

**SIERRA SANDS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Board of Education  
Special Meeting**

**February 6, 2012  
Ridgecrest City Council Chambers  
100 West California Avenue  
www.ssusd.org**

*We, the members of the Board of Education of the Sierra Sands Unified School District, are committed to providing the highest quality education in a safe environment to all K-12 students. We believe the school shares with the family, church, and community the responsibility for developing life-long learners who are responsible, productive*

**A G E N D A**

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

7:00 P.M.

Amy Covert  
Judy Dietrichson  
Bill Farris, Vice President/Clerk  
Tim Johnson, President  
Tom Pearl  
Kurt Rockwell  
Michael Scott

Joanna Rummer, Superintendent

MOMENT OF SILENCE

1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

2. PUBLIC HEARING

2.1 Public Hearing on Proposed Resolution to Decrease the Number of Members of the  
Governing Board from Seven to Five

3. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

3.1 Consideration and Possible Action to Adopt Resolution #22 1112 to Decrease the  
Number of Governing Board Members From Seven to Five for Use at the November  
2012 and Subsequent Governing Board Elections

4. ADJOURNMENT

3. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

3.1 Consideration and Possible Action to Adopt Resolution #22 1112 to Decrease the Number of Governing Board Members From Seven to Five for Use at the November 2012 and Subsequent Governing Board Elections

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Sierra Sands is one of only two of the 47 K-12 school districts in Kern County with a seven-member Board of Trustees. Staff believes the reason that the seven-member Board was established upon unification was to ensure representation from the territories of various former school districts. Trustees are entitled to compensation in the form of meeting stipends, health insurance, and certain travel and conference expense reimbursement.

CURRENT CONSIDERATIONS: Staff is unaware of any current need to maintain a seven-member Board in connection with representation of the former school districts which combined to form the unified District in 1974. A recent review of 2010 Census data reflects that population shifts and changes within the District have been significant since the time of unification.

Several trustees are of the opinion that a decrease in the size of the Board will promote efficiency in Board functions and administrative operations, and will enable the Board to better serve the needs of the District and its students. Staff indicates that significant costs savings could potentially be achieved by decreasing the number of trustees to five, ranging from \$139,134 to \$368,688 over a ten-year period (See Staff Report).

The proposed resolution calls for a reduction in the number of trustees from seven to five. This change is authorized by Education Code section 5019, by resolution of the Board of Trustees approved by the Kern County Committee on School District Organization.

In order to have these changes in place for the 2012 governing Board elections and begin to achieve the savings projected, it would be necessary to request a waiver from the State Board of Education of the requirement to submit these changes to the voters.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: It is estimated the District would save \$139,134 – \$368,688 over a ten-year period by decreasing the number of trustees from seven to five.

SUPERINTENDENT’S RECOMMENDATION: The recommendation is to consider possible action to adopt Resolution # 22 1112 as presented.

**STAFF REPORT ON POSSIBLE REDUCTION IN SIZE  
OF GOVERNING BOARD AND RELATED EXPENSES**

At its January 12 and 23, 2012 meetings, the Board of Trustees requested that staff review and report on the implications of, and procedure for, a reduction in the number of school board seats from seven to five. This report provides some background on the issue, an estimate of potential costs savings, and an outline of the relevant procedures. Staff consulted with legal counsel (Schools Legal Service) in preparing this report.

**A. Background.**

Sierra Sands Unified School District is one of two of the forty-seven K-12 school districts in Kern County with a seven-member Board of Trustees. It appears that the reason that the seven-member board was established upon unification was to ensure representation from the territories of the various former school districts. Staff is not aware of any current need to maintain seven board members in connection with these former school districts. A recent board review of the 2010 Census data shows that the population in various parts of the district has changed significantly, which resulted in recent board action to eliminate “trustee residence areas” as a prerequisite for candidates seeking election to school board offices.

**B. Estimated Cost Savings**

In recent years, the Kern County Grand Jury has repeatedly criticized Kern County school districts in connection with expenses relating to serving on school boards. Staff analysis indicates that significant costs savings could potentially be realized by decreasing the size of the governing board to five members.

It is estimated that the following savings could be achieved over a ten-year period by decreasing the number of school board seats to five:

<b>Expense Components</b>	<b>Estimated Savings 10 Years (2 trustees)</b>
-Meeting Stipends -Health insurance -Travel and conference/other	\$139,134 - \$368,688

The greater figure in the “Estimated Savings” column (\$368,688) is based on potential total expenses if all current trustees took the maximum stipends and health and welfare benefits, and a new five-member board did the same. (Travel expense is included and based on a seven year average.)

Historically and currently, however, some trustees do not accept all offered benefits. Staff ran an analysis based on historical usage, using Fiscal Year 2010-11 as the base year. If the five member board accepted the same level of benefits as the seven member board accepts (based on current expenditure trends), the savings would be \$303,102.

