

Hacienda La Puente Unified School District



An Overview of Imposing Board Member Term Limits

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Authority to Impose Limits

- Can Governing Board member term limits be imposed by the Board itself?
 - No
 - Imposing Board member term limits involves two steps.
 - **Education Code § 35107(c)**: “[T]he governing board of a school district may adopt . . . a proposal to limit . . . the number of terms a member of the governing board of the school district may serve ... prospectively only[.]” (Emph. added.)
 - **Education Code § 35107(d)(2)** directs such proposals to the procedures set forth in Chapter 6 of the Elections Code.
 - **Chapter 6 of the Elections Code** lists the County’s standard practice to conduct typical school district elections, including electing Board members and approving school bond measures.

Prospectively Only

- Section 35107 expressly states that the imposition of any term limit acts prospectively only.
- In other words, there is no counting past terms.
- Once imposed, every Board member is deemed to be on their first term.

Public Engagement

- The statutory scheme for imposing term limits does not require public hearings, community meetings, etc.
- Nevertheless, some form of public engagement may be beneficial.
 - E.g., public outreach meetings, email notices, mail notices, and separate public hearings before the Board.
- Primary benefit: the Board's ability to hear how constituents feel about imposing term limits.
- Drawbacks: time and cost.

Cost to the School District

- Estimated cost of for a term limits election: \$301,674.
- Estimated cost for 3 trustee areas up for election: \$213,100.
- Marketing for Term Limits: \$45,000.
 - Compare public engagement costs for establishing the 2020 Board trustee areas at \$62,805.
- Total cost for November 2026 election: \$559,774.

School Districts with Term Limits

- There are 937 school districts in California
- Only 12 or **1%** have term limits
- None of the 12 are adjacent to Hacienda La Puente Unified School District (Not Bassett, Fullerton, Rowland, or West Covina, El Monte, or Whittier)
- City of La Puente does not have term limits or voting districts.

- Potentially new/varied perspectives.
- Increased turnover.
- Efficient mechanism for the exit of ineffective members.
- Board members may not spend years gaining expertise in managerial or technical areas since these are the roles of the Superintendent and staff.

- For Board to provide proper oversight, it has to oversee very complex operations dealing with experienced and long-tenured school administrators, budget, enrollment, school programs, bargaining units, general education, special education, safety, funding, school construction and dealing with State and US Federal Legislators and Officials—all of which take time to master.
- Loss of expertise, institutional knowledge, and insight that can only be gained through experience.
- Loss of relationships with State and US Federal Elected Officials that can only be built over time.
- Impacts Voters' Rights - Removes voters' rights to choose the School Board members they want; empowers those voters who cannot vote for a candidate to weaken their opposition.
- Time and costs required to identify, recruit, and train; find qualified candidates; and build cohesiveness.
- Board may become more Political due to more turnover.

Questions

