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COMMENDATIONS

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

The Student Advisory Board on Education commends the Honorable Jack O'Connell, California State Superintendent of Public Education, for his time and commitment to encouraging the voice of the students of California.

The Student Advisory Board on Education commends the California State Board of Education for pursuing a relationship with students to help education in California progress towards positive change.

The Student Advisory Board on Education commends Rebecca Parker, the Education Program Consultant of the State Board of Education, for her invaluable knowledge as well as her desire to promote students into influential positions.

The Student Advisory Board on Education commends Ricky Gill, the Student Board Member of the California State Board of Education, for his hard work and determination to give students an influential voice by representing the students of California.

DEDICATION

The 2004 Student Advisory Board on Education proposal to the State Board of Education is dedicated to Lorelei Leonhardt. As a past delegate to the Student Advisory Board on Education and a counselor for the California Association of Student Councils, Lorelei offered incredible time and energy to improving California's educational system, as well as supporting the work of the California Association of Student Councils. She will be greatly missed.

California State Board of Education

Issue # 1

Wednesday, November 10, 2004

Topic: **Student Bill of Rights**

Speaker: Jonathan B. Peterson, Lower Lake High School

I. RECOMMENDATION

The Student Advisory Board on Education, a program of the California Association of Student Councils, recommends that the State Board of Education create a *Student Bill of Rights*, distribute it to every school district, and incorporate the *Student Bill of Rights* into social science curriculum taught to all students.

II. SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION DISCUSSION AND ACTION

A. Previous Student Advisory Board on Education Discussion and Action:

- 1970 – A Student’s Bill of Rights, Culver City High School
- 1973 – Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities, Luther Burbank High School
- 1974 – Student’s Rights and Responsibilities, Hiram Johnson High School
- 1977 – Student Bill of Rights for California, Grand Hotel
– District Student’s Rights Panel, Grand Hotel
- 1978 – Student’s Rights and Responsibilities, Hanford High School

B. Present Pertinent Regulations and Policy:

- California Education Code, Section 220
- California Education Code, Section 221.1
- California Education Code, Section 221.5
- California Education Code, Section 233
- California Education Code, Section 233.5

III. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

Due to limited awareness of student’s rights among administrators, faculty, and students, enforcement of these rights is inconsistent. Because these rights are not understood, there is a lack of confidence from both the student and teacher perspectives; students may not understand their rights and teachers may not be confident that they are always respecting these rights. From these root problems, the following may be concluded:

- Regardless of the school, all students are entitled to certain unalienable rights
- There is no one place where students’ rights can be found. Because of their unavailability, there is a general unawareness, resulting in rights not being consistently exercised.

- Rights are not consistently enforced because teachers and administrators are not properly informed.
- Students cannot exercise concern for their rights since they do not understand them.
- Most districts do not have their own bill of rights.
- People consider higher authority a scapegoat due to unawareness, believing that the administration is denying their rights
- Students and staff are less inclined to cooperate from this lack of respect for each other because they are unsure of the rights of both sides.

IV. FISCAL ANALYSIS

The state will incur the costs of creating the new curriculum and distribution of the curriculum to each district. Each district will fund the distribution and implementation of the rights into teaching. When all parties understand their rights and the rights of others, there will be fewer law suits over confusion of a violation. By informing students of their rights, students' interest in the government may increase since it applies directly to them. With this knowledge, they may be more inclined to participate in government in the future.

V. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. CRITERIA FOR IMPLEMENTATION

In order to implement our recommendation, we suggest that the State Board of Education:

- Create a task force composed of students, teachers, administrators, representatives of the Board of Education and an American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) member, preventing future ACLU-filed law suits against the Department of Education. This coalition should address the following topics:
 - Discrimination of students
 - Verbal, physical, and mental abuse
 - Freedom of expression
 - Equal opportunity in education
 - The 5th Amendment
 - Privacy of grades and personal information
 - Equal opportunity for excused absences
 - Lock-out violations
 - Search and seizure policy
 - Detention at inappropriate times
 - Bathroom rights and cleanliness
- Create two versions of the bill of rights; a compilation of every student right in a master list for the administration that includes any legal references, and an abridged version for easy reference for students, teachers and the community.

- Distribute a copy to every district and require that a copy of the abridged version be given to every student, possibly in a student planner or handbook, and be available to the general public.
- Educate school officials on the *Student Bill of Rights* during their credential programs.
- Incorporate the *Student Bill of Rights* into social science curriculum.

