

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FEBRUARY 22, 2000

FROM: CHARTER REFORM TASK FORCE
ON SCHOOL DISTRICT GOVERNANCE

SUBJECT: CHARTER REFORM STATUS REPORT, REVISED TIMELINE, AND
BUDGET INCREASE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$41,400

RECOMMENDATION OF CHARTER REFORM TASK FORCE:

It is recommended that the City Council:

- (1) Receive and file the status report and revised timeline;
- (2) Authorize an increase of \$41,400 to the Task Force's budget, increasing the budget from \$201,600 to \$243,000; and
- (3) Approve a journal voucher increasing the appropriation to Charter Reform Account No. 261010 by \$41,400. In addition, authorize the Director of Finance to transfer \$36,400 from the Unappropriated General Fund fund balance and recognize \$5,000 unanticipated revenue from the City of Sierra Madre for this purpose.

BACKGROUND:

The 11-member Charter Reform Task Force had its first meeting on September 21, 1999, and has held 16 meetings as of the date of this report. The Task Force's October and November meetings were primarily dedicated to organizational/administrative matters (putting together a workplan, budget, and hiring of its staff consultant). The Task Force deferred addressing key issues during the holiday season, and scheduled a panel of guest speakers in the field of education for its December meetings. The following were guest speakers at the December meetings: Dr. Roderick Kiewiet, Professor of Political Science at Caltech; Mr. Robert M. Palaich, co-author of a newly-released report from the Education Commission of the States; Mr. Thomas Toch, scholar at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. and author of In the Name of Excellence, an award winning book about American education; and Mr. Steven Bingler, author of What If? New Schools, Better Neighborhoods, More Livable Communities.

Based on the Task Force's Workplan (which was presented to Council on November 22), a series of topic-specific meetings were scheduled between January 5 and March 1. To date, the Task Force has held meetings and received staff reports on the topics of Student Achievement, Engaging and Involving the Public; Financial Management; the Board of Education; School Safety; and Election/Selection of the Board.

The Task Force has stayed on schedule regarding its series of topic-specific meetings. These meetings were publicized in flyers sent home with students and distributed at community centers and public libraries in Pasadena, Altadena and Sierra Madre, as well as mailed to over 400 community organizations and neighborhood associations. The schedule of topics was also published on the Task Force's web page, in the City's newsletter In Focus, as well as in the local newspaper.

In order to stay on its schedule of publicized topic meetings, the Task Force has delayed shaping any recommendations until the conclusion of its series of topic meetings. Task Force members found there was not sufficient time to have a staff presentation at the topic meetings, hear public comment, deliberate, and make recommendations at the conclusion of each meeting. Ad hoc subcommittees have been formed (see Attachment 1) to allow for more in-depth review of each of the topics and to begin drafting recommendations to present to the full Task Force for its deliberation meetings, scheduled under the revised timeline for March 15, 22, and 29.

Community Forums

During January and February, the Task Force held three interactive community forums: one in Sierra Madre, one in Altadena, and one in Pasadena at Villa Parke Center, which was conducted in Spanish with translation in English for Task Force members. A Student Led Forum is scheduled for Wednesday, February 23, which has been organized and the topics set by high school students. Student body representatives and ASB presidents from Blair, Muir, Marshall, Rose City, and Pasadena High Schools, as well as youth from the Youth Center Collaborative and the Youth Council, all worked together to organize the forum and determine the topics to be discussed. Another interactive forum on the topic of Neighborhood Schools is scheduled for Saturday morning, 9:00 a.m., February 26, at Madison Elementary School. Mr. Steven Bingler, the author of What If? New Schools, Better Neighborhoods, More Livable Communities, will be invited back as a guest speaker at the February 26th forum.

A survey to solicit input and feedback from teachers is also being prepared. Staff is working on a process to ensure there will be confidentiality of teachers' responses. The results of this survey will be tabulated prior to the Task Force's deliberation sessions in mid and late March.

After the Town Hall Meeting to present the Task Force's draft recommendations, there will be three additional interactive community forums to solicit public feedback on the draft recommendations. After these community forums, the Task Force will finalize its report and recommendations to the City Council.

Revised Timeline

At the Task Force's February 16th meeting, a revised timeline was approved and is being forwarded to Council for your information (Attachment 2). In this revised timeline, a meeting on the topic of "Charter Schools" was added, as it was felt that there would not be sufficient time to address both Neighborhood Schools and Charter Schools in one session. The major difference in this timeline is moving the Town Hall Meeting to present draft recommendations to the City Council and the community from late March to the first week in May. Several deliberation sessions to consider and approve draft recommendations have been added, as well as sessions in April to review, edit, and approve the Task Force's report and draft recommendations.

Under the revised timeline, the Town Hall Meeting will be scheduled during the first week of May. This will be a "kick off" community meeting to present to the Pasadena City Council, the Board of Education, the Sierra Madre City Council, Supervisor Antonovich and the Altadena Town Council, as well as the community at-large, the Task Force's report and draft recommendations.

Thereafter, during the month of May and early June, the Task Force will have the three interactive community forums for public input on the draft recommendations. The June 26th deadline for the Task Force to present its final report and recommendations has not been changed from the prior timeline.

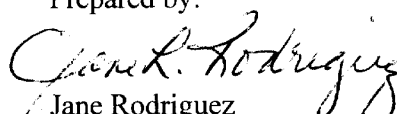
Revised Budget

The Task Force is requesting an increase of \$41,400 to its current budget of \$201,600, bringing the new total to \$243,000 (Attachment No. 3). This increase is due to having research assistants to help gather and compile various information and statistics (\$9,600+), having four interactive forums up front and graphic wall recording at the topic-specific meetings (\$5,000+), correcting an error in the clerical overtime (\$5,800+), guest speakers (\$4,000+), printing (\$10,000+), off-site Town Hall meeting (\$4,000+), and translation services (\$3,000+).

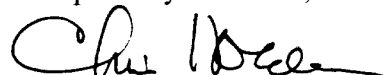
FISCAL IMPACT:

This action will bring the FY 2000 Charter Reform budget to \$243,000. Of this amount, \$238,00 is from the City's General Fund, and \$5,000 is from the City of Sierra Madre.

Prepared by:


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City Clerk

Respectfully submitted,


Chris Holden, Chair
Charter Reform Task Force