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## **Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education**

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education (SABLE) is a program of the California Association of Student Councils. The conference is a continuation of the Student Advisory Board on Education (SABE), which occurs each November. Whereas SABE delegates present to the State Board of Education, SABLE offers students the opportunity to present recommendations to and engage in dialogue with members of the Senate and Assembly Education Committees. For three days, the student delegates continue their discussion of key education issues determined at SABE, aligning their proposals to fit under the jurisdiction of the California state legislature.

## **California Association of Student Councils**

The California Association of Student Councils (CASC) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that works towards developing skilled leaders. Our focus is peer training of students and advisors to foster self-esteem and build citizenship. CASC serves as an advocate for youth, provides a channel for student views and empowers youth to take action.

CASC is led by a group of high school students known collectively as the State Council with the support of a Board of Directors. We believe in youth leadership and empowerment; thus all of our programs, such as the annual Student Advisory Board on Education in Sacramento and the Elementary/Middle school conferences, are truly led by students. We promote this philosophy even further within each program. All of our conferences include council sessions led by highly trained high school and college counselors.

## **Collaboration with the Association of Young Leaders**

We are honored to have a delegation from the Association of Young Leaders, the Russian sister-organization to the California Association of Student Councils, join this year's Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education. While serving on staff, their hope is to learn from our program in order to implement similar programs for youth in Russia. Through teaching each other about our best practices and exchanging in cross-cultural discussions, we came to the conclusion that when we share common values, we speak the same language. In hope and anticipation of future global collaboration, the entire delegation brainstormed their most important desired outcomes for how education can be improved throughout the world.

Their primary topics, in prioritized order, include:

- Access to education
- Free and affordable education
- Safety in schools
- Universal literacy
- Qualified teachers
- Updated and sufficient supplies

Other topics discussed by the delegation include:

- Student continuation and participation in education without gaps in education
- Cultural awareness education
- Funding to create schools when necessary
- Standardized grade level curriculum
- Accessibility to higher education
- Competitive teacher salaries
- Implementation of certificate of education recognized by all nations
- Greater emphasis of learning second language
- Regulation for sufficient and fair allocation of funding
- Governmental support of education
- Consistent historical accounts in textbooks
- Universal education process
- Universal offering of courses

For more information about the Association of Young Leaders, please visit [www.ayl.ru](http://www.ayl.ru).

## COMMENDATIONS

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education commends the Senate Education Committee for its continuing commitment to engage in dialogue with the students of California. We are greatly appreciative of their dedication to the Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education over the past seven years.

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education commends Senator Jack Scott, Chair of the Senate Education Committee, and Assembly Member Jackie Goldberg, Chair of the Assembly Education Committee, for their outstanding leadership in public education in the California legislature.

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education commends the Association of Young Leaders for their commitment to youth leadership in Russia and for their enthusiasm in creating similar programs in Russia. We are honored to have been able to share our conference with their delegation and to have their leaders work with our staff. We are excited about further collaboration throughout the world with our Russian sister-organization.



## Student Evaluation of Teachers

**PRESENTERS:** Elise Fider, Merrill West High School; Stefany James, San Benito High School; Tucker Morgan, Serrano High School; Brian Rocha, San Benito High School; Jasmine Silva, Serrano High School

### OUR VISION FOR CALIFORNIA EDUCATION:

Every student in California is actively participating in regular evaluations of their teachers. Teachers are using feedback from evaluations critically and constructively to further their professional development and adapt to all their students' needs in the classroom. Assessments of teachers are accurate and unbiased. They are completed in an environment that is open and conducive to honesty, giving the evaluations credibility and ensuring their productiveness. Students and teachers have complete awareness of the evaluation process and its benefits. All students actively participate due to their understanding of the importance of honest involvement in the evaluation process. Honest student feedback will encourage teachers to take action on student evaluations. Overall, all students are able to excel in all subject areas since their teachers will be more attuned to their students' needs.

### AREAS OF FOCUS:

#### *Components of Evaluation Process*

##### *Actions Recommended:*

- State legislature mandates student evaluation of teachers and allocates funding necessary for implementation.
- Legislators, educators, students and/or the Department of Education collaboratively create a standardized evaluation template.
- Evaluation template includes a universal list of questions, covering topics including classroom management, teaching methods, and other relevant topics.
- Objective of the evaluation is stated on the evaluation vis-à-vis a mission statement
- District school boards add additional questions to the evaluation to cater to local needs.
- Department heads can be third parties to disseminate and analyze evaluations, and facilitate feedback with teachers. Each district can identify their own criteria by which each department is to analyze evaluations.

