

**VENTURA COUNTY COMMITTEE
ON SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION**

JULY 5, 2005 MEETING

*Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Office – Conejo Room
5189 Verdugo Way, Camarillo, CA*

1. **Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

The meeting was called to order by Doyleenne Johnson, Member-at-Large and Chairperson of the Ventura County Committee on School District Organization (VCCSDO), at 6:02 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Leo Molitor.

2. **Roll Call of Committee Members**

Self-introductions were made by the following members of the Ventura County Committee on School District Organization in attendance:

*Judy Bysshe, representing Supervisorial District #1
Leo Molitor, representing Supervisorial District #1
Jan Iceland, representing Supervisorial District #2
Janet Lindgren, representing Supervisorial District #3
Tom Baldwin, representing Supervisorial District #4
Al Jacobs, representing Supervisorial District #4
John McGarry, representing Supervisorial District #5
Barbara Vollmert, representing Supervisorial District #5
Doyleenne Johnson, Member-at-Large*

Staff:

*Stan Mantooh, Secretary to the VCCSDO; and Associate Superintendent,
Administrative Services, Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Office
Sandy Wade, Administrative Assistant to Stan Mantooh – (recorder)*

3. **Approval of Agenda**

It was moved by Janet Lindgren to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Jan Iceland and carried by a unanimous vote.

4. **Public Comments** - *(Two minutes per speaker, with a maximum time limit of 20 minutes allocated)*

The following individuals spoke on the proposed unification to form a new Camarillo Unified School District:

*Sandy Berg, Board of Trustees of the Pleasant Valley School District
Sol Chooljian, Camarillo - (written remarks submitted)
Tom Dase, Superintendent, Pleasant Valley School District - (written remarks submitted)*

Sol Chooljian, Camarillo - (written remarks submitted)

Tom Dase, Superintendent, Pleasant Valley School District - (written remarks submitted)

Patty Lerner, Camarillo

D. Val Rains, Camarillo - (written remarks submitted)

Tom Griffin, Sacramento, General Counsel for Oxnard Union High School District

John Alamillo, Board of Trustees of the Pleasant Valley School District

Shawn Megli, Camarillo

5. **Approval of Minutes of the May 17, 2005 County Committee Meeting**

It was moved by Mrs. Lindgren to approve the minutes of the May 17, 2005 County Committee Meeting. The motion was seconded by John McGarry and carried by a unanimous vote.

6. **Informational Update from AB 780 Unification Subcommittee**

The three members of the AB 780 Unification Subcommittee, Jan Iceland, Leo Molitor and Doyleenne Johnson, provided their perspective on the input received from the Pleasant Valley, Somis Union, and Oxnard Union High School Districts at the two subcommittee meetings held on June 7, 2005 and June 22, 2005. Jan Iceland's observations included that there is some area of agreement between both PVSD and OUHSD. Leo Molitor's observations of both the subcommittee meetings with the respective school districts indicated that all three school districts were cooperating and interested. Areas were found that could cause conflicts in the future, but Mr. Molitor felt that the meetings were worthwhile and the meeting minutes will ascertain that. Doyleenne Johnson found the meetings to be very honest and forthright. The two areas that PVSD and OUHSD did not come to agreement on included racial balance and fiscal impact, which will have to be looked at in depth. Overall, the meetings were very informative.

Janet Lindgren commented on the June 22, 2005 Subcommittee Meeting Minutes - Page 7, last sentence of the first paragraph. The minutes indicated that OUHSD has never had a desegregation plan in the district. Mrs. Lindgren pointed out that her history with the Oxnard Union High School District as a former Board of Trustees dates back farther than that of the current administration. In 1978, at the request of the State Board of Education, OUHSD conducted a study to determine whether the school district had possible areas of segregation. A committee was appointed by OUHSD to study the issue. The study determined that Channel Islands and Oxnard High Schools had the possibility of being segregated. The proposal which was made to the OUHSD Board and approved by a majority of the Board was that the school attendance boundaries be changed and shifted around the four high schools of Rio Mesa, Oxnard, Channel Islands and Hueneme. OUHSD Board's decision was not to include Camarillo High School in the boundary changes due to the fact that Camarillo High School was too remote from the other high schools to participate in busing. Some parents were unhappy with the Board's decision and appealed to the Superior Court, which, in turn, agreed with the decision of OUHSD. The parents then appealed to the State Court of Appeal, who overturned the decision of OUHSD and of the Superior Court Judge. OUHSD then appealed to the California State

Supreme Court, which determined that the desegregation plan that was originally presented by OUHSD should be approved and implemented. (Please see attached documentation for Committee Members and interested parties which was provided by Mrs. Lindgren.)

