

California Association of Student Councils



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Student Advisory Board On Legislation
in Education

2008 Proposals

**STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD ON LEGISLATION IN EDUCATION (SABLE)
2008 PROPOSALS
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COMMENDATIONS

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education, a program of the California Association of Student Councils, would like to extend the following commendations:

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education commends the Senate and Assembly Education Committees for their continued support of youth participation and interaction with policymakers and their ongoing willingness to implement student-based legislation.

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education commends Senator Jack Scott, Chair of the Senate Education Committee, and Assembly Member Gene Mullin, Chair of the Assembly Education Committee, for their superb leadership in educational matters and policy within the California state legislature.

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education commends James Wilson, the Chief Consultant to the Senate Education Committee, for his involvement and support of the Student Advisory Board and his continued willingness to coordinate these empowering meetings each year.

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education commends Gerry Shelton, the Chief Consultant to the Assembly Education Committee, for his involvement and support of the Student Advisory Board and his continued willingness to coordinate these empowering meetings each year.

The Student Advisory Board on Education commends the California State Board of Education for its dedication to enhance the equality of public education in California and its encouragement of student input in decision-making, especially by considering the proposals of the Student Advisory Board in November.



The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education

Ninth Annual Presentation to the Senate Education Committee – February 27, 2008

Assessment of Accredited Teachers

PRESENTERS: Jennifer Guan, Gunn High School, Palo Alto; Rebekah Hoggan, Piedmont Hills High School, San Jose; Nicolas Jofre, Silverado High School, Victorville

COLLABORATORS: Cody John Abercrombie, Delta Charter High School, Tracy; Liora Simozar, Beverly Hills High School, Beverly Hills

FACILITATOR: Aaron Feuer, North Hollywood High School, Los Angeles

OUR VISION FOR CALIFORNIA EDUCATION:

All teachers have mastery over their respective subjects and teach with innovative and unique methods, thus allowing students to master the subjects being taught. Teachers care about their students' success on a personal level and strive to inspire students to reach their fullest potential. Pure passion motivates all teachers to promote student engagement in learning. Teachers fully embrace the diversity of opinions in the classroom, providing students with support and increasing students' motivation to excel. Teachers employ a range of teaching methods to accommodate diverse learning styles and to make classroom instruction relevant to the real world.

AREAS OF FOCUS:

Accountability

Actions Recommended:

- Actively support and encourage the extension of SB 2042 (teacher credentialing)¹ to apply to in-service teachers.

Methodology

Actions Recommended:

- Support extra training in different teaching methodologies for instructors who work in underperforming schools.
- Encourage in-service teachers to participate in professional development programs about instructional methods that target all learning styles.
- Support the creation of a “best practices” forum for successful teachers share effective strategies and resources.

Student Input

Actions Recommended:

- Provide opportunities for student input regarding instructional methodology training for teachers.
- Create opportunities for student positions on existing teacher assessment boards (especially for SB 2042 assessments).

¹ SB 2042 was adopted and passed by the legislature in 1998 in order to establish a new system for providing teacher preparation in California. The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing was charged with establishing new teacher education curriculum and program standards in response to SB 2042.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

Efforts to improve teacher quality would entail allocation of funds for professional development, especially for training targeted towards veteran teachers. A best practices network could be maintained at a low cost if resources for teachers were distributed electronically or through paper mailings. Other means of dissemination, including conventions highlighting effective teaching strategies, would incur higher costs. The assessment of in-service teachers using SB 2042 standards would also entail costs. Incorporating student input in this assessment process, however, does not incur any costs.

RATIONALE:

Education drives the development of any individual. Since teachers are vital facilitators of the learning process, effective communication of subject matter is necessary. In our experience, many instructors possess subject matter competency but are unable to communicate this knowledge in ways that encompass different learning styles. We have identified that many students do not reach proficiency because instructors use methods that fail to accommodate individualized styles of learning.

The standards established by SB 2042 for providing feedback to educators currently affect only new teachers. Veteran teachers are not held accountable for their performance and are often not trained in techniques that enable all types of learners to comprehend subject matter. Providing in-service teachers with training in innovative methodology and assessing their performance would facilitate greater student progress.

Since teaching at underprivileged schools poses many challenges for instructors, periodic training and other support are valuable incentives for teachers at these schools.

As primary stakeholders, students should be involved in the assessment process of teachers after they have been credentialed. Students can provide valuable insight to teachers about what techniques are beneficial in the student learning process.



