

AUSD Board of Education Meeting  
Tuesday, April 17, 2012

Subcommittee Report

Submitted by Pat Low

I was unable to complete the task I set for myself as thoroughly as I would have liked to. I would like to express my gratitude to Caryl O'Keefe and Preston Jordan, members of the city of Albany's Charter Review Committee, for their discussions with me, analysis and time consuming research, which helped me greatly. I, alone, however, take responsibilities for any inaccuracies that appear in this report. In addition, I welcome and invite my fellow board members and/or members of the public and press to check my findings and delve further into my questions to ascertain the most accurate and current information.

The board agreed that it wants to talk about the pros and cons of school board elections procedures being determined by the city charter in Albany and I volunteered (and was charged as a subcommittee) to look into how other school districts in California run their elections and to try to find rationales for different methods.

After reflecting on my task, I think what I am trying to accomplish in the subcommittee work is capturing what has existed historically with regard to California School Board elections and whether there are any patterns in recent changes in election methods. Since I think we can hypothesize that changes from at-large elections to some form of by-district method have largely been motivated by the California Voting Rights Act most recently, I'm not sure whether I'll be able to discover information about other reasons for change.

[http://www.voiceofsandiego.org/education/article\\_fe0a13a2-58c1-11df-9e5f-001cc4c03286.html](http://www.voiceofsandiego.org/education/article_fe0a13a2-58c1-11df-9e5f-001cc4c03286.html)

[http://www.csba.org/NewsAndMedia/Publications/CASchoolsMagazine/2012/Spring/InThisIssue/VotingAct\\_Spring2012.aspx](http://www.csba.org/NewsAndMedia/Publications/CASchoolsMagazine/2012/Spring/InThisIssue/VotingAct_Spring2012.aspx)

That is, if the information I am gathering is supposed to help the Board of Education deliberate and determine whether a change in the city charter/election method of BOE will make the Albany BOE more effective at serving the schools and community, then understanding what other like cities (size & demographics?) and school districts have done and WHY would seem useful.

So, I finally framed the subcommittee task, using the following questions:

- 1) How many California school districts have their school board election methods determined by city charter? Or, at least, approximately what percentage of districts in California have their election methods determined by city charter?
- 2) How many school districts that are about the same size as Albany Unified have their school board election methods determined by city charter?
- 3) Of those in answer to #2, how many have changed their election methods during the last five years or so? From what to what?
- 4) Also, any information on term limits and school board effectiveness or lack thereof would be much appreciated.

1) How many California school districts have their school board election methods determined by city charter? Or, at least, approximately what percentage of districts in California have their election methods determined by city charter?

- *There are 120 charter cities in California. See the list at the end of this report.*
- *For context, about 25% of cities in California are charter cities*
- *There are approximately 1,101 school districts in the state of California*
- *For a very rough estimate of an answer to question #1 because I don't have time to look up every district related to each charter city, if all 120 charter cities determined the election methods of a district, than 11% of school districts might be determined by a city charter (likely less).*

2) How many school districts that are about the same size as Albany Unified have their school board election methods determined by city charter?

- *If I had more time, I would take the list of charter cities, check their population size and demographics and research whether their school board election method is determined by their city charter.*
- *Instead, I selected the other two smallest charter cities in Alameda County, Alameda & Piedmont, and sought answers to questions #2 & 3.*
- *I spoke to the Piedmont City Clerk, John Tulloch, who informed me that the five member school board is elected at the same as the city council as prescribed by the charter. The only change that has occurred recently is to change these elections to February. School board members and city council members are limited to two four year terms; however, they may run again after a four year term is up. The city and school district have always shared the cost of the elections.*
- *I spoke to the administrative assistant for the general counsel of Alameda Unified School District, Kathleen Brooks. The school board broke away from the city charter in 2004. See the answers below.*

2) Of those in answer to #2, how many have changed their election methods during the last five years or so? From what to what?

- *Measure F, proposed on the ballot of November 2004, amended the City of Alameda charter to delete references to the Board of Education so that the Board of Education election process etc. would be subject to/governed by state law. It passed 57.2% to 42.8%. The district always paid for its share of the elections prior to Measure F. As the result of the passage, school board members are no longer subject to term limits.*

3) Also, any information on term limits and school board effectiveness or lack thereof would be much appreciated.

- *Californians favor term limits for many of their elective offices, at least at the state level.*
- *Term limits at the local level are far less common.*
- *Nationwide, about 10 percent of cities place term limits on city council members or mayors.*
- *In California, the percentage is higher.*
- *In a 2006 National School Boards Association survey, 32 of 34 states surveyed, indicated that they did not place term limits on local school board members. California was one of the 32 states.*

[http://articles.latimes.com/1996-07-10/local/me-22729\\_1\\_term-limits](http://articles.latimes.com/1996-07-10/local/me-22729_1_term-limits)

[http://articles.dailypilot.com/2007-03-30/news/dpt-termlimits30\\_1\\_term-limits-three-consecutive-four-year-terms-martha-fluor](http://articles.dailypilot.com/2007-03-30/news/dpt-termlimits30_1_term-limits-three-consecutive-four-year-terms-martha-fluor)

<http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa413.pdf>

[http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R\\_302ZHR.pdf](http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R_302ZHR.pdf).

## 120 Charter Cities in CA, per League of CA Cities April 2012

\* for cities where school districts may have requested waivers for changing from at-large to by district method of election based on CVRA

Adelanto	Lancaster	Salinas
Alameda	La Quinta	San Bernardino
Albany	<b>Lemoore*</b>	San Diego
Alhambra	<b>Lindsay*</b>	San Francisco
Anaheim	Loma Linda	San Jose
Arcadia	Long Beach	San Leandro
<b>Bakersfield*</b>	Los Alamitos	San Luis Obispo
Bell	Los Angeles	San Marcos
Berkeley	Marina	San Mateo
Big Bear Lake	Marysville	San Rafael
Buena Park	<b>Merced* ((BOE</b>	San Ramon
Burbank	<b>election info repealed</b>	Sand City
Carlsbad	<b>from their charter in</b>	Santa Ana
Cerritos	<b>2002)</b>	Santa Barbara
Chico	Modesto	Santa Clara
<b>Chula Vista* (BOE</b>	Monterey	Santa Cruz
<b>election repealed from</b>	Mountain View	Santa Maria
<b>their charter 1985)</b>	Napa	Santa Monica
Compton	Needles	Santa Rosa
Culver City	Newport Beach	Santee
Cypress	Norco	Seal Beach
Del Mar	Oakland	Shafter
Desert Hot Springs	Oceanside	Signal Hill
Dinuba	Oroville	Solvang
Downey	Pacific Grove	Stockton
El Centro	Palm Desert	Sunnyvale
Eureka	Palm Springs	Temple City
Exeter	Palmdale	Torrance
Folsom	Palo Alto	Truckee
Fortuna	Pasadena	<b>Tulare* (BOE election</b>
<b>Fresno*</b>	Petaluma	<b>info repealed from</b>
Gilroy	Piedmont	<b>their charter in 2002)</b>
Glendale	Placentia	Vallejo
Grass Valley	Pomona	Ventura
Hayward	Port Hueneme	Vernon
Huntington Beach	<b>Porterville*</b>	Victorville
Indian Wells	Rancho Mirage	<b>Visalia*</b>
Industry	Redondo Beach	Vista
Inglewood	Redwood City	Watsonville
Irvine	Richmond	Whittier
Irwindale	<b>Riverside*</b>	Woodlak
King City	Roseville	
Kingsburg	Sacramento	

