



# Advisory Committee to Develop a Plan to Reorganize Clark County School District

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# Plan to Reorganize Clark County School Districts

1. Background
1. Deconsolidation in Other States
2. Issues With Deconsolidation
3. Open Discussion of the Committee's Goals

# Consolidation of School Districts

- Number of school districts in the U.S (*Average district size*):
  - 1940: 117,108 (219)
  - 1970: 17,995 (2,530)
  - 2011: 13,588 (3,650)
- Reason districts consolidated:
  - Provide students with a more comprehensive education experience
  - Reduce costs

# Consolidation of School Districts

- In 1956 the “*Peabody Report*” recommended that the state consolidate down from 186 districts to 17 county-wide districts
- Average district size in Nevada:
  - 1956: 234
  - 1957: 2,563
  - 2012: 25,860

Source: *Reconfiguring the Structure of School Districts* – Jan. 1997

# Consolidation of School Districts

- 1957: 14 school districts in Clark County were consolidated into a single county-wide district
- Clark County District Today:
  - Student enrollment: 318,000
  - Number of schools: 356
  - Physical size: 8,012 square miles
  - Number of teachers: 15,000
  - Total revenue (2014-15): \$3.16 billion

# Clark County Schools

- Clark County School District today:
  - Fifth largest school district in the county
  - Larger student enrollment than 11 states
  - Over 6 times larger in size than Rhode Island
- If the district were broken into 14 separate districts again:
  - Average enrollment: 22,700
  - Average number of schools: 25
  - Average District size: 572 sq. miles
  - Average number of teachers: 1,100

# Types of Deconsolidation

1. Large school district broken into separate smaller districts
2. Creation of autonomist/semi-autonomist units within the district – with the district and sub-units each assigned powers/duties
3. Regional service areas created with all powers/duties still controlled at the district level



# Reasons for Deconsolidation

1. Socioeconomic/racial reasons
1. Greater local control/loss of connection between schools and the district
2. Cost savings

# Deconsolidation: Socioeconomic/Racial

- From the 1940s to the 1960s some large city or county school districts were broken-up along racial/economic lines
- This created intercity school districts with large populations of low-income and minority students
- The federal government has made it clear that they will review any deconsolidation plan that splits the district along racial lines

# District Examples

## Memphis/Shelby County

- In 2011 the Memphis school district voted to combine with the Shelby County district
- In 2014 the six suburban school districts in Shelby county were each allowed to break away from the county district and create their own districts

# District Examples

## Omaha

Enrollment: 45,000

- In 2006 legislation was passed to deconsolidate the Omaha school district into 3 smaller districts
- The deconsolidation plan had to do with both tax issues and local control
- The three districts would have been split on racial lines
- Threat of litigation derailed the program

# Greater Local Control

In some large districts:

- There is a general feeling that the district is just too big to serve each student's needs
- Parents feel they do not have enough of a voice in school policy
- Educators and other school staff feel disconnected from the district administration
- Layers of bureaucracy make it difficult for the community to be involved in schools

# District Example

## Los Angeles

Enrollment: 634,000

- In 2000 the school district adopted a plan to divide into 11 local districts
- The goal was to make the district “*more responsive to the parents and communities, more streamlined and efficient in its use of public resources, and more focused in getting results*”
- The plan was adopted in two months and implemented in 81 days

# District Examples

## Los Angeles

- In 2001 the 11 local districts began operation
- In 2004 the 11 local districts were reduced to 8
- In 2012 the 8 local districts were replaced by 5 “Educational Service Centers”
- In 2015 the 5 “Educational Service Centers” were replaced by 6 geographically based regional districts

# District Example

## New York City

Enrollment: 937,000

- The NYC school district is divided into 32 geographic districts
- These 32 geographic districts serve an average of just under 30,000 students
- Each geographic district has its own superintendent and receives guidance from a local council made up of parents and local representatives



# District Example

## New York City

- In 2002 the city created “School Networks” to empower principals to make the best decisions for their schools
- Each network contains approximately 25 schools
- The networks are not necessarily along geographic lines
- Each network receives 14 support staff
- This program replaced the district’s previous school district offices which were on geographic lines

# Cost Savings

- Researchers agree that large school districts can suffer “diseconomies of scale”
- Researchers differ on what size districts have to be to witness these diseconomies (*Numbers range from 30,000 to 80,000*)

# Cost Savings

- Districts may still be able to deliver some services at lower costs no matter how large they become: capital, food services, high-needs special education and transportation
- Current examples appear to show that for districts to produce any cost savings they will need to fully break-up into smaller districts

# District Example

## Jordan School District (Utah)

Enrollment: 80,000

- In 2006 the school district conducted a feasibility study to break the district in half
- In 2007 voters approved breaking the district apart – with the new district now called the “Canyons School District”
- It has been estimated that the one time cost of breaking the district apart was over \$59 million

# Issues with Deconsolidation

## (Breaking Districts Apart)

- How large will the new district be?
- How can you ensure that the districts are not being broken apart on racial, ethnic or economic lines?
- What will the enrollment policies be? *(What happens to students who live on dividing line between districts?)*

# Issues with Deconsolidation

## (Breaking Districts Apart)

- A full transition could take several years
  - There needs to be a division of assets/liabilities
  - New administration offices have to be set-up for the new districts
  - There has to be a decision if the old district will continue to provide any services (*capital, transportation, etc.*)
  - The new districts have to ensure that they are complying with both federal and state laws

# Issues with Deconsolidation (Creating Autonomist Precincts)

- How many precincts will be created?
- How will you staff each precinct?
- What will the enrollment policies be?
  - What happens to students who live on dividing line between precincts?
  - Will students be able to choose their own school?
  - Will transportation be provided? – If so, by who?
  - Who will run alternative/career tech schools?

# Issues with Deconsolidation

## (Creating Autonomist Precincts)

- It needs to be made clear which powers the district will retain and which the precincts will have:
  - Alternative schools
  - Capital/bonding
  - Career and technical education
  - Collective bargaining
  - Course/grade offerings
  - Food services
  - Special education
  - Teacher school assignment
  - Transportation



# Issues with Deconsolidation

## *(Regional Service Areas)*

- What are your expectations for these service areas and how will you measure their value?
- Will these service areas have any powers of their own? If so, what are they?
- How will they be designed to assist school personnel?

# School Funding Issues

## (Breaking Districts Apart)

- There needs to be a decision if each district will have its own taxing authority
- The state will also need decide if the old Clark County District will still provide services and if so what kind of taxing authority it will have
- Their might be a delay in federal funds following students depending on how the new districts are structured
- It is possible that the new districts will receive different amounts of Title I funding depending on their composition

# School Funding Issues

## (Creating Autonomist Precincts)

- Legislation requires:
  - That the committee ensure that the Clark County School District is funded in accordance with the Nevada Plan
  - That funding be distributed on a per pupil basis to the newly created precincts
- This may be difficult to achieve depending on how the district's powers/duties are divided
- There should be no issue with federal funding

# School Funding Issues

## *(Regional Service Areas)*

- The creation of regional service areas would not change the way that federal or state dollars are distributed to districts

# For More Information

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# Open Discussion