The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education

Ninth Annual Presentation to the Senate Education Committee – February 27, 2008

Student Motivation

PRESENTERS: Amanda Garland, Excelsior Education Center, Victorville; Jenny Heath, Los Gatos High School, Los Gatos; Christian Sabalbuero, North Hollywood High School, Northridge; Stephanie White, Excelsior Education Center, Victorville

FACILITATOR: Morgan Michaels, Serrano High School, Wrightwood

OUR VISION FOR CALIFORNIA EDUCATION:

Our modern world is comprised of a vast community of students who are all motivated to learn, succeed, and embrace responsibilities to themselves and the world. Every job opportunity in existence is known to students, which allows these students to choose the perfect career that serves their interests. All core classes in middle school and high school include relatable real-life applications their curriculum, preparing students for adulthood. California students are encouraged to develop a passion for learning and to expand their personal intellectualism by utilizing the vast opportunities that the California education system offers them. Both teachers and students have a zeal for education and as a result, both groups are completely engaged in the learning process. All parents and schools fully support student's endeavors regardless of socioeconomic factors. Students take classes that truly interest them. The students' thirst for knowledge both inside and outside of school allows them to make the most of their education. Most importantly, all students recognize their responsibility to themselves for their education, and take pride in their achievements. The students who constitute our society recognize and apply what they learn to their lives.

AREAS OF FOCUS:

Expansion of Peer Mentoring

Actions Recommended:

- Adopt an after-school and/or day program in which high school students positively influence elementary and middle school students by teaching them management skills, such as project-planning, goal-setting, and time management.
- Create non-fiscal incentives for student mentors to attract their volunteer work.
- Create a program where high-achieving high school students mentor lower-achieving high school students.

Core Curriculum Adaptations to Reinforce Real-Life Applications

Actions Recommended:

- Incorporate life skills in curriculum of core classes. These skills would include the following:
 - Math- financial literacy
 - English- how to write a resume, interview skills
 - Science- health/nutrition
 - History- current events/ public speaking
- Apply curriculum to relevant careers for example, the concept of parabolas would be emphasized by the teacher to correspond to a career as a firework technician.
- Establish a system for updating life skills curriculum to correspond with modern society.

Exploration of Career Opportunities

Actions Recommended:

- Adopt “elective wheels” to give students a chance to explore different career options.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

Certain costs will be required in order to support aspects of the peer-mentoring program related to program facilitation, supplies, and student training. The time required to incorporate life skills into the curriculum will incur some indirect costs. There will also be costs to establishing a system for updating life skills curriculum. All of these costs will be minimal. Unless elective classes already exist, a moderate amount will need to be provided for establishing new elective classes. Non-monetary incentives for student mentors will cost nothing.

RATIONALE:

This proposal fulfills the purpose of our educational system to adequately prepare students for their future lives. With the ability to relate to their subjects through the peer-mentoring program, students will be more encouraged to go to college and be successful in the community. By incorporating life skills and career specific education into core class curriculum, students will be more prepared with the necessary skills and knowledge to face real life situations. In addition, students will have a longer time to prepare for their futures in terms of their career. By incorporating practical application to curriculum, we are able to engage student interest and give them a better understanding of what they are learning. Students will be given new doors for vocational opportunities that they would not have been aware of otherwise, and they will finally be able to fully grasp information that they learn because they will see how it relates to their futures.

People who goal set are generally more successful in life. The recommendations for this proposal encourage the establishment of the intrinsic motivation necessary for each student in California to sustain an overall purpose in life. With the vocational information that students will learn in their core classes, we are ensuring that every student knows what jobs are available to them, and they can learn their own personal interests and strive for a career that corresponds to those interests. Ultimately, the success of California rests on the drive and motivation of today’s students, and it is important that the education they receive encourages that drive.



The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education

Ninth Annual Presentation to the Senate Education Committee – February 27, 2008

College Preparedness

PRESENTERS: Nick Molencupp, Lower Lake High School, Lower Lake; Estella Perez, Genesis Charter High School, Sacramento; Berenice Salas, Genesis Charter High School, Sacramento; Alexandra Teixeira, Esperanza High School, Anaheim

FACILITATOR: Linda Khamoushian, University of California – Berkeley

OUR VISION FOR CALIFORNIA EDUCATION:

In an ideal state, the entire student population is aware of and prepared for college as well as the work force. Career and life skill classes are incorporated within the A-G requirements. Each student is given equal opportunity and access to these post-secondary institutions. Beginning in middle school, students become aware of the requirements and are able to complete these requirements in high school with the support that they need in order to be successful. To help prepare the student body for post-secondary education, schools promote college prep classes to support the students. Counselors are more available to meet with the students at least once a month to discuss and track their progress and are formally trained in college-prep in order to provide students with the correct information. Any important resource is available to the student for reference. Students enter their senior year of high school prepared for the college admissions process and have fulfilled the necessary course requirements to continue on a post-secondary educational path.