#### *Implementation of Evaluation Process*

##### *Actions Recommended:*

- Encourage enthusiasm and stress the importance of evaluations to students to ensure their honesty and full participation.
- Disseminate the evaluations to all school districts through the Department of Education.
- High school students complete evaluation on a schedule determined by the school district no less than once per year.
- Department heads at each high school collect and compile a report of findings from the evaluations, identifying trends and other pertinent information.
- High schools combine reports to create a comprehensive review, which is then given to school districts in order for administrators to see overall trends.

## *Post-Evaluation System of Adaptation and Advancement for Teachers*

### *Actions Recommended:*

- Teachers actively review their feedback and make their own personal improvements.
- Department heads and teachers establish a system of feedback and support for improvement based upon information from evaluations.

### *Future Analysis of Process*

#### *Actions Recommended:*

- School districts evaluate the functionality of the evaluation program and offer localized recommendations for implementation after several years.
  - Examine the need for an independent third party data-configuration group.
  - Consider expanding the program to other levels of education.
  - Examine the feasibility of online evaluations versus paper evaluations to decrease costs.

## **FISCAL ANALYSIS:**

While this proposal will take time from instruction to complete the evaluation, the overall improvement of teacher quality across the state of California will far outweigh this minimal loss. Furthermore, costs would be incurred in printing and dissemination. This would be neutralized by several factors. First, teachers will get direct feedback from students to use for their professional development, thus not only benefiting the educational engagement of the students, but also cutting down on costs used for state-mandated staff development days and other staff development programs.

Increased teacher quality will also directly increase student performance. With more students achieving at greater levels, California High School Exit Exam, Academic Progress Index (API), Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), and other standardized test scores will improve. In addition, the students will be more vested in their education by being able to provide feedback. Thus, the likeliness that students will be in class will increase, providing more Average Daily Attendance (ADA) money to schools.

## **RATIONALE:**

Students have a perspective of the education system that often goes unseen and unrecognized by administrators and teachers. Evaluations offer insights into the ever-changing mindset of today's youth in California. They specifically allow teachers to understand the individual needs of their students. A regular evaluation process provides teachers with a framework to build strong habits early on in their teaching profession, and also allows experienced teachers to examine their effectiveness in teaching a constantly changing group of students.

Students will be more engaged in their education because evaluations create an environment of participation and collaboration between students and teachers. Students' passion for education will drastically increase because of their greater responsibility in their own education. Students will be empowered when teachers take their recommendations to heart, and will thus take greater ownership over their education. The ability for a student to be engaged in their education will lead to a more engaged person overall, creating a more educated and involved society. This is a result of not only better teachers, but also the actual process of participation by students in evaluating and taking action on the quality of their own education.

Students have the right to a prime education, and student evaluation of teachers provides a higher quality faculty that can adapt to meet their students' needs. In essence, the communication between students and teachers not only facilitates more effective learning, but also allows both students and teachers to become more vested in their education and more committed to working together for the best possible outcome. Student evaluation of teachers can help return California to the forefront in education by pioneering and creating a workforce better suited for the fast-paced and adapting global economy.

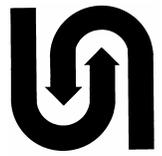
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## Student Input in Administration

**PRESENTERS:** Stephanie Bemboom, Serrano High School; Chris Brownell, Mariposa County High School; Nicholas Flenghi, Fortuna Union High School; Noah LaMoyne, Pioneer High School; Anthony Mercurio, San Mateo High School

### OUR VISION FOR CALIFORNIA EDUCATION:

In our ideal California education system, students and the administration collaborate effectively to create a positive and supportive environment where every student's opinion is fully heard and respected. The increase in student voice heard throughout the levels of administration motivates students to attend school and participate in their education. Students take ownership of their education and pursue positive change in their schools, communities, government, and world.

### AREAS OF FOCUS:

#### *Collaboration and Communication Between Administration and Students*

##### *Actions Recommended:*

- Include a student board member on each district board with preferential voting rights.
- Require time specifically for students to report at district board meetings.

#### *Outlets for Students to Voice Their Opinions*

##### *Actions Recommended:*

- Encourage representatives from each school to report to the student board member in order to relay concerns to district boards.
- Organize town hall meetings for students to specifically voice concerns or issues at the school level.
- Create a student advisory council to district boards in order to discuss and make recommendations about student issues with administration.