B. FIELD INVOLVEMENT

- Each district can support the task force and agree to accept and implement its decisions.
- Contact outside human rights activist organizations to help in distributing the bills, as well as promoting education of students' rights on a local level.

C. ALTERNATIVES

The Board may wish to consider the following alternatives in addition to the prior recommendations:

- Districts could tailor their own *Student Bill of Rights*.
- Seminars on students' rights can be held for school officials as part of staff development trainings.
- Students' rights can be reviewed during school orientations.
- Additional groups within schools can be created to be mediators for violated rights.

D. RATIONALE

Our proposal will improve the relationships between students and faculty, administrators, and both local and statewide government. With a *Student Bill of Rights*, educators and students will be placed on a more even level of understanding. This standard of equal rights will decrease favoritism and inferiority from student to student. The cooperation necessary to support these rights will encourage positive change as every group of the education system realizes that their goals interact with, not detract from, each other. School officials and students may feel more confident due to their complete understanding of their rights and boundaries. Since school officials are informed of the rights, unintentional violation is eliminated. Lastly, knowing these rights will increase responsibility and proactive involvement among students because they will feel a direct connection to the government.

California State Board of Education

Issue # 2

Wednesday, November 10, 2004

Topic: **Disbursement of Categorical Funding**

Speaker: Justin Lam, Bellarmine College Preparatory

I. RECOMMENDATION

The Student Advisory Board on Education, a program of the California Association of Student Councils, recommends that the State Board of Education analyze the method of dispersion of categorical funding by comparing techniques used by different districts and organizations in order to identify and promote the most effective means.

II. SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION DISCUSSION AND ACTION

A. Previous Student Advisory Board on Education Discussion and Action:

- 1972 – Educational Funding, Kennedy High School
- 1976 – State Financing of Schools, Grant Joint Union High School

B. Present Pertinent Regulations and Policy:

- Education code, Sections 63000, 63001
- Education code, Sections 63050, 63053, 63054, 63056
- Education code, Section 64100
- Education code, Section 47636

III. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

The Student Advisory Board on Education commends the State Board of Education for focusing on the Academic Performance Index similar schools rank when allocating equitable resources. We find this to be a fair process and hope that it will continue with constant and effective monitoring. In addition, state and district audits should continue to be used to check allocated funds and employ stringent consequences for negligent spending. We recognize that the state is attempting to create statewide equality by allocating need-based funds through categorical funding. However, evidence shows that some districts improperly allocate categorical funds. Since the majority of students fall under multiple categories, such as English Language Learners or Special Education for funding, some districts have misappropriated categorical funds to overlapping categories. This results in a lack a funding for one or more groups and excess in others. More communication is needed among the state, districts, schools, parents, teachers and students regarding the spending of categorical funds.

IV. FISCAL ANALYSIS

The benefits of an analysis of categorical funding will far outweigh the cost because it will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of these funds. The cost of researching the best practices of appropriation in California is miniscule compared to the millions of dollars lost by districts that create deficits by misappropriating categorical funding every year. The price tag of saving a student with special needs from categorical funding inadequacies will be well worth the dollars spent on a thorough cross-sectional study. Research expenses should be minimal to the state because the State Board of Education has the ability to use existing numbers from first-rate organizations, such as the California Agricultural Teachers Association (CATA). Ultimately, the state will save money because less people are likely to end up in the court, juvenile, and welfare systems due to a superb education.

V. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. CRITERIA FOR IMPLEMENTATION

In order to implement our recommendation we suggest that the State Board of Education:

- Reassess how categorical funding is distributed by selecting a cross-section of districts from all deciles in accordance with the API similar school rank system in order to determine best practices.
- The California Agriculture Teachers Association (CATA) serves as an advisory board on any legislation that pertains to agriculture categorical funding ensuring that the money will be distributed properly within that category. Examine how CATA operates in regards to categorical funding compared to the school board.
- Meet with representatives from CATA or additional agencies to discuss best practices for the appropriation of categorical funds within the school system.

B. FIELD INVOLVEMENT

In order to analyze the method of dispersion of categorical funding by comparing techniques used by different districts and organizations:

- Districts need to evaluate how they handle categorical funding and cooperate with the State Board in providing data
- Other organizations like CATA and the California Association of Teachers for English (CATE) who use categorical funds need to cooperate with the State Board in providing data
- Conduct a survey of students in a combination of categorical programs in different deciles in order to measure their productivity and education

C. ALTERNATIVES

- Educate parents, teachers, administration, families and students, of categorical funding with the Uniform Complaint Procedures (UCP) to help hold schools accountable and prevent the misuse of funds.
- Make UCP available and accessible in every school and educational facility.
- Encourage student and community advocacy groups to promote knowledge of the UCP.

