

**CITY OF FRESNO**

**SCHOOL LIAISON ACT**



**October 29, 2015**

The following policies are enacted to develop a closer working relationship between the City of Fresno and our local school districts.

## Preface

Historically, joint meetings between the Council and local area school boards have been minimal. The last meeting between the Fresno City Council and the Fresno Unified School Board was more than 10 years ago. There has never been a joint meeting between the Fresno City Council and the Clovis Unified School Board, the Central Unified School Board and the Sanger Unified School Board.

Many issues affect the Fresno City Council as well as the local area school district governing boards. This is particularly true with the Fresno Unified School District. Better communications between the respective governing boards would facilitate solutions to overlapping issues.

Former Mayor Autry understood the strategic relationship between the City and the Fresno Unified School Board. During his first term as Mayor of Fresno (2001-2004) he attempted to promote a legislation action by the State to enable the Mayor to select Fresno Unified School Board trustees. Although he was unsuccessful in obtaining a legislation solution to grant the Mayor the authority to appoint school board members, he did bring public attention to this important issue.

Other elected officials and community leaders understand the nexus between the academic performance of students of Fresno Unified School District and socio-economic issues of the City. The high dropout rate at Fresno Unified School District has a direct relationship to crime related issues and chronic high unemployment, particularly among young people in Southeast and Southwest Fresno. A significant portion of the City's General Fund is directed at public safety and related issues in the under-performing neighborhoods of Southeast and Southwest Fresno.

It is also very important to engage the other local school districts that fall within the City limits and have a direct impact on the City. Over the past 30 plus years the rapid growth of Fresno to the Northeast and Northwest has added new Clovis Unified and Central Unified schools and thousands of new students. The past 10 years saw major growth in the Southeast area that includes both Clovis Unified and Sanger Unified.

Direct engagement of Council members and school board trustees has been sporadic and primarily based upon the level of engagement of any individual Council member. It is essential that the Council work more closely with corresponding local school board trustees to improve communications and resolve cross jurisdictional and related citywide issues. The primary purpose of the School Liaison Act is to address the above issues by creating a Council Subcommittee to exchange information with local school district subcommittees.

## **ARTICLE I DEFINITIONS**

### **Career Technical Education**

Career Technical Education is a term applied to schools, institutions, and educational programs that specialize in skilled trades, applied sciences, modern technologies, and career preparation.

### **City**

“City” means the City of Fresno, a municipal corporation.

### **General Funds**

Revenues of the City, which are not otherwise restricted as to their use, including monies from local property and sales tax, and other revenue sources. The General Fund pays for core City services including police, fire, public works and parks.

### **Liaison**

Liaison is defined as communication or cooperation that facilitates a close working relationship between people or organizations.

### **School District**

A School District is an independent special purpose government, or dependent school system, which governs a public school system. State and local government regulate school districts. The governing body of a School District is elected by direct popular vote and is called a School Board or Board of Trustees.

### **Subcommittee**

A Subcommittee is a committee created by the Council of the City of Fresno or a local school district, comprised of members of the Council or the school district, for the purpose of advising Council or the school district on matters related to education.

## **ARTICLE II PURPOSE OF ACT**

The purpose of this Act is to develop policies and practices that will improve and further communication between the City and local school governing boards.

Objectives of Act:

1. To improve communications between the City and school governing boards:
2. To establish a Council Subcommittee to work directly with subcommittees from school governing boards;

3. To better integrate General Plan planning and growth with school governing boards;
4. To better coordinate infrastructure expansion and repair with schools located within City limits;
5. To better coordinate public transportation with the needs of our local schools;
6. To explore more efficient planning and coordination between the City and respective school board that may result in cost savings for both sides;
7. To improve school safety through closer planning and coordination with the City fire and police departments;
8. To offer citizens better access to City parks and school grounds after hours and on weekends; and
9. To work closely with the State Center College District and local school governing boards to promote and develop Career Technical Education (CTE).

Accomplishment of the above stated objectives will enhance the working relationship between the City and school jurisdictions located within City limits and afford all entities an opportunity to progress regarding their core mission.

### **ARTICLE III SCHOOL DISTRICT BOUNDARIES INCLUDED IN CITY LIMITS**

The Fresno Unified School District covers all seven City of Fresno Council Districts. The Clovis Unified School District includes City of Fresno Council Districts 2, 4, 5, and 6. The Central Unified School District includes City of Fresno Council Districts 1, 2, and 3. The Sanger Unified School District includes City of Fresno Council District 5. The State Center Community College District includes the entire City of Fresno.

### **ARTICLE IV ESTABLISHMENT OF COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE**

The Council shall create a standing Subcommittee called the School Liaison Subcommittee to meet with Subcommittees developed by Fresno Unified, Clovis Unified, Central Unified, and Sanger Unified School Districts, and the State Center College District. The formation of any specific school board Subcommittee will be

dependent upon a reciprocating school board decision to participate and add its own members (not to exceed a majority of the trustees) to the Subcommittee.

The following general rules shall apply to School Liaison Subcommittee formation:

1. The Council President shall appoint a Council member to be the Subcommittee Chairperson which may be the Council President himself/herself;
2. The Subcommittee Chairperson shall appoint two Council members which may include the Council President to serve on the Subcommittee;
3. All Subcommittee members shall serve a two year term;
4. The Subcommittee shall vote to elect a Vice Chairperson at their first regularly scheduled meeting; and
5. The Subcommittee membership shall be reviewed once a year to replace Council members who have departed or no longer wish to serve on the Subcommittee.

## **ARTICLE V SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS**

When an individual school board forms a Subcommittee to meet with the Council Subcommittee, the following format shall be initially applied:

1. The respective Subcommittee Chairpersons shall communicate to determine the location, time, and date of the first meeting and future meetings for the calendar year;
2. It is anticipated that meetings shall be held twice a year or as needed and that meetings will be between one to two hours;
3. It is anticipated that one of the Subcommittee meetings will be held at Fresno City Hall and the second meeting at a school board site as determined by the school board Subcommittee;
4. Subcommittee meetings shall be open meetings pursuant to the Ralph M. Brown Act, Cal. Gov. Code 54950 *et seq.*, including public noticing of meetings. Minutes will be taken and the respective subcommittee members from both sides will determine the format of the meetings including agendas;
5. The Council Subcommittee Chairperson shall report the results of the Subcommittee meetings on an annual or as-needed basis to the entire Council at a regularly scheduled meeting; and

6. The Mayor and/or City Manager or their representatives and appropriate staff members shall attend the meetings. The school districts, at their discretion, may include the Superintendent or his/her representative and appropriate staff members.

**ARTICLE VI  
ANNUAL JOINT MEETING WITH SCHOOL BOARDS**

The City shall encourage annual joint meetings with the respective local school boards. It will be the prerogative of the Council President and the local area school board trustees to arrange for one annual meeting. At these meetings, the findings and recommendations of the Subcommittees could be presented.

**ARTICLE VII  
ANNUAL REVIEW**

Once a year, or as needed, provisions of this Act shall be reviewed and evaluated to determine the effectiveness of this Act and any suggested amendments to improve policies and practices set forth in this Act.

**ARTICLE VIII  
EFFECTIVE DATE**

This resolution shall take effect upon its final adoption by the City Council.