



CUSD Feedback <feedback@carmelunified.org>

Criteria

1 message

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What criteria are used to create trustee areas?

Federal and state laws require that the trustee areas be nearly equal in population using the most recent Census counts. Some deviation is permitted, but the rule of thumb is that the difference between the most- and least-populous election districts should not exceed ten percent of the "ideal" district's population, which is one third, one fifth, or one seventh of the jurisdiction's total population (depending on the number of trustee areas). We understand that courts have generally accepted this standard for population equality (in school districts).

Federal law also requires that election districts be drawn to respect protected race/ethnic groups so that their communities are neither divided nor overly concentrated in individual districts. Protected groups are race/ethnic/language groups, including Hispanics, African Americans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans (as well as some others).

In addition, the California Elections Code (Section 22000) lists criteria that may be considered during the redistricting (and initial districting process): In adjusting the boundaries of the divisions, the board may consider the following factors: (1) topography, (2) geography, (3) cohesiveness, contiguity, integrity, and compactness of territory, and (4) community of interests of the division.

Comments:

I have copied and pasted the paragraphs above from the District website. Paragraph 1 describes the desired parity between the Trustee Areas as far as population, with no more than 10% difference as the rule of thumb. Paragraph 2 describes the criteria of protecting certain race/ethnic/language groups. Paragraph 3 lists additional criteria that the Board may consider in choosing a map.

Applying Paragraph 1 to the diverse and expansive geography found within CUSD results in the maps 1 through 9b which are largely disjointed and not respectful of existing social and community identity for all areas.

As far as Paragraph 2, because of the overall demographic present within CUSD, I would submit that no map presented is better than any other in achieving that goal. Just going to Trustee Area elections alone goes much further than the existing at-large elections simply by creating more opportunities for candidacy throughout the district, which includes more opportunities for the protected groups listed.

This leads me to urge the Board of Trustees to strongly lean on Paragraph 3 over Paragraphs 1 and 2 to create the best outcome overall. The "Ingram Plan" [which I hope has been provided to the Board] has probably the worst Plan Deviation as far as population distribution, but is the best in achieving the criteria shown in Paragraph 3. Given the existing geography, communities of interest and overall demographic present in CUSD, I believe the Board is on solid legal ground in using Paragraph 3 as their primary consideration in adopting a final plan for the Trustee Areas.