AREAS OF FOCUS:

Requirements for Graduation

Actions Recommended:

- Establish A-G requirements as graduation requirements.
- Incorporate career and life skills into the A-G requirements.
- Require middle/high school academic counselors to track student's progress towards A-G requirements.

Post-Secondary Preparation

Actions Recommended:

- Promote and implement college preparation classes (i.e. AVID/Upward Bound) at all middle/high schools.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

Implementing A-G courses will incur costs in some districts. Books, materials, teacher salary, and counselor salary will account for the majority of cost in implementing the A-G programs. However, it is possible to simply reallocate existing resources to support the transition from current district standards to the proposed standards. College preparation classes will need monetary support for teachers and materials, as well.

RATIONALE:

According to Education Trust-West, an independent nonprofit organization, eighty percent of students plan on attending college but only thirty-four percent of students graduate with the A-G requirements² necessary to attend a UC or CSU. This startling percentage is a reality because of student's lack of awareness and lack of access to A-G. Some schools in California do not even offer all of the A-G requirements. This means that students eager to attend a UC or CSU can be made forego their ability to attend. California's students should have the option to attend the public universities within their home state. The state should consider it their duty to cultivate their young citizens into productive, educated members of our society. By enabling students to be successful in our own state, we will be able to retain and develop talented, native Californians.

Some people may think that implementing the A-G requirements is not feasible because the standards are too rigorous, districts will be resistant to change, and that the costs incurred will be too great. However, there is presently a district within our state that has implemented these standards successfully. In the San Jose Unified School District, A-G requirements have been implemented as graduation requirements. As a result, the district has reached a new level of learning—attaining higher accomplishments. According to Don Iglesias, Superintendent of the San Jose Unified School District³, students are able to complete the required courses in half the time it takes the rest of the state. It has raised the academic performance, as seen in their Annual Performance Index (API) score, and has helped to foster a “college-going culture.” Los Angeles Unified School District is currently undergoing the same transformation as the San Jose district and is hoping to reach the same achievements. Its effectiveness in one district has prompted another district to adopt the A-G requirements as the graduation requirements, and proves that success is attainable.

We recognize that not all students wish to attend college; however, the skills acquired through these courses will benefit the student and are useful in many areas of the workforce. It is also important to recognize that not all students are clear on their plans for college during their early years of high school. Bear in mind, these are 14-15 year old adolescents who are often unsure of their future plans, as should be expected. Some students think that they do not want to attend college and then change their mind later on in their high school career. Unfortunately, it is often too late for them to complete the courses necessary at this point. We need to address this problem and change the system so that four year college is always an option.

² The Education Trust-West. “The A-G Curriculum: College-Prep? Work-Prep? Life-Prep?” Spring 2004.

³ Iglesias, Don; Superintendent of San Jose Unified School District. “Superintendent’s Letter,” 2007.



The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education

Ninth Annual Presentation to the Senate Education Committee – February 27, 2008

Environmentalism in Schools

PRESENTERS: Cody John Abercrombie, Delta Charter High School, Tracy; Liora Simozar, Beverly Hills High School, Beverly Hills

COLLABORATORS: Jennifer Guan, Gunn High School; Rebekah Hoggan, Piedmont Hills High School; Nicholas Jofre, Silverado High School

FACILITATOR: Aaron Feuer, North Hollywood High School, Los Angeles

OUR VISION FOR CALIFORNIA EDUCATION:

California schools are models for school districts nationwide and worldwide, and serve as a foundation for environmental awareness throughout the state. As the California population-at-large is aware of environmental problems, citizens practice “green” lifestyles. California schools recycle and compost all used materials. Students understand how to implement environmentally sound practices. All schools exhibit “green” infrastructure and operate using sustainable, renewable energy sources. The effective learning environment created by clean and healthy school campuses promotes the academic success of students. Environmentally-friendly campuses support the health and well-being of all students.