D. RATIONALE

Everyday, students with special needs that would be satisfied through properly used categorical funds are being neglected through improper distribution of categorical funds. The current process of allocation cheats many students with special needs. Categorical funds are intended for specific purposes, yet many districts combine overlapping categorical funds. In some cases this occurs because handling overlapping categorical funds is confusing, while other districts may view the combination of funds as the best approach to spending categorical funds. We, however, believe that it is of critical importance to maintain the categorical fund allocation determined at the state level. This ensures that students who qualify for categorical funding in multiple areas benefit in each of these areas.

The state needs to look at how organizations like the California Agricultural Teachers Association (CATA) and the California Association for Teachers for English (CATE) maintain the efficacy of their categorical funds. Despite debt and financial crisis, agricultural programs in the state of California have persevered. By examining the way these organizations function, districts will improve their ability to handle categorical funds. Every single student that qualifies for special programs will have funds readily available.

California State Board of Education

Issue # 3

Wednesday, November 10, 2004

Topic: **Credibility of Regional Occupation Programs and Fine Arts**

Speaker: Evan Natwick, Holtville High School

I. RECOMMENDATION

The Student Advisory Board of Education, a program of the California Association of Student Councils, recommends that the State Board of Education expand the criteria in the School Accountability Report Card (SARC) to acknowledge the credibility and benefits of Regional Occupational Programs (ROP) and fine arts courses.

II. SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION DISCUSSION AND ACTION

A. Previous Student Advisory Board on Education Discussion and Action:

- This is the first year that the Student Advisory Board on Education has addressed this issue.

B. Present Pertinent Regulations and Policy:

- California Education Code, Section 52300
 - California Education Code, Section 52301
 - California Education Code, Section 52301.5
 - California Education Code, Section 52302.3
 - California Education Code, Section 52302.5
 - California Education Code, Section 52303
 - California Education Code, Section 52310
 - California Education Code, Section 33126.1
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III. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

Individual districts and schools are cutting ROP and fine arts programs out of their budgets. This occurs because ROP and fine arts aren't seen as important as core academic courses.

- ROP and fine arts are not appreciated as an important educational component due to a lack of knowledge concerning the benefits of the classes.
 - There is a lack of knowledge concerning the career technology, application, and life skills that can be gained from ROP and fine arts.
 - Schools are not placing emphasis on ROP and fine arts because they are not given as much significance as core academic subjects in state assessments.
-

IV. FISCAL ANALYSIS

Districts and local schools would be responsible for the cost of printing informative literature regarding the existing SARC. Additional voluntary costs would apply if schools choose to implement ROP and fine arts courses specifically for the SARC assessment.

The cost to the State Board of Education would be minimal compared to the revenue gained by local businesses. The community would benefit from the competent employees introduced to the workforce directly out of high school. Schools would raise their Average Daily Attendance (ADA) due to students' motivation to come to classes that pertain to their personal interests, thus increasing funds available to each individual school.

V. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. CRITERIA FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The Student Advisory Board on Education recommends the following actions as necessary to implement the proposal:

- The SARC should work to expand the definition and evaluation of criteria addressing ROP and fine arts by simply adding points for existing programs. While this does not implement any additional requirements for the schools, the possibility of higher SARC scores will provide incentives for the creation of ROP and fine arts courses.
- For schools who successfully offer fine arts and ROP programs, the State Board of Education should formulate a process for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of these programs. This will allow the SARC to determine which areas they should expand the section on ROP and fine arts and how it could be accomplished.
- The State Board of Education should encourage schools to distribute an informational flyer about SARC to every student in order to increase awareness of the existence of the report. The schools can decide to either distribute the flyers in their registration packet or in another appropriate way.

B. FIELD INVOLVEMENT

To increase the importance of ROP and fine arts, the SARC must be expanded in order to assess the quality of the programs that schools offer.

- Schools can incorporate ROP and fine arts into existing curriculum.
- Local businesses can offer their expertise by evaluating the quality and relevance of the ROP and fine arts programs to increase the quality of such programs.
- Local media emphasis on the SARC will help to increase the status of the report.
- Schools should display the SARC report where it is easily accessible to all students, parents and staff.

C. ALTERNATIVES

The State Board of Education should approve new ROP programs that include aspects of fine arts. This would help students who enjoy fine arts get more hands-on training and through ROP courses.