#### *Administrative Action Towards Student Needs*

##### *Actions Recommended:*

- Require a time for direct interaction between students and administration, such as a Principal's Corner, open forum, or suggestion box accompanied by a discussion.
- Publicize outlets for student input in administration, such as sharing student board member information or providing site council information at the district level.
- Encourage district boards to collaborate with student board members to address issues.

### FISCAL ANALYSIS:

The inclusion of a student member on each district board of education creates many benefits that far outweigh the minimal costs to districts. In comparison to other methods of collecting student opinion, such as surveys, a district student board member will accomplish many of the same objectives with minimal costs. The minimal costs generally consist of paper and supplies needed for an additional board member. By directly providing student opinion, board meetings can be more

efficient and cost-effective due to less time and money being spent on trying to understand students' needs. The other actions that administrations might take, such as the Principal's Corner, only take up a small portion of time, not money. The establishment of student forums at the administrative level only cost student time as well. Publicizing these outlets would also incur minimal cost, but would be well worth it considering the invaluable information that students can bring.

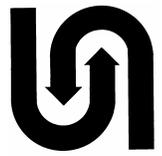
## **RATIONALE:**

Students are the most important part of the education system and are often not represented and heard when they have the most valuable input to contribute. The American School Board Journal argues, "The person often missing from the school board meetings is the very one whom the policies affect the most: the student." Because students feel powerless and unmotivated towards being involved in their education, they need to have direct input and representation in administrative decisions that affect them. Having a student with preferential voting privileges on the district board gives the board valuable insight as to the concerns of students and how they believe policies affect them on the district level. Only when a student board member is able to relay their true thoughts, ideas, and concerns directly through the administration with the respect of having a preferential vote will student voice truly be heard.

While many adults may criticize high school students as being unable to handle the responsibilities of being a board member, the contrary can be seen at the state level. In California, the current Student Member of the State Board of Education serves as a full board member with voting privileges. In Maryland, districts have had student board members with voting privileges for the last twenty-five years. These student members consistently represent the students of the district in decision making from school environment to budget and fiscal issues. Student representation in every district in California cannot only work, but it is also crucial in providing sustainable and valid input into school administrations so that students receive the highest quality of education.

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## Drug and Alcohol Intervention Programs

**PRESENTERS:** Olga Beltsar, Amador Valley High School; Andrew Estep, Serrano High School; Emmalena Illia, Lower Lake High School; Julie Mills, Notre Dame High School; Bina Santos, Notre Dame High School; Stacey Shuai, North Hollywood High School

### OUR VISION FOR CALIFORNIA EDUCATION:

Our vision for the California education system is that it provides a drug and alcohol-free environment for all students. The individuals of society are not victims to such substances; rather, they are in control of their own lives and possess a strong sense of respect for themselves and others. In such a community, people have healthy relationships. Students care about, support, and want to see each other healthy and happy; they do not pressure one another to abuse drugs or alcohol. Society as a whole is improved and more productive because people are involved in healthy extra-curricular and recreational activities. People recognize and admit problems with drug and alcohol abuse and make an active effort to change.

### AREAS OF FOCUS:

#### *Availability of Intervention Programs*

##### *Actions Recommended:*

- On-campus therapy intervention program
  - Targets individual reasons for drug or alcohol abuse through the Matrix Model, which incorporates treatment methods such as relapse prevention, group therapy, drug education and self-help participation.
  - This curriculum takes components from successful community rehabilitation and intervention programs.
  - In addition to the Matrix Model, treatment may include elements of the relapse prevention therapy, motivational enhancement therapy, and supportive expressive therapy.
- Information and intervention-training program for youth
  - Provide students with the opportunity to attend a training that is led by professionals in drug and alcohol abuse and intervention.
  - The intervention program incorporates activities that provide safe alternatives to drug and alcohol use.
  - Motivated and knowledgeable students are chosen by schools to attend the training in order to be peer advisors.
  - Students return to their school with the knowledge to create an alcohol and drug intervention support program that addresses individual needs of students who use drugs and alcohol.