AREAS OF FOCUS:

Curriculum Additions

Actions Recommended:

- Continue to support the incorporation of environmental curriculum into science and health classes (c.f. Education and the Environment Initiative⁴).

“Green” supply purchasing

Actions recommended:

- Provide incentives and information about the benefits of purchasing biodegradable or recyclable materials.

Infrastructure and facility standards

Actions Recommended:

- Strongly encourage that schools follow the green building standards established by the Collaborative for High Performing Schools⁵.
- Support the beautification of school campuses through the addition of low-maintenance, native plant life.

⁴ The Education and the Environment Initiative (established pursuant to AB 1548 (Pavley) and AB 1721 (Pavley) provides for the development of a unified education strategy to bring education about the environment into California’s primary and secondary schools (<http://www.calepa.ca.gov/Education/EEI>)

⁵ The Collaborative for High Performing Schools (CHPS) oversees the nation’s first green building rating program especially designed for K-12 schools. The CHPS criteria provide a comprehensive system of environmentally responsible benchmarks for schools. (<http://www.chps.net/overview/index.htm>)

Awareness of Environmentally-Sound Practices

Action Recommended:

- Strongly encourage the creation and support of on-campus recycling and compost programs.
- Support the initiation of a statewide campaign to encourage students to adopt environmentally-sound practices.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

Incorporating environmental curriculum into classroom instruction would draw from funding that has already been allocated for the Education and the Environment Initiative. The development of “green” infrastructure according to the criteria established by the Collaborative for High Performing Schools would entail building costs that would be offset by reduced operating costs. Implementing environmentally friendly practices at schools would also incur costs associated with creating and maintaining recycling and compost programs, purchasing biodegradable materials and recyclables for school use, and employing renewable energy sources to power school facilities. Digital, paper, and in-person efforts to encourage environmentally friendly practices would incur development and distribution costs. However, schools that utilize renewable energy sources will benefit from reduced energy bills.

RATIONALE:

Since schools mold students into functional citizens, schools should provide students with all of the tools necessary to lead environmentally responsible lives. Without education about the consequences of ignoring environmental issues, students will not be motivated to protect the environment in which they will spend the rest of their lives. If schools embrace “green” infrastructure and adopt environmentally friendly practices students will be motivated to incorporate environmentalism into their everyday lives. By eliminating the high volume of waste produced by schools, schools will reduce pollution in the environment. Studies have also shown that environmentally-friendly campuses promote higher academic achievement and fewer health problems⁶. Schools with less air pollution reduce the risk of asthma attacks, spread of disease, exposure to toxic substances, and other air-borne allergies. Since green campuses create positive learning environments, students who attend “green” schools will exhibit higher academic achievement and be more productive in class.

⁶ State Education and Environment Roundtable (SEER). 2000. California Student Assessment Project: The Effects of Environment-based Education on Student Achievement. San Diego, CAL SEER.

Student Engagement in Standardized Testing

PRESENTERS: Evan Reid, Excelsior Education Center, Victorville; Caitlin Rose, Esperanza High School, Anaheim; Dana Roth, Red Bluff High School, Red Bluff; Dylan Sampsel, Excelsior Education Center, Victorville

FACILITATOR: Linda Khamoushian, University of California - Berkeley

OUR VISION FOR CALIFORNIA EDUCATION:

