

PUBLIC HEARING

LAKE COUNTY COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION

JUNE 24, 2015

Upper Lake Union High School

MINUTES

I CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Lake County Committee on School District Organization was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Upper Lake High School, 675 Clover Valley Road, Upper Lake, CA by Board President Patricia Hicks. Board Members Browning, Cooper, Lyon and Ryder were present. Also present were Brock Falkenberg, Superintendent of Schools, and LCOE staff members Janice Bailey and Annie Gall.

II The **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** was led by Board President Hicks. Following the Pledge, the Board Members introduced themselves to the audience.

III APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Dr. Browning, seconded by Mrs. Lyon to approve Agenda of the Public Hearing of the Committee on School District Organization of June 24, 2015.

Aye Browning; Aye Cooper; Aye Hicks; Aye Lyon; Aye Ryder - Motion Carried 5-0

IV THE UNIFICATION PROCESS

Lake County Superintendent of Schools, Brock Falkenberg, reported that Resolutions requesting that the County Committee on School District Organization consider unification have been received from Upper Lake Union Elementary District (on June 5, 2015) and Upper Lake Union High School District (on June 11, 2015), along with a Resolution from Lucerne Elementary School District requesting exclusion from the unification process. Once the District Resolutions were received and a determination made that they were signed as required by law, the resolutions were forwarded to the County Committee on June 17, 2015. The County Committee had 60 days to hold Public Hearings. Notification of the June 24, 2015 Public Hearings were posted on Friday, June 12, 2015 at 17 local schools and businesses, as well as online postings on Facebook and the LCOE website. Mr. Falkenberg thanked Lake County News for publishing the meeting notices and feature articles.

Notification of the unification process was sent to the Local Agency Formation Committee (LAFCO) on June 18, 2015; and it was determined at the June 17, 2015 meeting of the Committee on School District Organization that unification does not constitute a “project” under CEQA guidelines.

Mr. Falkenberg then reviewed the ten criteria that must be considered in the unification process: enrollment; community identity; equitable division of property and facilities; the unification will not promote racial or ethnic discrimination or segregation; no additional cost to the state/taxpayers; sound educational performance; insignificant facilities costs; property values; sound fiscal management; and any other criteria by regulation, such as bonded indebtedness.

Mr. Falkenberg commended the local School Boards and district staffs for their transparency and focus on students as they discussed the possibilities of unification. The County Committee will use the work outlined in the districts' *Feasibility Study* as a basis for their review; and will verify any technical aspects of the report. Mr. Falkenberg noted that the initial report reflected the collaborative spirit of the Upper Lake community.

The County Committee on School District Organization will meet on Wednesday, August 19. If the proposal for unification is approved by the Committee at that time, it will be forwarded to the State Board of Education by September 1, 2015 to be included on their November agenda. Although each of the Upper Lake districts has included language in their Resolutions to waive the election process, it is ultimately up to the State Board of Education to approve/disapprove waiver requests.

V. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Mrs. Valerie Gardner, Superintendent of the Upper Lake Union Elementary School District, thanked the two Boards for taking a serious look at unification. She stated that the discussion is not just about kids in grades K-8; but in grades K-12/16. She urged the County Committee to look at what is the best plan for the student; and to make decisions for the child – not just the grade span. She is hopeful this is the direction of the Committee.

Mr. Pat Iaccino, Superintendent of the Upper Lake Union High School District, thanked Mr. Falkenberg and both school boards for their time and energy. He also thanked the parents for their support.

Mr. Falkenberg shared that the Lucerne Elementary District holds a strong position on exclusion from the unification process at this time, though they were supportive of the Upper Lake districts' efforts. He stated that both Upper Lake districts were also supportive of Lucerne's decision. Mrs. Hicks stated that it is important for the potential new Upper Lake District to keep in academic touch with Lucerne so their students remain on a par with the Upper Lake students.

VI PUBLIC INPUT

Speakers in favor of the unification process included Pat Iaccino, principal of Upper Lake Union High School District and Valerie Gardner, principal of the Upper Lake Union Elementary District. Mrs. Gardner shared she was grateful to both Upper Lake school boards for taking a serious look at unification, stating that in her opinion, unification was "going to be the best for our students." Other speakers in favor of the unification process included Claudine Pedroncelli, Upper Lake High Board member; Keith Austin, Upper Lake High Board president; and parents Melanie Sneathen and Sara Sanchez.

Mr. Falkenberg read a letter from Upper Lake resident Walt Christensen, who expressed his concern over moving forward with unification without knowing the total costs involved. Mrs. Hicks indicated that the Board has considered the loss of \$100,000 per district if unification is deemed a benefit to the children.

V SUMMATION/CLOSING STATEMENTS

Mrs. Hicks commended everyone for their efforts and expressed appreciation for their input.

VI ADJOURNMENT

The motion to adjourn was made by Dr. Cooper and seconded by Mrs. Lyon.

Aye Browning; Aye Cooper; Aye Hicks; Aye Lyon; Aye Ryder - Motion Carried 5-0

The Lake County Committee on School District Organization adjourned at 7:34p.m.

Submitted by,

BROCK FALKENBERG

Secretary to the Lake County Committee on School District Organization