D. RATIONALE

There is currently no comprehensive review of the crucial need and importance of ROP and fine arts courses. While the SARC assesses all aspects of schools, its criteria minimally addresses ROP and fine arts courses, which needs to be expanded to encompass the benefits of the programs. This detailed assessment is necessary to enable the continuation of these programs.

Although there is a need for skilled workers in various industries, schools are not addressing this demand. Since schools are under the pressure to meet state standards and prepare students for post-secondary education, they also need to cater to non-college-bound students as well. For these students, ROP and fine arts courses are necessary because they will not only expose students to non-academic courses, but also provide them with skills necessary in the workforce. Furthermore, all students, including college-bound students, will benefit from the hands-on learning experience from partnerships with businesses and incorporation of core skills in their daily lives. These programs will also help students without a definite career path to identify their future plans.

By preparing students for the workforce, they are more inclined to become productive member of society. Moreover, as businesses recognize the need for qualified workers, ROP and Fine Arts students will be possible recruits. This potential collaboration would not only benefit businesses, but also students who need stable careers.

California State Board of Education

Issue # 4

Wednesday, November 10, 2004

Topic: **Teacher Instruction of State Standards**
Speaker: Leah Luchetti, Montgomery High School

I. RECOMMENDATION

The Student Advisory Board of Education, a program of the California Association of Student Councils, recommends that the State Board of Education establish more extensive programs and resources to help teachers understand and utilize California's curriculum standards so that they can effectively teach the standards in the classroom.

II. SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION DISCUSSION AND ACTION

A. Previous Student Advisory Board on Education Discussion and Action:

- This is the first year that the Student Advisory Board on Education has addressed this issue.

B. Present Pertinent Regulations and Policy:

- California Education Code, Section 44259
- California Education Code, Section 44320.2

III. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- Teachers may not completely comprehend the state standards.
- Student motivation in academics may be low because the specific course standards cannot be properly conveyed by teachers
- Middle school and high school curriculum are not effectively aligned.

IV. FISCAL ANALYSIS

Minimal costs will be required to complete the goals outlined in this proposal. There shall be nominal costs incurred from maintaining a website, hiring a webmaster and web designer, due to the availability of existing resources. There will also be a moderate cost for the recruitment of instructors for Professional Development Training who will help teachers meet No Child Left Behind mandates, specifically the presence of "highly qualified" teachers in core subjects. There will be no new costs for educators to attend Professional Development Programs since attendance is already required by state mandate and costs are already integrated into salaries of those respective educators.

V. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. CRITERIA FOR IMPLEMENTATION

In order to implement our recommendation, we suggest that the State Board of Education:

- Distribute a syllabus to all teachers with easy-to-use tools such as hands-on learning techniques, structured activities, real-life examples, visual aids,

memorization tools, and class discussion questions during their professional development program.

- Determines the most effective way of implementing the aforementioned Professional Development Program in schools.
- Create an online resource (website) for teachers that focuses on providing a wealth of information for the better understanding of the California State Standards, which includes, but is not limited to: forums for communication between teachers, tips for teaching the standards, personal testimonials, and suggested learning plans.

B. FIELD INVOLVEMENT

- School and district boards implement revised Professional Development Programs to provide innovative learning techniques such as hands-on learning, structured activities, real-life examples, visual aids, memorization tools, and class discussion questions.
- Qualified instructors, defined by their knowledge of and training in the State Standards, assist local educators in their understanding of the aforementioned material.
- California educators attend Professional Development Trainings related to State Standards.
- All members of the California educational community, including educators, administrators, students, and parents, are knowledgeable of and actively utilize the internet resources provided.

C. ALTERNATIVES

The Board may wish to consider the following alternatives in addition to the prior recommendations:

- Encourage meetings between middle school and high school educators to collaborate in aligning curriculum.
- Initiate the standardization of textbooks and other resources in high schools throughout California through Jack O'Connell's High School Initiative.
- Increase number and variety of AP courses and give all students the opportunity to take these higher educational courses.

D. RATIONALE

Not all students in California are receiving the fair quality of education that they deserve. A very crucial element of education in California that needs improvement in order to attain equality is making sure that all students learn the state standards. In order for this to happen, teachers must understand core curriculum standards so that they can effectively educate students and prepare them for life after graduation. In order to provide teachers with a better understanding of standards, accessibility to resources for clarification, and a concise interpretation of the standards is crucial. Giving teachers confidence in their knowledge of what they are teaching is the only way to ensure that all students understand and master California's standards.