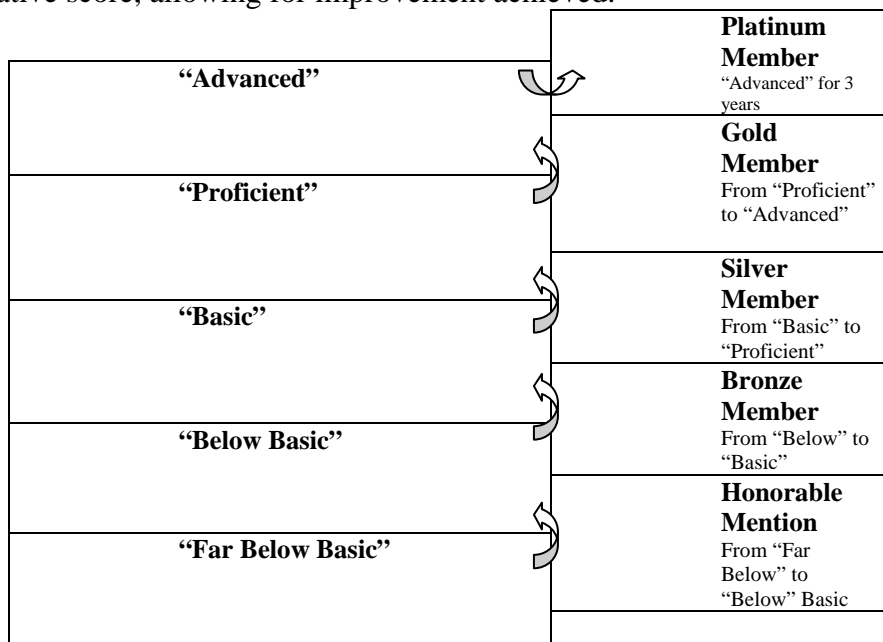
In our perfect education system, all students score exceptionally well on the STAR standardized tests because students fully understand the standards. Students are motivated to perform at their highest potential and care deeply about the results of the test. High student achievement on standardized tests is directly reflected in overall school performance and accountability because each school in California receives high marks on their Academic Performing Index (API). Students are fully prepared by teachers and extra test preparation is accessible and abundant to all students. Tests are written and proctored efficiently so that students remain focused throughout the test, which ensures that scores accurately represent student knowledge. Finally, students succeed in post-secondary education and careers because standardized tests are based on a curriculum that focuses on life skills as well as academic knowledge.

AREAS OF FOCUS:

Student Motivation for Improvement on Standardized Testing

Actions Recommended:

- Create a non-monetary rewards system—such as seals on students’ high school diplomas—to encourage students to further succeed in standardized testing.
- Base this recognition program on the averaging of each student’s subject category scores into one cumulative score, allowing for improvement achieved.



Actions Recommended:

- Implement a Standardized Testing Advisory Council (STAC) to evaluate the design and administration of the test. This will comprise of the following members:
 - A representative from the Education Testing Service (ETS) One BTSA certified teacher
 - A representative from the Department of Standards and Assessments One teacher from the High School level (grades 9-11)
 - A member of the State Board of Education One teacher from the Middle School level (grades 6-8)
 - A member from a PTA/PTSA organization in the state of California ▪ Two Students:
 - A layperson (preferably a parent) One student from a Distinguished School
 - An administrator One student from a school with an API Score below the 50th percentile
 - A counselor Student members are appointed their junior and serve their senior year
 - Four Teachers (union members):
 - One BCLAD certified teacher

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

Our proposal will be equipped with a minimal fiscal burden on the state's budget. The only cost incurred would include the tallying and distribution of appropriate seals to their respective districts. With the further implementation of the Standardized Testing Advisory Council (STAC), additional expenditures regarding the compensation of travel, of room and board, along with any additional expenses for the thirteen members should be considered.

RATIONALE:

Currently, California's students do not feel obligated to perform well on STAR tests due to the fact that they don't recognize how it affects them. The API score is used to grade schools on the rigor of their curriculums, and universities use this score as a measurement to compare one student's grade point average to another's. This provides a way to make the California UC and CSU admissions process as fair as possible. However, students recognize that this is a collaborative effort and are discouraged by the fact that others may not contribute comparable effort. If a system were set in place that directly, individually, and personally gave incentive for students to do well by providing an opportunity for recognition by the state, students will excel.

The education system is a pivotal aspect of our daily lives because it furthers knowledge, which is important for developing well-rounded individuals. Standardized tests should efficiently and effectively assess the quality of education in California. However, the only way that these tests can serve their entire purpose is by doing this accurately. If pupils have no motivation to perform well on these tests, the results are an incomprehensive representation of their abilities. It is inherently unjust to base the destiny of a school on incomplete evaluations. Incentives will help motivate students to perform to their full potential on standardized tests, and this will more accurately reflect the learning and knowledge of students in California.

Students are the main participants in the standardized testing program in California. We possess valuable insight into the everyday workings of this system. However, our input is not being utilized, and our voice should be heard. Students should have input in the evaluation and design of the California standardized testing system in order to more correctly assess the effectiveness of standardized tests. Thus, we propose the Standardized Testing Advisory Council, which incorporates all those affected by the testing system, and remedies the previous detriment incurred by standardized testing.



