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October 20, 2025

Via E-Mail

Lmackey@cccoe.k12.ca.us

Contra Costa County Committee on
School District Organization
c/o Lynn Mackey
County Superintendent of Schools
77 Santa Barbara Rd.
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

Re: Acalanes Union High School District Petition for Transition to By-Trustee Area Election System

Dear Contra Costa County Committee on School District Organization:

As you may know, our office represents the Acalanes Union High School District (“District”). We write to inform you that the Governing Board of the District has completed its transition process and has adopted a final trustee area plan in compliance with the California Voting Rights Act (“CVRA”), FAIR MAPS Act, and other related Elections and Education Code sections. By this correspondence and enclosures, the District submits its Petition for review and approval by the Contra Costa County Committee on School District Organization, the District’s final trustee area plan.

Commitment to Students and Transparency

The District and its Governing Board are strongly committed to the best interests of its students and the District has taken this transition to a new election system very seriously. Throughout the process, the District has been, and continues to be, committed to transparency and educating its residents with public meetings and hearings about the proposed transition to a new election system to ensure compliance with the CVRA.

Background & Actions Taken by District

The Acalanes Union High School District’s mission is “We educate every student to excel and contribute in a global society” and one of our LCAP Goals is to “[i]dentify and implement

policies and practices that eliminate opportunity gaps. (Equity & Access).” The District’s goals align with the purpose of the CVRA. The Governing Board also seeks to ensure access and opportunities for all parents and community members to be involved in the governance process and to provide meaningful input. As such, the District has taken action to transition to a “by-trustee” area election system and encourage community feedback and participation in a multitude of ways, including:

- May 30, 2025: The District received a demand letter from a law firm based in Malibu, California alleging the District’s at-large election system violated the CVRA and demanding the District voluntarily change our election system.
- July 9, 2025: The Board adopted a *Resolution* to initiate transition to a by-trustee area election system and stating the District’s intention to apply to the County Committee for establishment of trustee areas pursuant to Education Code section 5019 in a timely manner to have the 2026 elections for the Board conducted within the new trustee areas for the seats open for election at that time in accordance with SB 442. The District timely posted the agenda and attachments for this meeting.
- July 21, 2025: The Superintendent informed District parents of the transition schedule and invited participation. A copy of the letter was also linked to the District’s website, and remains published on the District’s dedicated election transition webpage. The message was read by nearly 8,000 people.
- July – October 2025: In an effort to foster community awareness, input and involvement, the District posted notices with presentation and meeting dates on the District website, issued detailed updates, releases, notices of public hearings, newspaper advertisements in the Contra Costa Times, and messages to notify residents with information regarding the trustee area options meetings and public hearings. This information included dates, times and locations for two pre-map Public Hearings (August 6 and August 20, 2025), as well as the map Public Hearings (September 3, September 17, and October 15, 2025).

Throughout this important process, the District constantly reminded and encouraged the community that, even if they could not attend a public hearing, comments, feedback, and questions could be submitted to trusteeareafeedback@auhsdschools.org or via telephone at (925) 942-9649. All map preference feedback was relayed to the Board prior to its discussion at each public hearing and prior to its adoption of a map option.

- August 4, 2025: The District posted “majority-minority” analysis to the website, required pursuant to Elections Code § 21130(b)(1), which states: “Consistent with the districting body’s existing obligations under the federal Voting Rights Act, the districting body shall determine whether it is possible to create an election district or districts in which a minority group is sufficiently large and geographically compact to constitute a majority in a single-member district, as set forth in *Thornburg v. Gingles*, 478 U.S. 30 (1986), and as interpreted in case law regarding enforcement of the federal Voting Rights Act with respect to redistricting. The districting body shall publish on its redistricting web page, at a minimum, the results of its analysis within seven days of completing the analysis or prior to adopting election district boundaries, whichever occurs first.”
- August 6, 2025: After posting notice in the newspaper (Contra Costa Times) and on the District’s website, and at District facilities, the District conducted the first of two *Public Hearings* held to receive public comments concerning the composition of potential trustee voting areas associated with the District’s transition to a by-trustee area election system in advance of the preparation of draft trustee voting area plans by the District’s demographer. Since this public hearing was consolidated with a Board meeting, this public hearing began at the appropriate time in accordance with recently revised Elections Code § 10010(a)(3), requiring the public hearing start at the time fixed on the Notice of Public Hearing, regardless of where it appears on the agenda, or upon the conclusion of the agenda item immediately preceding that time (including discussion, action, and public comments.) This public hearing was also livestreamed online and the video from the public hearing was posted on the District’s election transition webpage shortly thereafter.
- August 20, 2025: After posting notice in the newspaper (Contra Costa Times) and on the District’s website, and at District facilities, the District conducted the second of two *Public Hearings* held to receive public comments concerning the composition of potential trustee voting areas associated with the District’s transition to a by-trustee area election system in advance of the preparation of draft trustee voting area plans by the District’s demographer. Since this public hearing was consolidated with a Board meeting, this public hearing began at the appropriate time in accordance with recently revised Elections Code § 10010(a)(3), requiring the public hearing start at the time fixed on the Notice of Public Hearing, regardless of where it appears on the agenda, or upon the conclusion of the agenda item immediately preceding that time (including discussion, action, and public comments.) This public hearing was also livestreamed online and the video from the public hearing was posted on the District’s election transition webpage shortly thereafter.

