

# MINUTES OF PRESIDENTS' JOINT COMMISSION ON LAUSD GOVERNANCE

July 28, 2005

MWD Headquarters

Attendees: David Cunningham, Maria Casillas, Robert Barner, Ed Burke, Bill Clay, Jose Cornejo, Maria Davila, Donald Dear, Marqueece Harris-Dawson, Jerry Horowitz, Cecilia Moreno, Ramon Muniz, Mary Rose Ortega, Erin Pak, Scott Plotkin, Ron Prescott, Mary Rodriguez, Julie Ruelas, Carla Sanger, Howard Welinsky, Paul White, Tyree Wieder Jonathan Williams.

The Commission meeting was called to order by Co-Chair David Cunningham at 4:45 pm.

Assemblywoman Jackie Goldberg addressed the Commission members and answered questions. She made some salient points: 1) the Commission should not just look at who appoints the Board members, but where and how decisions should be made and at which level (state, district, school level, etc.); 2) the current Board has the responsibility to do things and change things, but has no authority; 3) the district needs more money-\$7,500/student cannot accomplish much; 4) LAUSD tried using School Based Management, but never gave the schools decision making authority or any extra money; 5) to reach every kid, the district must change, especially the teaching conditions and size of classes; 6) all students need more experiences and field trips; 7) teachers need to be "invited" to learn other languages; 8) teachers need to make the kids curious and creative again; and, 9) regular schools need to improve and be competitive, so parents don't need to send kids to charter or private schools.

Agenda Item # 3: Frank Martinez, City Clerk, informed the Commission that a proposal has been received from Rand Corporation to provide research, analysis, report writing and other support functions. Mr. Martinez and Bill Mabie are reviewing the proposal and will report on this at the next meeting. A number of issues need to be analyzed (what does Rand have to offer us; whether we can approve a sole source contract or need an RFP or RFQ; legal implications, etc.). He also announced that Ms. Bass will be a permanent staff member to the Commission.

Agenda Item #4: Discussion began on this item regarding the structure and choice of Subcommittees. The Discussion was tabled to allow LAUSD Board President, Marlene Canter, and Superintendent Roy Romer, to address the Commission.

Agenda Item #1: LAUSD Board President, Marlene Canter addressed the Commission. She stressed that the Commission needs to focus on the daily complexities of educating the students and needs to look at the successes of the District and the schools, and not just the failures. Ms. Canter indicated that Board members only earn \$24,000 and are technically "part-time", but many work almost full time on Board issues. She stated that she is not sure that the number of Board members is the problem. This Commission needs to look at other issues, including busing, Board salaries, size of classes and needs to solve problems, not create more resolves that go unanswered.

LAUSD Superintendent, Roy Romer, spoke next. He stated that some important issues are: 1) what makes LAUSD work and not work; 2) must cull through accurate and inaccurate data about the District; 3) need to look at from where the money is coming and where the schools are being built; 4) too much criticism about the District, and not enough praise. There has been more academic progress in LAUSD in the past 5 years than any other California School District; 5) need to teach better and make school experiences more personal; 6) drop out rate is still high; 7) Board is elected by who can raise the most money and much of it comes from employee units; 8) individual schools need more flexibility to be able to teach however they want, but must show good results in the end; and, 9) need to look at what ingredients are needed to improve LAUSD.

Agenda Item #4 continued: Discussion continued on this item. Members agreed that we need more information on finances, Best Practices, other models from other cities, LAUSD history and its strengths and weaknesses, etc., and more background reading materials, especially for Members who are not educators.

It was Moved by Bill Clay, Seconded and Passed that August and September will be spent on “learning”. We will have presentations, and we will acquire additional information and material. Subcommittees will start in October and November and the Community outreach meetings will begin in full force.

The Commission then agreed that the next meeting will focus on financing issues.

Agenda Item #2: The City Attorney was asked at the last meeting to report back on whether or not a member of the public needs to sign-in at the building and if this is a violation of the Brown Act. City Attorney representative Jim Colbert stated that there are no court decisions and no Attorney General decisions on this issue, so there is no clear answer. He and Ms. Edmiston have spoken with the MWD Security about the situation. MWD Security has agreed to waive the sign-in requirement for anyone who does not wish to sign-in.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Adrienne Bass  
Legislative Assistant to the Commission