The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education

Ninth Annual Presentation to the Senate Education Committee – February 27, 2008

Drug/Alcohol Prevention and Intervention

PRESENTERS: Wyatt Frei, Tamalpais High School, Mill Valley; Gavin Front, Sir Francis Drake High School, San Anselmo; Jose Galvan, Genesis Charter, Sacramento; Shandell Jordan, Serrano High, Phelan; Vanessa Madrid, Galt High School, Galt; Leticia Mendiola, Genesis Charter, Sacramento; Kayla Myrick, Lower Lake High School, Lower Lake

FACILITATOR: Tiffany Cheng, University of Southern California, Los Angeles

OUR VISION FOR CALIFORNIA EDUCATION:

The educational system fosters support for a drug and alcohol free lifestyle, as well as takes the lead in educating the public on the negative consequences of drug and alcohol use. School campuses are 100% drug and alcohol free safe havens that offer prevention and intervention programs for the community. Every student is fully aware of the consequences, implications, and ramifications of drug and alcohol use and makes positive, informed decisions accordingly. Schools provide such a wide variety of healthy alternatives to drug/alcohol that drinking and drug use is unnecessary for personal fulfillment. Every student comes to school with a clear mind, allowing them to focus academically and academic performance is enhanced. Ultimately, all consequences of drug and alcohol use—including disease and death—are no longer part of society.

AREAS OF FOCUS:

Support systems for students on school campuses

Actions Recommended:

- Create new and expand existing peer-driven student support systems and encourage districts to adopt such systems.
 - Use existing student governments, Associated Student Body (ASB) members, and student council members to establish such support systems where needed.
- Ensure that every school provides emotional support systems on campus for students dealing with drug and alcohol issues.
- Provide each school with at least one full-time emotional and psychological counselor.
- Maintain positive relationships between schools and local law enforcement.
 - Mandate the presence of local school resource officers (SROs) on high school campuses, though the time spent on campus would be per a school's demonstrated need.
- Ensure school-sponsored events have drug and alcohol interventions while respecting the privacy of students.
 - Encourage school ASBs to form commission to combat drug and alcohol use at school events.
 - Interventions such as purse checks, bag checks, and breathalyzers.

After-school programs

Actions Recommended:

- Expand existing target groups for state-funded after school programs to include high school students.

Actions Recommended:

- Issue a writ of support for and encourage the use of existing drug and alcohol prevention programs such as MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving), DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) and other private entities involved in youth drug and alcohol prevention and intervention, and encourage districts to use such resources.
- Continue to fund existing government drug and alcohol prevention and intervention programs such as the California Highway Patrol's Every 15 Minutes program and Friday Night Live.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

Most of the proposed actions above are zero-cost, for they would either require no funding or the use of already-allocated funding. The writ of support would entail no-cost recognitions of efforts, and the continuation of funding for state programs requires no additional money. Requiring full time emotional and psychological counselors would incur cost, yet the cost could come out of existing school funds. The expansion of after-school programming would also incur cost; however, as Proposition 49 allocates funding to elementary and middle school after-school programs, we propose that the California legislature allocate more of the money earmarked for general after-school programs by the No Child Left Behind Act, Title IV, Part B to high school programs. We would also suggest collaborative work with other groups, such as MADD and DARE, to defer and offset costs.

RATIONALE:

California schools should function as safe havens from drug and alcohol use and abuse. Preventative measures around drugs and alcohol use create positive atmospheres for clear-headed, undistracted learning. Though intervention programs and school resource officer presence, schools can deal with alcohol and other drug issues on campus efficiently, thoroughly, and will be able to keep the good of the students as the top priority. Through high school after-school programming, the educational system will provide students with a healthy, productive alternative to drug and alcohol use.

California schools should provide students with the opportunity for a healthy lifestyle. Harmful self-medication will no longer be the only option for students once a greater student-support system, including the proposed peer-based systems and increased counseling services, is established. Now, many youth receive mixed messages around drug and alcohol use from peers, the media, and even family about the effects of substance use. Once properly educated on the social, health-related, and legal ramifications of drug and alcohol use, students will also be able to make independent, positive, and informed decisions.

California schools should serve as a model for social change, as the educational system creates tomorrow's members of society. Money spent now to keep students off of drugs and in school will result in greater long-term economic stability and decreased law enforcement and prison system expenditures because the California school system will produce more productive, beneficial members of society. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, "alcohol and other drug use increases the risk of dropping out of school." The reinforcement and expansion of student support services and drug and alcohol education, prevention, and intervention programs—as proposed—will keep students in school and produce productive members of society.