

## **San Bernardino County Committee on School District Organization Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q. What is the San Bernardino County Committee on School District Organization?**

A. It is a committee created in each county by the California State Legislature and is elected by representatives from local boards of education.

The County Committee studies and makes recommendations in the areas of (a) the organization and reorganization of school districts; (b) changes in school district boundaries; and (c) the number of trustees and the manner by which they are elected. These activities are coordinated by the Secretary to the San Bernardino County Committee on School District Organization.

It is important to note that the County Superintendent of Schools, or his/her designee is not a member of the County Committee, and therefore, has no authority over the decisions of the County Committee and remains neutral on issues under consideration.

**Q. Who serves on the County Committee?**

A. The County Committee consists of 11 members – two representatives from each of the five county supervisorial districts and one member serving at-large. Employees of any county office of education or any school district cannot be members of the County Committee. However, school district or community college district governing board members who are otherwise eligible may simultaneously serve as a member of the County Committee.

Members are elected annually by a voting representative of each of the 33 school district and community college governing boards. The term of office is four years and begins upon election. County Committee members serve without pay.

**Q. How often does the County Committee meet?**

A. The County Committee meets as needed at the offices of the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools located at 670 East Carnegie Drive, San Bernardino. If needed, regular meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month at 6:00pm. Meetings are open to the public and conducted in accordance with the Brown Act.

Some matters that come before the County Committee may require a public hearing to be held. Depending on the nature of the matter, the public hearing may be required to be held in the district(s) affected by the proposed reorganization matter. Special meetings may also be called by the chairperson or a quorum of the County Committee. A majority of the members of the County Committee constitutes a quorum.

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**Q. What is “school district reorganization”?**

A. The reorganization of a school district is one of the major responsibilities of the County Committee. An action to reorganize school districts can refer to any one of the following:

- Transfer of territory between/among school districts
- School district unification or deunification
- Dissolution or lapsation of a school district
- Annexation of all or part of one district to another district
- Establishment/abolishment of trustee areas and increase/decrease in the number of trustees
- Formation of new districts of all types from territory of existing districts

**Q. How is a reorganization action initiated?**

A. Districts may be reorganized by transfers of territory, unifications, unionizations, or annexations.

- Unification is the formation of a new K-12 district from elementary or high school districts.
- Unionization is the formation of a new district of the same level – elementary, high school, or unified.
- Annexation is when one district is merged into another district that continues to operate. (E.C. 35700-35785)

Action to consider reorganization, the transfer of territory, the altering of trustee areas, or the size of school boards may be initiated by a citizen's petition, a joint request of two school district governing boards, a petition from a city council, county board of supervisors, or local agency formation commission; or a petition from a landowner, or by a county committee on school district organization.

**Q. What is the County Committee’s role in relation to the number of trustees or governing board members and the manner by which they are elected?**

A. Except in a school district governed by a board of education provided for in the charter of a city, the County Committee has the power to establish or abolish trustee areas; rearrange the boundaries of trustee areas; increase or decrease the number of members of the governing board of a school district and adopt an alternative method of electing governing board members.

Most recently, school districts have been going through the process of changing their trustee election methods in order to comply with the California Voting Rights Act. Requests for such an action may be initiated by a petition of the qualified electors in a district, or a resolution by the governing board of a school district, or by a county committee. This process requires the school district to go through a lengthy process which concludes with submission to the County Committee which then approves or disapproves the proposal.

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**Q. Where can I get additional information about County Committees on School District Organization?**

A. The California Department of Education (CDE) has published comprehensive *Handbook on School District Organization* which can be accessed by visiting <https://www.cde.ca.gov/re/lr/do/>.

For more information, please contact:

county.committee@sbcoss.net