California State Board of Education

Issue # 5

Wednesday, November 10, 2004

Topic: **Coping with Overcrowded High Schools**

Speaker: Christopher Khavarian, The Preuss School UCSD

I. RECOMMENDATION

The Student Advisory Board on Education, a program of the California Association of Student Councils, recommends that the State Board of Education create a guideline for implementation of regularly scheduled advisory classes in order to cope with overcrowding in California high school classrooms.

II. SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION DISCUSSION AND ACTION

A. Previous Student Advisory Board on Education Discussion and Action:

- This is the first year that the Student Advisory Board on Education has addressed this issue.

B. Present Pertinent Regulations and Policy:

- There are no previous laws or policies that are known to us that specifically address this issue.

III. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

Teacher Training

- There is a lack of training for teachers to effectively handle and teach overcrowded classes.
- Teachers are unable to focus on individual students and their learning needs and styles.
- Every student learns at his or her own pace, making it difficult for teachers to keep students on the same track in the classroom.

Student Awareness

- Students are unaware of the learning styles through which they learn best.
- Students are unaware of the various resources available to them that would help them achieve a greater understanding of curriculum.

IV. FISCAL ANALYSIS

Implementation of these classes requires the minimal cost of a logistical team to plan out specifics of the advisories in each district, as well as the potential costs of making additional classroom materials available to students. Districts will also incur the minimal costs of publishing and distributing information regarding identifying students' styles of learning and activities students from each learning style can utilize.

While there are minimal costs, districts can efficiently handle overcrowding in schools by providing an increase in individualized attention given to all students in advisories.

Therefore, this would reduce costs of expanding current campuses and hiring new staff

until new schools are created. This new advisory program is a cost-effective solution to address the need for student individualism in overcrowded schools.

V. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. CRITERIA FOR IMPLEMENTATION

In order to implement beneficial advisory classes, the following is necessary:

- Districts set aside one hour every two weeks for an advisory session, equally shortening all classes on that day to account for the hour.
- Each advisory class is run by an individual teacher with additional aid from volunteer tutors, counselors, community members, and other school staff.
- The State Board creates guidelines for advisory periods, to be implemented in all districts, though they may adapt the advisories to their own schools' needs.
- Teachers and volunteer tutors work to help students identify the methods that are most effective for them by experimenting with different types of learning, which students can then apply to subjects and areas in which they are struggling.
- To provide a familiar environment, creating personal relationships between teachers and their advisory students, all students should remain in the same advisory class, with students of the same grade, throughout their high school career experience.
- Standardized testing is administered by advisory teachers, creating a familiar and stress-free environment for students to test in.
- The State Board offers incentives to schools, such as awards or levels of accreditation, if these advisory programs are effectively implemented.

B. FIELD INVOLVEMENT

The implementation of our recommendation also relies on the following cooperation at local levels:

- Districts, teachers, and administrators must be willing to actively participate and support these advisory classes.
- College students, especially those studying to be teachers, must serve as tutors in exchange for community service or college course credits.
- Other community members must actively participate to help students within the classes.
- Parental support for this program, including the contribution of supplies and/or time.

C. ALTERNATIVES

In the event that regularly scheduled advisory classes cannot be implemented, we recommend the following alternatives:

- The State Board develops literature to distribute to teachers and/or students, which discusses the different learning styles and provides methods to help identify them.
- The State Board implements a program for staff developmental meetings, including staff and student representatives, regarding teaching strategies which will help deal with overcrowded classes. This program will give teachers and students the opportunity to collaborate on techniques in handling overcrowded classrooms.

D. RATIONALE

Throughout California, students find themselves in overcrowded classrooms which do not allow them to express their individuality and learn at their own pace. With limited time and resources, teachers are unable to provide the amount of personal attention that they would ideally give their students. Regularly scheduled advisory classes are low-cost solutions that create an improved learning environment for students. In this improved environment, students will be able to better utilize their educational resources to help identify and maximize their potential. Recommended advisories provide students with the personal attention not given in overcrowded classes. The advisory class helps students better connect with peers and teachers, because they have the opportunity to bond with the same group throughout their high school career. This family-like atmosphere provides students with a greater sense of belonging, allowing them to clearly and confidently express themselves. During advisory, students also have the opportunity to work with teachers, tutors, and each other to explore and develop their own personalized styles of learning, allowing them to work at their own pace and maximize their potential within existing large class sizes.

