Chairperson, Mary Schafer, called the meeting of the Sonoma County Committee on School District Organization to order at 5:38 p.m. and led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was held at the Sonoma County Office of Education in the C&I Conference Room.

Jeanne Bassett Fernandes, Jeremy Brott, Vernon Calsy, Larry Haenel, Kathy Hayes, and Mary Schafer. Rick Massell arrived at 5:53 p.m.

Ms. Calvert distributed the 2008-09 Statistical Report to the committee for their information. She briefly reviewed the Basic Aid districts in the report and the new districts falling into Basic Aid.

Dan Bunting, and James DeWilders

Denise Calvert, Susanne Reed, Patti Springer; and guest Marko Fong

Ms. Calvert administered the Oath of Office to Jeanne Bassett Fernandes, and Larry Haenel.

On motion by Ms. Bassett Fernandes, seconded by Mr. Calsy, the motion carried to select Ms. Schafer as the County Committee Chairperson.

On motion by Mr. Haenel, seconded by Ms. Bassett Fernandes, the motion carried to select Mr. DeWilders as the County Committee Vice Chairperson.

On motion by Ms. Bassett Fernandes, seconded by Mr. Brott, the motion carried to approve the March 22, 2010 agenda.

On motion by Mr. Calsy, seconded by Mr. Brott, the motion carried to approve the June 8, 2009 minutes.

None

Ms. Calvert reported that the consolidation is on hold right now. Due to new legislation being approved since the consolidation was originally submitted, if Guerneville and Monte Rio should resubmit their plans to consolidate with both districts still in support of the consolidation, it would come directly to the County Committee for action.

Ms. Reed explained that as a result of the 2010 Census, trustee area boundaries are required to be rearranged based on population for the districts that have trustee areas. If districts fail to rearrange them, the County Committee has only 30 days to rearrange the boundaries for them.
Ms. Reed and Mr. Fong distributed information, including Mr. Fong's February 26, 2009 Legal Update, on the 2001 California Voting Rights Act (CVRA) and explained how it has affected other counties, Madera in particular, and how it could impact Sonoma County schools in regards to the “at large” method of elections. A group known as the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights (LCCR) is challenging school districts, stating their practice of electing school board trustees “at large” is a violation of the CVRA. Mr. Fong commented that about 90% of California has “at large” trustees, and at present the LCCR is concentrating on the Central Valley. He speculated that this might be the case because of their bi-lingual ballots.

The committee discussed district options of: 1) do nothing, and wait until they receive a letter from the LCCR; 2) complete a study on their trustee areas; which can be costly; or 3) change from “at large” to “by trustee area” elections. Mr. Fong added that districts with 100 or less registered voters are exempt from having trustee areas.

Ms. Reed and Mr. Fong proposed a workshop for School Board Trustees and District Superintendents on the Voting Rights Act with the County Committee as one of the sponsors. Discussed some possible dates in May for the workshop and perhaps having a demographer come and advise what technical things to look for.

On motion by Mr. Haenel, seconded by Ms. Hayes, the motion carried to have the Sonoma County Committee on School District Organization sponsor a district workshop on the California Voting Rights Act.

Additionally, some committee members commented on the confusion between board voting delegates and actual representatives of the County Committee. Ms. Reed stated she could add information about voting delegates to the annual letter she sends to districts, and Ms. Calvert can have this information added to the SCOE website.

Meetings are usually scheduled for the second Monday in March, June, September, and December. Following that schedule, the next meeting will be held on June 14, 2010.

Ms. Schafer adjourned the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

[Signature]
Denise Calvert, Secretary
S.C.C.S.D.O.