If a new five member board accepted all available benefits (a higher proportionate expenditure level than the current board), the differential between the current level of expenditure with a seven member board and the projected expenditure for the five-member board would be \$139,134.

**C. Other Benefits From Reducing Board Size**

Several members of the Board of Trustees commented at the January 23, 2012, meeting that reducing the size of the board would promote efficiency in board functions and administrative operations in the district, and would help the board better serve the needs of the district and its students.

**D. Procedure for Reducing Board Size**

Education Code section 5019 provides that the district can reduce the number of school board seats from seven to five by resolution of the Board of Trustees. This would then need to be approved by the Kern County Committee on School District Organization. Normally, the decision to make these changes would be submitted to the voters at the next election (November 2012). However, it may be possible to obtain a waiver of this requirement through the State Board of Education so that the changes could be implemented for the 2012 elections. The district could then begin to realize the cost savings described in this report. A waiver application would need to be filed by February 27, 2012, after consulting with district stakeholder groups such as unions, school site councils and district advisory committees.

**CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION:** Significant costs savings could potentially be achieved by decreasing the number of trustees to five, estimated at between \$139,134 and \$368,688 over a ten-year period. Other benefits and efficiencies may also flow from the reduction. The board may, therefore, wish to consider a reduction in the number of trustees from seven to five.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
JOANNA RUMMER, Superintendent

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
ELAINE WUNDERLICH JANSON  
Chief Business Official

**BEFORE THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE  
SIERRA SANDS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

In the Matter of the District's Election System and the Number of its Governing Board Members.

[PROPOSED]  
RESOLUTION NO.#22 1112

A Resolution by the Governing Board to Decrease The Number of Governing Board Members From Seven to Five for Use at the November 2012 and Subsequent Governing Board Elections

**RECITALS**

1. California Education Code sections 5019(a) & (c)(l) authorize the Kern County Committee on School District Organization ("County Committee"), upon application of a school district's governing board, to decrease from seven to five the number of members of the governing board; and

2. The Board of Trustees of the Sierra Sands Unified School District ("School District" or "District") is currently composed of seven members who are elected in "at-large" elections, i.e., elections in which "each governing board member [is] elected by the registered voters of the entire school district," but reside in a trustee area which he or she represents [Education Code section 5030(c)]; and

3. The Board passed Resolution No. 17-1112 on January 23, 2011, to abolish its trustee residence areas and change its election system to one in which each member of the governing Board is elected by the registered voters of the entire District, without regard to the location of the residence of candidates for school Board seats [Education Code section 5030(a)]; and

4. The Board believes that a reduction in the number of Board members may enhance the efficiency of its operations and allow the Board to better serve the needs of the District and its students; and

5. The Board has become concerned about the cost of maintaining a seven-member Board and potential cost savings that could be achieved with a five-member Board, particularly in light of the present condition of the State economy and school district budgets; and

6. After a review of the relevant costs, the Board has determined that significant savings to the District would result from a decrease in the number of governing Board members to five; and

7. The Board held a duly noticed public hearing on the question of decreasing the number of governing Board members to five on February 6, 2012; and

8. In light of the information received to date, the Board believes that the best interests of the District and its students would be served by decreasing the number of governing Board members to five.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** as follows:

A. The above recitals are true and correct.

B. The Board resolves to request that the Kern County Committee on School District Organization decrease the number of its governing board members to five effective with the 2012 governing board elections; provide for two trustees to be elected in 2012, and three trustees to be elected in 2014; and, in accordance with Education Code section 5021 and the interpretation of the California Department of Education, provide that incumbent Board members shall serve out their terms of office and succeeding Board members shall be nominated and elected at-large from the District as provided herein.

C. The Superintendent is authorized and directed to take all actions necessary to permit implementation of these changes at the November 2012 governing Board election, including filing this Resolution with the Kern County Committee on School District Organization for approval, with a courtesy copy to the San Bernardino County Committee on School District Organization.

E. The Superintendent shall consult with legal counsel to resolve all legal issues necessary to give effect to this Resolution.

Resolution #22 1112 (continued)

THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION was adopted upon motion by Trustee \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by Trustee \_\_\_\_\_, at a special meeting held on February 6, 2012, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

DATED: February 6, 2012

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President, Board of Trustees  
Sierra Sands Unified School District

**CERTIFICATION**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, Clerk to the Board of Trustees of the Sierra Sands Unified School District, certify that the foregoing Resolution was regularly introduced, passed, and adopted by the Board of Trustees at its meeting held on February 6, 2012.

DATED: \_\_\_\_\_, 2012

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk, Board of Trustees  
Sierra Sands Unified School District