

**COUNTY COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION  
(COUNTY COMMITTEE)**

**KEY POINTS**

**Overarching Purpose:**

The County Committee plays a major role in the review and approval of proposals to change school district organization in the county. It formulates plans, responds to petitions, conducts public hearings, develops and releases information, and analyses proposals throughout the approval process of any reorganizational plan.

**School District Reorganization** can refer to any one of the following:

1. Transfer of territory between/among school districts;
2. School district unification or de-unification;
3. Dissolution or lapsation of a school district;
4. Annexation of all or part of one district to another district;
5. Establishment/abolishment of trustee areas and increase/decrease in the number of trustees; and
6. Formation of new districts of all types from territory of existing districts.

**County Committee General Information:**

1. It is an 11 member committee (two from each of the five county **supervisory** districts and one member serving at-large)
2. The term of office is two or four years and **begins upon selection**.
3. The members are elected by **school district board representatives** from each of the 11 districts in the county.
4. The meeting schedule, determined by the County Committee, can be monthly, quarterly or once a year.
5. The meetings are subject to the provisions of the Brown Act.
6. The members of the County Committee must serve without pay, but must be reimbursed for their actual and necessary travel expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

**Authority of the County Committee:**

1. Any proposal to reorganize a school district must be considered by the County Committee for public hearing and decision or recommendation.
2. Any action taken by the County Committee may be appealed to the State Board of Education (SBE).

## **PROCESSES FOR PROPOSALS TO THE COUNTY COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION**

### **Process for Proposing a Transfer of Territory**

An action to transfer territory from one school district to another is initiated by the submission of a valid petition to the County Committee. The petition may be initiated by: (1) at least 25 percent of the registered voters residing in the area proposed for transfer (or by ten percent of the registered voters of the entire school district); (2) the owner of the property if it is uninhabited; (3) a majority of the members of the governing boards of each affected district; or (4) a resolution approved by a majority of the members of a city council, county board of supervisors, governing body of a special district, or local agency formation commission that has jurisdiction over all or a portion of the school district. The Secretary to the County Committee assists petitioners in securing the appropriate documentation.

After the County Committee has conducted a required public hearing or hearings and studied the petition, it prepares findings in a report based on requirements as specified in the Education Code, and makes a determination to approve/ disapprove the proposal. If the County Committee disapproves the proposal, the process ends. If the County Committee approves the proposal, an election is held on the proposal in the territory selected by the County Committee. If the proposal passes at the election, the transfer action is implemented. If the proposal is initiated by a majority of the governing board of each affected district and the territory proposed for transfer is less than ten percent of the territory of the transferring district, the proposal does not go to election. Any action taken by the County Committee may be appealed to the State Board of Education (SBE).

### **Process for Proposing an Action for Unification**

Like a transfer of territory, an action to unify a school district(s) is initiated by the submission to the County Committee of a petition that has been determined to be sufficient and signed as required by law. The signature requirements are the same as those for a transfer of territory. After the County Committee has studied the proposal and held hearings on the matter in each of the affected school districts, it prepares a series of findings, a recommendation, and a unification plan for submission to the SBE. The SBE approves or denies the petition and plan. If approved, the proposal goes to an election in territory selected by the SBE. The SBE cannot be bypassed.

### **Process for Proposing an Action to Form a District**

Similar to unification, an action to form a school district is initiated by the submission of a petition that has been determined by the County Committee to be sufficient and signed as required by law. The signature requirements are the same as those for a unification action. After the County Committee has studied the proposal and held hearings on the matter in each of the affected school districts, it prepares a series of findings, a recommendation, and a plan for submission to the SBE. The SBE approves or denies the petition and plan. If approved, the proposal goes to an election in territory selected by the SBE. The SBE cannot be bypassed.

## **PROCESSES FOR PROPOSALS TO THE COUNTY COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION**

### **County Committee's Role in Relation to the Number of Trustees and the Manner by which They are Elected**

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. Any request for such an action may be initiated by the County Committee, a petition of the qualified electors in a district, or a resolution of the governing board of a district. At the conclusion of hearings held within the district, the County Committee approves or disapproves the proposal. Approval constitutes an Order of Election; denial terminates the proposal. If the matter goes to election, the voters determine the final outcome of the proposal.

### **Requirements for a Petition**

To request a petition to reorganize a school or community college district, any citizen or school or community college district must write a letter to the Secretary of the County Committee. The letter should include a statement of what is proposed, the names of the districts affected, a list of the reasons for such proposal, and a map and boundary description of the area involved. The Secretary will provide the format for the petition. The number of signatures required for a valid petition varies depending upon the type of action proposed.