

**SIERRA SANDS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL MEETING  
JANUARY 23, 2012**

**DISTRICT OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM "A"  
113 W. FELSPAR AVE.  
*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 citizens.*

**A G E N D A**

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

6:30 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**

*Welcome to a meeting of the Board of Education. Because we believe you share our concern for the education of the youth of our community, we appreciate and welcome your participation. Copies of the agenda, along with a procedural handout, are available on the wall at the back of the room to assist with your participation in the meeting.*

2. **EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION**

- 2.1 Approval of LEA Program Improvement Year 1 Plan Addendum
- 2.2 Approval of Title III Improvement Plan Year 4

3. **GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**

- 3.1 Review Staff Report Regarding Trustee Residence Areas

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION (Continued)

- 3.2. Public Hearing Regarding Possible Change in Election System to Eliminate Trustee Residence Areas in Light of Population Changes for 2012 and Subsequent Elections
- 3.3 Consideration and Possible Action to Adopt Resolution to Change Election Systems and Abolish Trustee Residence Areas, for Use at the November 2012 and Subsequent Governing Board Elections
- 3.4 Discussion Regarding Possible Reduction in Number of School Board Trustees from Seven to Five

4. ADJOURNMENT

*Any materials required by law to be made available to the public prior to a meeting of the Board of Education of the Sierra Sands Unified School District can be inspected during normal business hours at the district office located at 113 Felspar, Ridgecrest, CA. These materials can also be viewed on the district's internet website at [www.ssusd.org](http://www.ssusd.org).*

*Note: Individuals who require special accommodation, including but not limited to an American sign language interpreter, accessible seating or documentation in accessible formats, should contact the Superintendent's Office at least two days before the meeting date.*

## 2. EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

### 2.1 Approval of LEA Program Improvement Year 1 Plan Addendum

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** The Elementary and Secondary Education Act requires school districts to develop a Local Educational Agency Plan (LEA Plan) as a requirement for receiving categorical federal funding.

The LEA Plan is based on NCLB's five performance goals and 12 indicators. The LEA Plan describes the actions Sierra Sands will take to ensure they meet certain programmatic requirements, including coordination of services, needs assessments, consultations, school choice, supplemental services, services to homeless students, and others as required. In addition, LEA Plans summarize assessment data, school goals and activities from the Single Plans for Student Achievement developed by the LEA's schools.

The [LEA Plan](#), Consolidated Application and Reporting System (CARS which replaces the ConApp), and Categorical Program Monitoring (CPM) processes are three major accountability systems that serve specific purposes and are linked together. The LEA Plan describes the actions LEAs will take to ensure that programmatic requirements are met. The CARS is a fiscal mechanism for the distribution of formula-driven federal and state funds. CARS is brought to the board in June for approval and January for informational purposes. The CARS has been delayed by the state this year. The CPM provides oversight by conducting on-site reviews of a variety of federal and state programs. The purpose is to verify compliance with program requirements to ensure that program funds are spent to increase student performance. Sierra Sands is scheduled for a CPM review in 2012-2013.

**CURRENT CONSIDERATIONS:** The original Sierra Sands Unified School District's LEA Plan was approved by the board on May 29, 2003 and fully approved by the California SBE in July, 2003. The plan has been annually reviewed and approved since that time. Sierra Sands entered LEA Title 1 Program Improvement in 2011-2012. Guidance from the CDE instructs the district to submit a LEA Program Improvement (PI) Year 1 Plan Addendum rather than revise the whole LEA Plan.

In preparation for writing the addendum, the district has completed required state tools including the District Assistance Survey (DAS), the English Learner Subgroup Self Assessment (ELSSA) and the Inventory of Services and Supports (ISS) for Students with Disabilities. In addition, each site has completed an Academic Program Survey (APS).

Instructional priorities continue to be aligned with the district's goals, advisory committee recommendations, and the state's curriculum adoption cycle. School sites have completed revisions to their Single Plans for Student Achievement (SPSA) and these revisions are reflected in the LEA Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: The LEA Program Improvement Year 1 Plan Addendum must be revised and submitted as part of the process for receiving categorical federal funding and to satisfy program improvement requirements.

SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that the board approve the LEA Program Improvement Year 1 Plan Addendum for the Sierra Sands Unified School District as presented.

## 2. EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

### 2.2 Approval of Title III Improvement Plan Year 4

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** Title III (officially known as the *English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act*. Section 3102) is to be used to ensure that limited-English-proficient (LEP) students (called English learners under California laws) attain English proficiency and meet the same challenging academic content and achievement standards that other students are expected to meet. Districts must use Title III funds to implement language instruction educational programs designed to help LEP students achieve standards. The state, districts, and schools, are accountable for increasing the English proficiency and core academic content knowledge of LEP students. Sierra Sands receives a Title III subgrant based upon the number of students reported on the Annual Language Census Report (R-30 Report), completed in March and an additional Title III Immigrant subgrant to meet the needs of students born outside the United States. Each fall, and within 30 days of initial enrollment in a California school, the district is required to administer the CELDT (California English Language Development Test) to each English learner.

Title III requires that states hold Title III sub grantees accountable for meeting three annual measurable achievement objectives (AMAOs) for English learners. The first AMAO relates to making annual progress as measured by the CELDT, the second relates to attaining English proficiency as measured by the CELDT, and the third AMAO is determined by the percent of district level English Learner's scoring at proficient or above on the California Standards test and as reported as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

Districts not meeting one or more of the three Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives must send a letter to parents of English learners stating that the LEA did not meet all Title III AMAOs. The district sent this letter in fall 2008 through 2011. If a Title III subgrantee fails to meet one or more AMAO growth targets for four consecutive years, the state shall require the district to modify its curriculum, program, and method of instruction or determine whether the district will continue to receive Title III funds (Section 3122 (b)).

**CURRENT CONSIDERATIONS:** Sierra Sands has met some AMAOs and missed other AMAOs for the past 4 years. This year we did see five percent plus growth in English Learner subgroup English/ Language Arts on AYP and made safe harbor for this subgroup. However, we did not meet the target in math or the increasing targets for AMAO 1 and 2 and have advanced to year 4 requirements.

Tools from the state, including the English Learner Subgroup Self Assessment (ELSSA), and input from staff and parents were utilized in completing the Title III Improvement Plan Year 4. The plan will go to the District English Language Advisory Committee on January 20, 2012 for final approval.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: Costs for implementation of this improvement plan are covered by federal categorical funds (Title III). The district's Title III grant award in 2011-2012 is \$52,000 and the Immigrant award is \$12,500.

SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that the board approve the Title III Improvement Plan Year 4 as presented.

### 3. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

#### 3.1 Review Staff Report Regarding Trustee Residence Areas

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##### **STAFF REPORT ON TRUSTEE RESIDENCE AREAS**

###### **BACKGROUND:**

At its January 12, 2012 meeting, the Board of Trustees requested that staff review and report on the question of whether it should consider abolishing the current trustee residence areas in light of dramatic changes in population within the District. The request stemmed from information presented by legal counsel in the form of updated Census data showing that the current trustee residence areas are significantly out of balance in terms of total population. This report makes findings and recommendations concerning this issue. Staff consulted with legal counsel (Schools Legal Service) in preparing this report.

###### **A. Background on Trustee Residence Areas.**

When the District was created by unification in July of 1974, two trustee residence areas were established. One trustee residence area (“the Rand Trustee Residence Area”) is located in the Rand/Johannesburg area and is comprised of the territory of the former Rand Joint School District, which became part of the District upon unification. One of the District’s seven trustees must reside within this trustee residence area.

The second trustee area is comprised of the remainder of the District (representing the territories of the former China Lake Joint School District and Indian Wells Valley Joint Union School District), in which the remaining six trustees must reside. (See Unification Election of the Burroughs Attendance Area, County Counsel’s Analysis, 1973.)

