County of Los Angeles
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE
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WILLIAM T FUJIOKA
Chief Executive Officer

Board of Supervisors
GLORIA MOLINA
First District

MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
Second District

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
Third District

DON KNABE
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Fifth District

May 16, 2011

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich, Chair
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: William T Fujioka
Chief Executive Officer

STRENGTHENING THE COUNTY'S ROLE IN GOVERNANCE OF THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

On March 29, 2011, a motion by Supervisor Ridley-Thomas directed the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), in collaboration with County Counsel, to evaluate the current County ordinance pertaining to the appointment of the Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools, and report back in 45 days with recommendations for amending the ordinance to establish a governance structure consistent with contemporary human resources management and personnel policies.

Your Board has a unique responsibility over both the Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools (Superintendent) and Los Angeles County Board of Education (BOE) in that the County Charter (Article IV, Section 14) authorizes your Board to appoint both the Superintendent and the seven members of the BOE. In the other 57 counties in California, the members of the county BOEs are elected officials, and, in 53 of those counties, their county Superintendent is elected as well. There are only 4 other counties with an appointed Superintendent: Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, and Santa Clara. In each of these counties, the Superintendent is appointed by their BOE.

On June 1, 1971 your Board adopted a resolution to create a single and separate budget for the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), discontinue the relationship of LACOE employees being employed by the County, and transfer the following educational duties and functions from your Board to the BOE:

1. Approval of the Superintendent's estimate of anticipated revenue and expenditures;

2. Allowance of actual and necessary travel expenses, LACOE expenses, and expenses for providing housing for all services of the Superintendent;

3. Any other duties and functions of an educational nature; and

4. Any duties and functions relative to the organization or reorganization of school districts.

Although these duties and functions were transferred to the BOE, your Board retained the authority to appoint and remove the Superintendent at your pleasure, with or without cause, per Chapter 2.07.010 of the County Ordinance. Further, this authority has been stipulated in subsequent employment agreements between the County of Los Angeles and the Superintendent.

It has been current practice, as outlined in these subsequent employment contracts, for the BOE to conduct the annual performance evaluation of the Superintendent and submit it to your Board for your information. As the Superintendent is an unclassified, appointed County officer, and your Board has the authority to appoint and remove persons serving in this position, it is recommended that your Board consider adding the following additional structure to the Superintendent's performance evaluation process:

1. Your Board annually evaluate the Superintendent's performance based on approved measurable goals, which may resemble the Management Appraisal and Performance Plan that County department directors and managers use;

2. Articulate this process in the Employment Contract, as well as your Board's expectations with regards to the Superintendent regularly meeting with your Board and/or your deputies; and

3. Collaborate with the BOE and Superintendent to assess the feasibility of developing a framework for annually evaluating the instructional program performance of LACOE-operated programs, based on student outcomes, with those evaluation reports submitted annually to your Board.

If implemented, these recommendations would clarify the Superintendent's evaluation process, strengthen the partnership between your Board and the BOE, and provide a comprehensive view of the Superintendent's overall performance. Should your Board be interested in adopting any of these recommendations, County Counsel can provide further consultation.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me, or your staff may contact Trish Ploehn, Assistant Chief Executive Officer, at (213) 974-4532 or via e-mail at tploehn@ceo.lacounty.gov.

WTF:TP
CDM:eb

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
Board of Education
Human Resources
Office of Education