election will be in the same trustee area. He also mentioned that the school district has already completed their State Board of Education waiver.

Chairperson Benecke asked if any public comments or rebuttal public comments were received. Ms. Weiss stated she did not receive any public comments or rebuttal comments. Chairperson Benecke then moved on to questions from the County Committee, which she will ask in alphabetical order.

Ms. Marilyn Buchi stated that she thought the school district underwent a very thoughtful map process and asked where the sitting board members were on the map.

Dr. Pulver stated that on the Adopted map Green 4 Trustee area 1 is Marlys Davidson, Trustee Area 2 is vacant, Trustee Area 3 is Diane Hill and David Boyer, Trustee Area 4 is vacant, and Trustee Area 5 is Meg Cutuli and Mrs. Russell. Boyer will not be able to seek re-election when his term is complete as Hill's is finishing out two of her four year term. In Trustee Area 5, both Cutuli and Russell's term is up in 2020. Russell has stated she will not seek re-election.

Ms. Meg Cutuli mentioned that she was supportive of this, and it is reflective of what their community wants. They had a lot of community input and it was important for the school district to break up Leisure World. The map has each area connected with more than one school.

Ms. Jackie Filbeck stated she agreed with Meg that the map balanced the school district.

Ms. Karin Freeman asked about the perimeters of Leisure World. Dr. Levitt and Dr. Pulver answered that they are using the roads that currently exist in Leisure World and do not divide buildings or properties. Ms. Freeman complimented the school district on their extensive outreach.

Ms. Kathryn Moffat stated her questions were answered by the question asked by Karin Freeman. She thanked Meg also for her explanations of Map 3 and 4.

Ms. Francine Scinto said they did a great job making sure that each elementary school has more than one board member. Ms. Scinto appreciated that the school district did not have to spend \$30,000 in response to a demand letter.

Ms. Jo-Ann Purcell indicated that she trusted Meg Cutuli's support of the map because Ms. Cutuli was familiar with the process and area.

Ms. Suzie Swartz stated that she knows it was not easy to come up with these maps especially with the quirks of geography that included Leisure World and the military base. She asked what is the range of deviation in some of the

other map areas. Dr. Pulver said the Orange map had the highest level of deviation. Dr. Levitt said they showed a deviation from 1.5% in the Purple map all the way up to 9.5%.

Ms. Suzie Swartz asked if they are expecting any major population shifts based on the 2020 Census. Dr. Pulver said they do not anticipate a lot of changes, it just depends on how the military is going to count the people on the base. Dr. Levitt agreed with Dr. Pulver in that the major question is how the military will count the base.

Ms. Joey Van Camp responded that all of her questions have been answered and complimented the school district on an amazing job with the 36 meetings. She asked if she was reading it correctly that the majority of non-White population are in Area 1 so they are together and asked if it is a blend of Asian and Hispanic populations. Dr. Levitt said it includes the most Latino neighborhood in old town Los Alamitos, the most heavily Asian population in Cypress, and the most diverse neighborhood overall in kind of the south end of Los Alamitos.

Ms. Virginia Wilson stated she was happy to be here. She attended many of the meetings before she had major surgery. She said the school board was very open to the old board members being involved and that she was very proud and commends the direction they took.

Chairperson Benecke closed the public hearing at 6:49 pm.

C. Vote to Approve/Disapprove the Proposal of the Los Alamitos Unified School District

Chairperson Benecke asked for a motion. Virginia Wilson moved to adopt a resolution. Suzie Swartz seconded and read the resolution approving the proposal of the Los Alamitos Unified School District establishing “the Green 4 Map” and changing the method of election to a by-trustee area election process, and that this action shall not be deemed to constitute an order of election if the State Board of Education grants the District’s waiver request. The motion was moved by Virginia Wilson and seconded by Suzie Swartz. There was a roll call vote and the motion was approved 11-0.

9. NEXT MEETING

Chairperson Benecke reported that no meetings are currently scheduled for the County Committee.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business Chairperson Benecke requested to adjourn

the meeting. The motion was moved by Karin Freeman, seconded by Francine Scinto and approved unanimously by a roll call. The meeting was adjourned at 6:52 p.m.