

ORANGE COUNTY COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION
MINUTES
Annual Organizational Meeting
November 13, 2019

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

The Annual Organizational Meeting of the Orange County Committee on School District Organization was called to order by Chairperson Sheila Benecke at 6:30 p.m., November 13, 2019 in the Board Room of the Orange County Department of Education, 200 Kalmus Drive, Costa Mesa, California, 92626.

2. FLAG SALUTE The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Karin Freeman.

3. ROLL CALL Chairperson Benecke requested Laurie Weiss to take roll.

Present:

Sheila Benecke, Chairperson	Marilyn Buchi
Meg Cutuli	Karin Freeman, Vice-Chairperson
Kathy Moffat	Francine Scinto
Suzie Swartz	

Absent:

Jo-Ann Purcell	Robert Singer
Josephine "Joey" Van Camp	Virginia Wilson

4. ADOPTION OF AGENDA Motion by Karin Freeman, seconded by Suzie Swartz, and carried by unanimous vote of all members present to adopt the agenda as presented.

5. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES Motion by Kathy Moffat, seconded by Meg Cutuli, and carried by unanimous vote of all members present, approving the County Committee minutes of the November 7, 2018 meeting.

Chairperson Benecke noted that no members of the public were present for public comment.

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. Annual Organizational Meeting

1. Chairperson Benecke asked Mr. Chris Lombardo, Secretary to the County Committee, to report on the results from the Nominating Committee meeting.

Mr. Lombardo reported that on Wednesday, October 30, 2019, the Nominating Committee met for the annual County Committee elections. Elections were held for the 2nd, 3rd, and 5th Supervisorial member seats. Nominating Committee Members were given the option to vote via absentee

or traditional paper ballot. In all, 22 ballots were cast, 16 ballots were cast via absentee, and 6 ballots were cast in-person.

Mr. Lombardo congratulated the re-elected members:

- Virginia Wilson representing the 2nd Supervisorial District
- Karin Freeman representing the 3rd Supervisorial District
- Suzie Swartz representing the 5th Supervisorial District

2. Chairperson Benecke administered the oath of office to re-elected members who were present: Karin Freeman and Suzie Swartz. Chairperson Benecke congratulated the re-elected members.
3. Mr. Lombardo sought nominations for the position of Chairperson. A nomination was made by Suzie Swartz for Sheila Benecke to continue to serve as Chairperson, seconded by Karin Freeman, and carried by unanimous vote of all members present.

Chairperson Benecke then conducted the election for Vice-Chairperson. A nomination was made by Kathy Moffat for Karin Freeman to continue as Vice-Chairperson, seconded by Suzie Swartz, and carried by unanimous vote of all members present.

7. OLD BUSINESS Chairperson Benecke asked Mr. Lombardo to give the County Committee an update on the old business.

A. Update on District Elections By-Trustee Area

Mr. Lombardo provided each County Committee member a document entitled "Orange County Method of Voting for District Governing Boards," which lists all Orange County K-12 school districts, community college districts, and the County Board of Education, as well as the method of election. Mr. Lombardo stated that currently, fifteen K-12 school districts utilize the by-trustee area method of election, as do three of the four community college districts. Orange Unified School District and South Orange County Community College District have trustee areas and board members are elected at-large.

B. Update on Transfer of Territory from the Orange Unified School District to the Tustin Unified School District (Panorama Heights II): Orange Unified School District Appeal

Mr. Lombardo reported that he, Ruth Brewda, and Laurie Weiss attended the Secretaries on School District Organization Summit in October. At that summit, Larry Shirey, representative from the California Board of Education, indicated that there are four other appeals ahead of the Orange USD appeal. It is estimated that the Panorama Heights II appeal will be heard in approximately two years.

County Committee members asked how often the State Board meets and how do they prioritize items to be heard. Mr. Lombardo explained that the State Board meets approximately every two months, and that matters are generally heard in the order that they are received. However, there were four other items that were received prior to the appeal from Orange Unified and the State Board will prioritize other matters such as waiver requests.

