

Measure B, November 6, 2007, Special Election
Proposed new North Area School District (K-12)
LWV Sacramento County, Issue and Candidates Forum, October 3, 2007

There will be an election on November 6, 2007 in Sacramento County for voters who live within the Measure B area to decide on school unification. League members eligible to vote in this area are encouraged to be informed and participate in this important election. The League, NAACP and Metro Cable will present an "Issue and Candidates Forum on Measure B," at the Foothill Oaks Elementary School, 5520 Lancelot Drive, Sacramento, off Elkhorn Blvd & Diablo St., on October 3, 2007, at 6:30 P.M. There are 24 eligible candidates for trustee of the new district. Metro Cable Channel 14 will videotape the forum for rebroadcast before the election.

Measure B is a proposal to unify four school districts. Eligible voters must reside within the proposed new North Area School District (K-12 grades) school districts to vote on this issue. There are two parts to Measure B. First, voters of the entire district will decide whether to unify the districts into one new unified K-12 district. Second, voters will elect the governing board, one trustee for each of the seven districts. Passage requires a majority of voters voting. The new district, if voters approve, would open July 1, 2008.

The Question: Shall the Del Paso Heights Elementary School District, the Grant Joint Union High School, the North Sacramento Elementary School District and the Rio Linda Elementary School District unify into one new district serving students in kindergarten through grade 12, with a seven-member governing board consisting of one member residing in each of the seven trustee areas elected by the registered voters of the entire unified school district?

The Background: Past efforts to unify these districts have failed. This proposal was initiated in June 2006 by resolutions of the governing boards of the four participating districts to the Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE). SCOE, acting as the County Committee on Reorganization, held public hearings in each district and added recommendations. In March 2007 the State Board of Education (SBE) approved the exclusion of Elverta and Robla School Districts as requested, and the governing board details. The hope for passage of the Measure B plan is based on this effort by all parties and approval by the four school boards of all the districts involved, as well as the county and state boards of education. But voters who cast a ballot on November 6 will have the final say on whether a North Area Unified School District for K-12 grades will become a reality.

In 2006-07 the combined enrollment of the four participating districts was 30,713. It would have between 30,000-31,000 students its first year of operation.

The Proposal: What the measure will do: The Measure B proposal creates a new North Area K-12 school district through the unification of four existing school districts: the Del Paso Heights Elementary School District (grades K-6), the Grant Joint Union High School (grades 7-12), the North Sacramento Elementary School District (K-7) and the Rio Linda Union Elementary School District (K-8). (The governing board would determine its name and select the first superintendent.) In the interim the superintendent of SCOE will serve as superintendent of the new school district. The boundaries would be identical to the Grant school district as they are today. No students will be required to change schools.

If the new district is formed, employees of the existing four districts will become employees of the new district. Education Codes provide that unification will not affect the rights, job classification or salaries or other benefits of existing employees.

Although the Elverta Joint Elementary School District (K-8) and the Robla Elementary School District (K-6) voted against being a part of the unified district, the Measure B Proposal allows for students from Elverta and Robla districts to attend the Grant Joint Union High School. And registered voters in Elverta and Robla districts are eligible to vote on Measure B.

Costs: Financial Information: Based on 2006-07 data, the revenue limit per pupil for the proposed unified school district is estimated to be \$6,262. (This is the amount each district receives from the state for each student. This amount is multiplied by the district's average daily attendance to get the total revenue limit.) If the proposed district is approved the California Department of Education will calculate the actual revenue limit. This represents an 8 percent increase in revenue limit per pupil for the four separate districts combined and an increase of approximately \$12,500,000 in total revenue funding annually. Because Proposition 98 dictates the total state support for schools, this increase will not increase the total amount the state pays for education. In the future, state support for the new district is expected to be comparable to those provided to unified school districts of similar size and characteristics.

Because no students will be displaced or transferred to different schools as a result of the proposed unification, no additional facilities should be required as a consequence of the unification. Therefore, there should be no change in the costs of housing the existing student population.

Argument in Favor (Pro)

1. Today districts have overlapping boundaries and needless bureaucracies. Measure B unified district improves local schools by eliminating bureaucracy and needless administration and by redirecting resources into the classroom.
2. A single unified school district will save taxpayers money and will not raise taxes. Measure B will create one streamlined administration, one new superintendent, and a single seven member elected school board.
3. Students will have a coordinated curriculum from preschool through 12th grade. And students will have the benefit of expanded educational programs to better prepare them for college and careers.

Arguments Opposed (Con)

1. Measure B is a risky proposition that will create a gigantic 30,000 student school district. Bigger is not always better.
2. Measure B combines four school districts into one massive bureaucracy. Thus, destroying local control where communities of interest determine their own priorities.
3. This is not the reform the citizens group of parents and community members envisioned in effort to reform the governance structure of public schools in the north area of Sacramento County.