Mr. McGarry asked the County Committee Secretary to explain what a “Thompson-style” unification entails. Mr. Mantooth stated that a “Thompson-style” unification would allow for an existing school district which is a feeder elementary school district to a high school district to retain its own governance structure and be included as part of a new unified school district, retain its own governance structure, and have the ability to feed high school students to the new district. This item was tabled and further discussed under agenda item #7, Area of the Territory to be Reorganized.

7. **Information/Action on Alternatives for Required Components of the Tentative Recommendation on the Petition for Unification for a Proposed Camarillo Unified School District**

Mr. Mantooth stated that, in accordance with Education Code Section 35721(d), it is necessary for the County Committee to develop a Tentative Recommendation on the petition prior to conducting the required Public Hearing on the petition. Copies of Education Code Section 35721 and Alternatives for Required Components of the Tentative Recommendation to Create a New Camarillo Unified School District Under the Provisions of Assembly Bill 780 were distributed for the information of the members. The three basic components of the Tentative Recommendation include: (1) Area of the Territory to be Reorganized; (2) Area of Election; and (3) Trustees and Trustee Areas. Mr. Mantooth reiterated that the list includes Tentative Recommendations, all of which can be modified or changed by the County Committee prior to its final decision, including possibly incorporating other elements into the petition.

a. **Area of the Territory to be Reorganized:**

Mr. Mantooth stated that four alternatives have been listed for the County Committee to consider under the area of the territory to be reorganized, and explained the four alternatives as presented.

Ms. Johnson informed the members that at the previous Subcommittee Meetings, Mary McKee, Superintendent/Principal of Somis Union School District, stated that Somis wishes to continue to send their graduating students to Camarillo High School; and the only way that can be guaranteed is through a “Thompson-style” unification. Because the high school acreage is located in the Somis School District, if the “Thompson-style” unification was not put into place, Somis would be under Oxnard Union High School District’s jurisdiction and OUHSD would have the authority to determine where the Somis students would be placed. Even if interdistrict transfers were requested for Somis students to attend Camarillo High School, there would be no guarantee that those interdistrict transfer requests would be honored.

Mr. Mantooth stated that County Committee counsel has been asked the question as to whether additional conditions can be added to the petition. One of the conditions

could be the placement of Somis students which would be binding on the newly-formed school district; but we are currently unsure of what counsel's opinion is concerning this issue. At the request of Ms. Johnson, Mary McKee came forward to give Somis School District's position on this issue. Dr. McKee said that it has been correctly stated that Somis's primary concern is to maintain their district's autonomy. The district also has an interest in continuing the tradition of having their graduating students attend Camarillo High School. Dr. McKee further stated that when approached several months ago with information about the "Thompson-style" unification, it appeared to be the solution to the issue. A question posed by the Somis Union School District is because the original purpose of the "Thompson-style" unification was for a high school district to pull in a number of feeder elementary school districts rather than one elementary school district pulling in another elementary school district, would the "Thompson-style" unification apply in this case, or would there be any obstacle that once a district was in that it couldn't get out? Somis has obtained an additional legal opinion from their counsel, and they have three different opinions. If Somis is secure in the position that the district would get everything they want; i.e., to become an elementary feeder district to the new unified school district and at the same time maintain its current governance structure, the district would be very comfortable with a "Thompson-style" unification, because it would meet the needs of the Somis School District. Dr. McKee further stated that the bottom line is that they want to take care of their students first.