###### **B. Need for Rebalancing Trustee Residence Areas / Results**

Schools Legal Service advises that trustee residence areas should be balanced in terms of total population. With a seven-member Board, this would mean that the Rand Trustee Residence Area should consist of one-seventh of the total population of the school district. The 2010 Census indicated that the total population in the District is now 35,267, so the Rand Trustee Area should contain 5,038 residents. (See 2010 Census and Related Data Profile from National Demographics Corporation.) Over time, the population in the Rand/Johannesburg area has declined significantly to the point that the Rand Trustee Residence Area now contains only 377 residents. Thus, if the existing trustee areas are rebalanced in light of 2010 Census results, the Rand Trustee Residence Area would need to be extended into Ridgecrest to gain sufficient population. The result would be a trustee area where approximately 92 percent of residents would be from areas outside Rand/Johannesburg, and residents of Rand/Johannesburg would comprise less than 8 percent of the population of the rebalanced trustee area.

**C. Process for Abolishing Trustee Residence Areas**

The Education Code provides that the District can abolish its trustee areas 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 abolish the trustee areas would be submitted to the voters at the next election (November 2012). However, the State Board of Education has a process which permits districts to seek a waiver of this requirement. An application for such a waiver could be filed so that these changes could be implemented for the 2012 elections.

**D. Additional Benefits From These Changes**

If the trustee residence areas are abolished, candidates for all school board seats could then come from any portion of the District. This should help streamline the campaign and election process and will no longer require the qualification of candidates based upon their area of residence within the District. This may also result in an increase in candidates for school board seats, since, according to the Kern County Elections Division, there are only 120 registered voters in the Rand Trustee Area who would be eligible to run for the designated seat. Future demographics, legal and other costs incurred in rebalancing trustee residence areas in light of Census information would also be eliminated.

**CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION:** The Rand Trustee Residence Area served an important purpose at the time the District was unified in 1974, by preserving a voice for that community and the residents of the former Rand Joint School District. Separate trustee residence areas can no longer promote that purpose given the population changes within the District. To simplify the electoral system and possibly foster an increase in candidates for school board seats, and eliminate future costs, the Board may wish to consider abolishing the trustee residence areas.

Respectfully submitted,



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Joanna Rummer, Superintendent

3. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

3.2 Public Hearing Regarding Possible Change in Election System to Eliminate Trustee  
Residence Areas in Light of Population Changes for 2012 and Subsequent Elections

The board will hold a public hearing regarding possible change in election systems to eliminate trustee residence areas in light of population changes for 2012 and subsequent elections.

### 3. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

#### 3.3 Consideration and Possible Action to Adopt Resolution # 21 1112 to Change Election Systems and Abolish Trustee Residence Areas, for Use at the November 2012 and Subsequent Governing Board Elections

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION: Currently the trustees on the seven-member Board of Trustees for the Sierra Sands Unified School District are elected by the registered voters of the entire school district in an “at-large” election system, using “trustee residence areas.” One trustee must reside within a defined trustee area in the Rand/Johannesburg area corresponding to the territory of the former Rand Joint School District, which became part of the Sierra Sands Unified School District upon unification in 1974. The remaining six trustees must reside in the area of the District outside the Rand trustee area.

CURRENT CONSIDERATIONS: Trustee Residence Areas. Trustee residence areas should be balanced in terms of the total population of the district. With a seven member board of trustees, the Rand/Johannesburg trustee area should contain 1/7 of the total population of the district. In light of data received from the 2010 Census, it has become apparent that the trustee areas are significantly out of balance in terms of total population (see Staff Report dated January 17, 2012). Correcting the imbalance would require redrawing trustee residence area lines such that the residents of the community of Rand would now form a small minority, only approximately 8%, of the population of that trustee residence area.

In light of these changes, staff is of the opinion that it may no longer useful to the residents of Rand/Johannesburg, or to the district, to maintain the separate trustee residence areas and recommends that the board consider abolishing the trustee residence areas, so that all trustees would simply be elected trustee at-large, regardless of where they reside. This could have added benefits in the form of an increase in candidates for school board seats, since, according to the Kern County Elections Division, there are only 120 registered voters in the Rand Trustee Area who would be eligible to run for the designated seat.

The proposed resolution presented for consideration by the board calls for the elimination of the current trustee residence areas, thus changing the election system to one in which each governing board member is elected by the registered voters of the entire school district regardless of where candidates reside. These changes would take effect for the November 2012 school board elections.

In order to have these changes in place for the 2012 governing board elections and 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.

