



SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SMMUSD Rejects Latest City of Malibu Unification Offer but Reaffirms its Offer to Return to the Negotiating Table with the City

The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Board of Education voted 5-2 to reject the latest City of Malibu counter proposal on unification. This counter proposal would have required the district to support the City's petition in exchange for the City and District agreeing to be bound by whatever financial recommendation the Los Angeles County Committee on School District Organization ("Committee") staff and consultants might make at a future date and time. This decision was made during closed session held the morning of April 16, 2021 and announced by Jon Kean, board president, following the meeting.

Craig Foster and Richard Tahvildaran-Jesswein dissented.

The proposal and its rejection will not change the status quo. The City would already have to abide by the County's recommendations or risk denial of its petition. The District will continue to advocate for denial of the petition before the Committee while also promoting what it believes to be a fair and equitable proposal for separation.

The School Board is not comfortable agreeing to be bound by future recommendations -- sight unseen -- particularly since the District has its own financial plan that will accomplish what both sides have publicly stated they want; an equitable separation. "To do otherwise would be an abdication of our responsibility to act in the best interests of our students," Kean said.

"We continue to support the concept of unification, as long as it is equitable for both territories, but we will not relinquish our authority to ensure a fair outcome in the process," Kean said. "We again reiterate our desire to work cooperatively with the City and re-extend an invitation to the City to return to the negotiating table with the district."

The Committee has scheduled a hearing for 9:30 a.m., Saturday, April 17, 2021, via Zoom webinar. Testimony will be presented by the City of Malibu and SMMUSD, followed by public comment.

The District encourages participation by sending a written comment by 5 p.m. April 16, 2021 to the County Committee Secretary, Mr. Octavio Castelo at castelo_octavio@lacoedu or joining the meeting to make a public comment. (Public comment will be limited to one hour each for proponents and opponents, therefore not all speakers may have a chance to speak.)

To join the virtual meeting webinar:

<https://lacoedu.zoom.us/j/81101324358?pwd=TXdtdc3VrYmVBNzNOMIFTaVVmSFBjUT09>

Password: 547531

Or iPhone one-tap: +16699009128,,81101324358#,1#,547531

Or Dial US: +1 669 900 9128, 81101324358#, 1#,547531

SMMUSD is looking forward to presenting facts about unification, the impact on Santa Monica students and the required nine criteria for territories to form their own school district.

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