8. DISCUSSION ITEMS Chairperson Benecke asked Mr. Lombardo to give an update on the Discussion Items.

A. Saddleback Valley Unified School District's anticipated proposal to establish trustee areas and change to a by-trustee area method of election

Mr. Lombardo reported that on September 12, 2019, the Saddleback Valley Unified School District adopted a resolution to initiate a transition to a by-trustee area election system beginning with the November 2020 governing board election. Based on the District's timeline, their final public hearing will be on December 12, 2019. It is anticipated that a formal proposal will be submitted to the County Committee in January 2020.

County Committee member, Suzie Swartz, asked if she was allowed to participate in that discussion given her position as a board member for the Saddleback Valley Unified School District. Mr. Lombardo confirmed that she may simultaneously serve as a member of the county committee.

B. Los Alamitos Unified School District's anticipated proposal to establish trustee areas and change to a by-trustee area method of election

Mr. Lombardo reported that on December 12, 2017, the Los Alamitos Unified School District adopted a resolution to initiate a transition to a by-trustee area election system beginning with the November 2020 governing board election. Based on the District's timeline, their final public hearing will be in January or February 2020. It is anticipated that a formal proposal will be submitted to the County Committee in February or March 2020.

C. Huntington Beach City School District's anticipated proposal to establish trustee areas and change to a by-trustee area method of election

Mr. Lombardo reported stated that in July, the Huntington Beach City School District adopted a resolution to initiate a transition to a by-trustee area election system commencing with the November 2020 governing board election. Based on the District's timeline, their final public hearing will be in January 2020. It is anticipated that a formal proposal will be submitted to the County Committee in February or March 2020.

D. Brea Olinda Unified School District’s anticipated proposal to establish trustee areas and change to a by-trustee area method of election

Mr. Lombardo reported that the Brea Olinda Unified School District’s website indicates that, in May 2019, the District adopted a resolution to initiate a transition to a by-trustee area election system commencing with the November 2020 governing board election. Based on information from the District’s website, their final public hearing may be held by December 2019. It is anticipated that a formal proposal will be submitted to the County Committee in December 2019 or January 2020.

County Committee member, Meg Cutuli, inquired about the anticipated number of County Committee meetings that will be held. Mr. Lombardo responded that there will likely be at least four meetings at the beginning of 2020. Chairperson Benecke asked what the timeline was for submitting changes to school district election methods and trustee areas for the November 2020 election. Mr. Lombardo indicated that the Registrar of Voters would need to receive the maps by the first week of July. Chairperson Benecke stated that the County Committee would have six months to hold hearings on the school districts’ resolutions. Mr. Lombardo indicated that the County Committee was similarly occupied in 2016. Meg Cutuli commented that the school districts would also need the State Board of Education to waive the requirement that by-trustee area election methods be approved at a districtwide election. Mr. Lombardo explained that the County Committee may include language about the County Committee’s approval being contingent upon a waiver approval.

E. Anticipated petition to initiate transfer of territory from Saddleback Valley Unified School District to the Irvine Unified School District

Mr. Lombardo reported that on November 1, 2019, County Committee staff met with a group of people who were interested in initiating a petition for a transfer of territory from Saddleback Valley Unified School District to Irvine Unified School District. The property is located in the Great Park area, specifically the former Marine Corp Air Station El Toro. The representatives for the potential petition said they would likely submit a formal petition after January 2020.

9. PRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

10. NEXT MEETING

Chairperson Benecke reported that there are no meetings scheduled at this time. However, it is anticipated that several districts will be transitioning to

the by-trustee area method of election, and meetings will likely be scheduled beginning in January 2020.

County Committee member, Kathy Moffat asked if meetings will be scheduled on the second Wednesday of the month. Chairperson Benecke explained that they are scheduled after the County Committee receives a petition or information from school districts. Mr. Lombardo indicated that County Committee staff will attempt to schedule meetings on Wednesdays, but may need to schedule meetings on other days of the week depending on the timeline of requests received.

11. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business Chairperson Benecke requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was moved by Karin Freeman, seconded by Suzie Swartz, and unanimously approved by all members present. The meeting was adjourned at 6:53 p.m.