California State Board of Education

Issue # 6

Wednesday, November 10, 2004

Topic: **Sexual Orientation Education**

Speaker: Blaise Patzkowski, La Mirada High School

I. RECOMMENDATION

The Student Advisory Board on Education, a program of the California Association of Student Councils, recommends that the State Board of Education integrate sexual orientation curriculum regarding Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) issues into California State Social Science, Language Arts, Science, and/or Health education standards.

II. SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION DISCUSSION AND ACTION

A. Previous Student Advisory Board on Education Discussion and Action:

- This is the first year the Student Advisory Board on Education has addressed this issue

B. Present Pertinent Regulations and Policy:

- AB 537
- Education Code, Section 51210(c)
- Education Code, Section 48900.3
- Education Code, Section 201(e)
- Education Code, Section 51220(b)

III. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

There is a lack of sufficient knowledge and education concerning key LGBTQ issues among public high school students because the curriculum falls short in acknowledging sexuality. There is a strong correlation between the negative social stigma of LGBTQ students and the intolerant school community on the subject of LGBTQ. The lack of information provided to students on these issues has created ill-informed citizens and has perpetuated a generation of intolerance. Having students learn about safe sex, HIV/AIDS and STDS would provide a safer community for students as well as a method for the prevention of the spread of disease.

IV. FISCAL ANALYSIS

Integrating LGBTQ curriculum into the existing California state standards will require minimal expenses. Revising the current standards and the distribution of the updated standards would be the only costs incurred. This could be combined with the preexisting \$135 million allocated for abstinence and sexual education. These costs would be additionally counterbalanced by avoiding possible lawsuits regarding harassment and other crimes related to LGBTQ issues.

V. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. CRITERIA FOR IMPLEMENTATION

In order to implement our recommendation we suggest that the State Board of Education:

- Implement LGBTQ issues, including HIV/AIDS, safe sex, the definition of sexual preference, and awareness of social issues, into applicable high school curriculum.
- Incorporate input from students into the creation of the curriculum.
- Recommend that all school mission statements include guidelines of protection of actual or perceived sexual orientations and gender identities.

B. FIELD INVOLVEMENT

In order to create a tolerant and educated school community, the curriculum must encompass subject matter regarding all diverse sexual preferences and pertinent issues.

In order to achieve this:

- Teachers can teach objective LGBTQ curriculum within existing standards.
- Administrators can support and enforce the new curriculum standards.
- School administrators can make information on LGBTQ issues readily available on school campuses.
- School administrators can inform parents that the school will be a LGBTQ safe environment through student handbooks, school newsletters, e-mails, back-to-school nights, and open houses.

C. ALTERNATIVES

The Board may wish to consider the following alternatives in addition to the above recommendations:

- Have high school counselors trained in issues pertaining to sexuality in order to support those students who are in need of help or wish to seek information on such topics.
- Supply both classical and contemporary literature pertaining to LGBTQ issues in all public high school libraries.

D. RATIONALE

Currently, California has no state-funded programs to prevent discrimination against homosexual or bisexual students. This has created a learning environment that allows prejudice to spread and the well-being of California students to be pushed aside. In 1997, a Washington State Safe Schools Report came to the conclusion that 34% of the LGBTQ students surveyed in the nation have been the target of verbal assaults. The California State Department of Education has a responsibility to protect, serve and educate each student, regardless of their sexual orientation. The only way to curb intolerance and misunderstanding in the schools is to incorporate central knowledge concerning this subject core curriculum.

In order to create a more comfortable learning environment for all students, students must be exposed to curriculum discussing LGBTQ issues. This includes the crucial topic of safe sex. Those who discriminate generally have a lack of complete understanding of the LGBTQ community, creating intolerance that only begets more intolerance. From a 1997

survey, an overwhelming 97% of the students in public high schools nationwide reported regularly hearing homophobic remarks by their student peers.

We all strive for cohesive and supportive learning environments throughout California. A safer and more knowledgeable environment leads to an increase in awareness of student and human equality regardless of sexual identity. Also, the slowing of the spread of diseases such as HIV/AIDS could be an additional result. There is also evidence that the suicide rates and suicide attempts of LGBTQ students will fall pending the teaching of understanding in schools; from a recent Safe Schools Report the LGBTQ population is more than four times as likely to attempt suicide as those who are heterosexual.

Furthermore, the status of the LGBTQ rights movement will continue to rise higher on the agenda if the root of the problem is not addressed. Equality in the educational process can only come from a complete understanding and awareness of all lifestyles.