Consideration and Possible Action to Adopt Resolution # 21 1112

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FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: Future demographics, legal and other costs incurred in rebalancing trustee residence areas in light of Census information would also be eliminated.

SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATION: The superintendent's recommendation is to review the staff report and consider possible action to adopt Resolution # 21 1112, Change Election Systems and Abolish Trustee Residence Areas.

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

In the Matter of the District's Election System.

RESOLUTION NO. #21 1112

A Resolution by the Governing Board to Change Election Systems and Abolish Trustee Residence Areas for November 2012 and Subsequent Governing Board Elections

**RECITALS**

1. California Education Code sections 5019(a) & (c)(1) and 5030 authorize the Kern County Committee on School District Organization ("County Committee"), upon application of a school district's governing board, to abolish trustee areas; 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 the trustee area which he or she represents [Education Code section 5030(c)]; and

3. When the District was created by unification in July of 1974, two trustee residence areas were established. One trustee residence area ("the Rand Trustee Residence Area") is located in the Rand/Johannesburg area and is comprised of the territory of the former Rand Joint School District, which became part of the District upon unification. The second trustee area is comprised of the remainder of the District (representing the territories of the former China Lake Joint School District and Indian Wells Valley Joint Union School District), from which the remaining six trustees are elected; and

4. Over time, the population in the Rand/Johannesburg area has declined to the point that, if the existing trustee areas are rebalanced in light of 2010 Census results, the population of the Rand Trustee Residence Area will represent less than eight percent of the rebalanced trustee area; and

5. Data from the 2010 Census shows that the current total population of the District is 35,267, so that the ideal size for the Rand Trustee Residence Area would be 5,038 persons, while the current population in the area is only 377; and

6. In light of 2010 Census data, to rebalance the District's trustee areas would require extending the Rand Trustee Residence Area into Ridgecrest and would result in a trustee area where approximately 92 percent of residents would be from areas outside Rand/Johannesburg; and

7. The Kern County Elections Division indicates that there are currently only 120 registered voters in the Rand Trustee Residence Area; and

8. After review of the pertinent information, the Board of Trustees believes that maintaining separate trustee residence areas no longer serves an important purpose for the District or the residents of Rand/Johannesburg, or the students of the District in light of population changes since the unification of the District and because given those changes it can no longer serve as a useful means for preserving the community point of view; and

9. The Board believes that eliminating the trustee residence area requirements may lead to an increase in candidates since a Board seat will not be reserved for an area with only 120 potential candidates, and will lead to cost savings in the form of demographic and legal fees required to rebalance trustee residence areas following each decennial Census; and

10. The Board held a duly noticed public hearing on the questions of abolishing the trustee residence areas on January 23, 2012; and

11. In light of the information received to date, the Board of Trustees believes that the best interests of the District and its students would be served by abolishing the District's trustee residence areas and changing its election system to one in which elections in which "each governing board member [is] elected by the registered voters of the entire district," but regardless of where a candidate lives within the District [Education Code section 5030(a)]; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED as follows:

A. The above recitals are true and correct.

B. The Board resolves to abolish its trustee residence areas and change its election system to one in which each governing board member is elected by the registered voters of the entire district, without regard to their residence, effective with the 2012 governing board elections, as authorized by Education Code sections 5019(c) and 5030(a).

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

Resolution # 21 1112 (continued)

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

THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION # 21 1112 was adopted upon motion by Trustee \_\_\_\_\_, seconded by Trustee \_\_\_\_\_, at a special meeting held on January 23, 2012, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

DATED: January 23, 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 # 21 1112 was regularly introduced, passed, and adopted by the Board of Trustees at its meeting held on January 23, 2012.

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

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Clerk, Board of Trustees  
Sierra Sands Unified School District

3. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

3.4 Discussion Regarding Possible Reduction in Number of School Board Trustees from  
Seven to Five

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At the last board meeting, Mr. Hornback asked whether there was any interest in further exploring the impact of population changes on the trustee areas. Mr. Farris made a request for further study and information regarding that issue. He also indicated it would be a good time to look at the size of the board and any related issues associated with this topic. At this time, the board will hear information from Schools Legal Service and enter into a discussion regarding the process and procedures associated with determining the best course of action.