After some discussion, Mr. Molitor stated that at this time he favors item #3 under the Area of the Territory to be Reorganized because it best meets the needs of Somis Union School District and brings the proposed high school site within the new Camarillo Unified School District. In light of the above, it was moved by Mr. Molitor to approve item #3 to reconfigure the boundaries of the territory to be reorganized to include the entire Pleasant Valley and Somis School Districts, and effect the unification as a "Thompson-style" unification; which allows Somis to become an elementary feeder district to the new unified school district and at the same time maintain its current governance structure. The motion was seconded by Dr. Jacobs. Ms. Iceland asked Mr. Molitor's permission to amend his motion to make it dependent upon the legal opinion that the "Thompson-style" unification would be permitted. The Chairperson stated that this does not have to be done since this is a Tentative Recommendation, and the County Committee can change it as soon as we receive the legal opinion. Ms. Iceland further stated that she would feel more comfortable if the County Committee's intent was shown. Mr. Mantooth reiterated that Mr. Molitor made it clear about how we would change the Tentative Recommendation if it were determined that there was an obstacle with effecting a "Thompson-style" unification. Mr. Molitor stated that he has no objection of having it in writing. Mr. Mantooth stated that if that is the case, he will need to consult with others to ascertain whether that qualifies as a viable component of the Tentative Recommendation. Dr. Jacobs questioned if it would also mean that the consultant couldn't go forward until the County Committee received the recommendation. Mr. Mantooth answered that he didn't know the answer to that question. Ms. Iceland then withdrew her request for an amended motion. Mr. Mantooth stated that it is clear in the record and that we recognize that if there is a flaw in this reasoning that the

County Committee would want to reconsider its decision. Mr. Mantooth further stated that he is in contact with the consultant on a regular basis; and stated that once it is determined in which direction this is going, he will notify the consultant accordingly so that the consultant may change his approach if necessary.

There being no further discussion on this issue, the Chairperson called for a roll call vote on the original motion made by Mr. Molitor and seconded by Dr. Jacobs to approve option #3 of the Area of the Territory to be Reorganized. The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 8 (Bysshe, Molitor, Iceland, Baldwin, Jacobs, McGarry, Vollmert, Johnson)
Noes: 1 (Lindgren)

b. Area of Election:

Discussion ensued regarding the five alternatives for the area of election. It was moved by Ms. Vollmert to confine the area of election to the registered voters within the current boundaries of the Pleasant Valley, Somis and Mesa School Districts, as well as the remaining student attendance area for Rio Mesa High School not included in the three districts cited above. The motion was seconded by Tom Baldwin and carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 6 (Iceland, Baldwin, Jacobs, McGarry, Vollmert, Johnson)
Noes: 3 (Lindgren, Molitor, Bysshe)

c. Trustees and Trustee Areas:

The Chairperson read the four alternatives for Trustees and Trustee Areas. It was moved by Ms. Lindgren to approve item #1 to provide that the reorganized school district have a Board comprised of five members elected at large. The motion was seconded by Mr. Baldwin and carried by a unanimous vote:

Ayes: 9 (Bysshe, Molitor, Iceland, Lindgren, Baldwin, Jacobs, McGarry, Vollmert, Johnson)
Noes: 0

8. Other

Mr. Baldwin requested that the desegregation plan for Oxnard Union High School District be addressed and researched to determine whether the plan currently exists in the district. Mr. Mantooth stated that he will ask our consultant to answer the question and render his opinion on the matter, which may be incorporated into the study of criteria #4. Doyleenne Johnson addressed the question to Dr. Gary Davis, OUHSD Superintendent, who stated that he is not aware of any desegregation plan currently in place in the district. It was agreed that any information obtained will be shared with the consultant.

9. **Next Meeting Date**

After the County Committee members checked their calendars for their availability to meet, it was agreed that the next meeting will be held on August 15, 2005, ostensibly for the Public Hearing. A second meeting date was also scheduled for September 12, 2005.

Tom Griffin, General Counsel for the Oxnard Union High School District, commented on the scheduling of County Committee Meetings. He stated that one problem the public had in February 2004 with the last petition was that the report came out two days prior to the Committee decision. By that time, it was too late for the County Committee to interact with the consultant for modifications to the report.

Mr. Mantooth stated that Mr. Griffin has a very valid point about sharing of information and having the consultant's report available for interested parties to digest and to present their reactions on the report in advance of the Committee's decision. The Secretary further pointed out that in the traditional process, there is a 120-day timeframe allowed between holding the required Public Hearing and the County Committee rendering their final decision.

10. **Adjournment**

There being no further business, it was moved by Mr. Jacobs that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Lindgren. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

By: _____

Stan Mantooth
Secretary to the County Committee on School District Organization
Associate Superintendent, Administrative Services,
Ventura County Superintendent of Schools Office