- August 27, 2025: Draft map options (Map Option 1, Map Option 2, Map Option 3, and Map Option 4) were created by the demographer in compliance with all applicable laws and standards, and posted on the District's website. Additionally, the Superintendent informed District parents of map release and again invited participation via letter on the website and via messaging. The message was read by over 16,500 people. A copy of the maps and the letter were also linked to the District's website, including an interactive map tool, and remains published on the District's dedicated election transition webpage. Concurrently with the posting of the map options, the District also posted a proposed schedule of election sequencing.
- September 3, 2025: After posting notice in the newspaper (Contra Costa Times) and on the District's website, and at District facilities, the District conducted the first of three *Public Hearings* held to present the draft map options and respond to community comments and questions regarding the trustee area map options for the District's transition to a by-trustee area election system. Since this public hearing was consolidated with a Board meeting, this public hearing began at the appropriate time in accordance with recently revised Elections Code § 10010(a)(3), requiring the public hearing start at the time fixed on the Notice of Public Hearing, regardless of where it appears on the agenda, or upon the conclusion of the agenda item immediately preceding that time (including discussion, action, and public comments.) This public hearing was also livestreamed online and the video from the public hearing was posted on the District's election transition webpage shortly thereafter.
- September 9, 2025: Three additional options (Map Option 2A, Map Option 2B, and Map Option 5) were created following the first map public hearing based on feedback received to date. Concurrently with the posting of these additional map options, the District also posted an updated proposed schedule of election sequencing that included these options. The Superintendent shared a message to the community with this update, viewed by nearly 16,500 people.
- September 10, 2025: The District held an informational session (in-person and on zoom) to answer questions, solicit feedback, and continue to keep the community informed regarding the election transition process to date.
- September 17, 2025: After posting notice in the newspaper (Contra Costa Times) and on the District's website, and at District facilities, the District conducted the second of three *Public Hearings* held to present the draft map options and respond to community comments and questions regarding the trustee area map options for

the District's transition to a by-trustee area election system. Since this public hearing was consolidated with a Board meeting, this public hearing began at the appropriate time in accordance with recently revised Elections Code § 10010(a)(3), requiring the public hearing start at the time fixed on the Notice of Public Hearing, regardless of where it appears on the agenda, or upon the conclusion of the agenda item immediately preceding that time (including discussion, action, and public comments.) This public hearing was also livestreamed online and the video from the public hearing was posted on the District's election transition webpage shortly thereafter.

Additionally on September 17, 2025, the Board adopted a *Resolution* affirming its commitment to whole District representation following the transition to by-trustee area election method.

- October 7, 2025: Upon request from a community member, the District posted an updated proposed schedule of election sequencing.
- October 15, 2025: After posting notice in the newspaper (Contra Costa Times) and on the District's website, and at District facilities, on October 15, 2025, a third map *Public Hearing* was held to present the draft map options and to respond to community comments and questions regarding the trustee area map options for the District's transition to a by-trustee area election system. Since this public hearing was consolidated with a Board meeting, this public hearing began at the appropriate time in accordance with recently revised Elections Code § 10010(a)(3), requiring the public hearing start at the time fixed on the Notice of Public Hearing, regardless of where it appears on the agenda, or upon the conclusion of the agenda item immediately preceding that time (including discussion, action, and public comments.) This public hearing was also livestreamed online and the video from the public hearing was posted on the District's election transition webpage shortly thereafter.

Following the Public Hearing, the Board adopted a *Resolution* to approve of the District's transition to by-trustee area elections, adopt the "Map Option 2" trustee area plan map, and hold elections in Areas 1, 3, and 5 in 2026 and in Areas 2 and 4 in 2028.

Then next day, the Superintendent sent an update to the community, viewed by 16,189 people.

It is the Governing Board's intent and desire to have the new by-trustee area process in place in time for the 2026 elections and requests the County Committee on School District Organization

Contra Costa County Committee
October 20, 2025
Page 6

approve of the District's election transition pursuant to SB 442 in furtherance of the purposes of the CVRA without holding a districtwide election or the need to obtain an Education Code section waiver from the State Board of Education for the same. As such, the District requests the Committee strongly consider and approve the designated "by-trustee areas" as submitted by the District.

If you should require any additional information, please contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,

FAGEN FRIEDMAN & FULFROST, LLP

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "JS", enclosed within a large, loopy, horizontal oval shape.

Jonathan Salt

cc: Dr. John Nickerson, Superintendent

Attachments