#### *Youth Role Models*

##### *Actions Recommended:*

- Mentoring programs
  - Create peer-to-peer mentoring programs for high school students. Programs will target students addicted to drugs and/or alcohol and makes it mandatory for students caught abusing substances to attend programs where they can discuss their feelings with peers who

- seek to help. Teachers can recommend motivated, drug and alcohol-free student role models ,who can mentor targeted students regularly, and meet the individual’s needs.
- Mentoring programs can also be established so that drug and alcohol-free high school students work with middle school students to endorse a drug and alcohol-free lifestyle.
  - Drug testing athletes
    - Test athletes for drug and alcohol use to drive them to choose between substance abuse and sports.
    - This will help set a precedent for the general population and spread the positive results of leading a drug and alcohol-free lifestyle.

### **FISCAL ANALYSIS:**

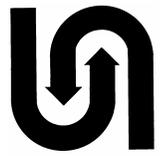
The state will incur the costs of designing intervention programs. However, funds are available in the form of grants and by sharing funds from prevention programs. Training passionate students to help their peers eliminates the costs of hiring expensive professionals. Furthermore, our intervention programs should be subjected to a test of a few years through a pilot program and adjusted to maximize financial efficiency. Money that the state spends now on intervention programs is money that it will not have to spend later on drug and alcohol abusers. By stepping in and solving the problem early, it will cost less than the prolonged consequences of allowing drug and alcohol abuse to continue.

### **RATIONALE:**

Drug and alcohol intervention programs will help students who already use and abuse drugs and alcohol. Students who have already fallen prey to substance abuse will be able to regain a sense of self and become active members of society if involved in an intervention program. These programs will help students to understand that their mistakes are not permanent. Prevention is not enough; we need an intervention program that will address students’ individual motives for substance abuse. Through intervention, fewer students will witness the physical and mental demise of those that they care for and love. This decrease in substance abuse can lead students to a more complete education because attendance will be increased, schools will be safer, and retention will be enhanced. Every person deserves to live a fulfilling life no matter what mistakes they made in the past. It is the responsibility of the California education system to intervene end this destructive cycle among students.

### **SUMMARY OF SOURCES CONSULTED:**

Nichol Muoz-Murrillo, Senator Escutia’s Education Advisor  
Rosielyn A. Pulmano, Senior Consultant Assembly Committee on Health  
*Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act*  
*The Partnership for a Drug Free America*



## Quality Teaching at Underperforming Schools

**PRESENTERS:** Ariel Edwards-Levy, North Hollywood High School; Stacey Mork, San Mateo High School; Lili Pill-Kahan, North Hollywood High School; Lakshmi Subramanian, North Hollywood High School; Mayan White, Santa Clara Preparatory High School

### OUR VISION FOR CALIFORNIA EDUCATION:

All students have an equal opportunity to be taught by quality teachers. Students and teachers have mutual respect for each another. Teachers teach with rigor and relevance, and have control over their classrooms. They care about, relate to, and understand their students; therefore, the students are passionate about learning and actively participate in class. Teachers use innovative methods to engage students, leading students to be self-motivated to learn. All schools provide students with the skills and knowledge to graduate high school and move on to higher education.

### AREAS OF FOCUS:

#### *More Experienced Teachers at Underperforming Schools*

##### *Actions Recommended:*

- Support State Secretary of Education Alan Bersin's proposal to bring teams of experienced administrators and teachers to underperforming schools.
- Support Senator Jack Scott's proposal to force schools to notify school districts of teaching vacancies at an earlier date.
- Provide experienced teachers who teach at underperforming schools with an income that increases over a long period of time, which will serve as recognition of the importance of their work.

#### *Teachers' Comfort Levels in Underperforming Schools*

##### *Actions Recommended:*

- Teachers allocate a portion of their 40-hour work week, such as a conference period, to meet and provide feedback to the administrators of their schools.
- Expand the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program to include all new teachers in underperforming schools.
- Support the extension of the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program from two to three years.
- Provide supplemental funding for materials in addition to those guaranteed by the *Williams* settlement in 2004.
- Allow for teacher input in the purchase of supplemental materials to be used in their classrooms.

#### *Meeting Unique Needs of Students at Underperforming Schools*

##### *Actions Recommended:*

- Add cultural competency workshops to the offered set of courses counting toward the required 150 hours of training for teachers to renew their credentials.

- Include student members on the committee that creates the cultural competency workshop curriculum.

## **FISCAL ANALYSIS:**

If the state provides monetary incentives to teachers the longer they work at an underperforming school, the number of experienced teachers working in underperforming schools will grow. Allocating more funds to the Peer Assistance and Review program will lead teachers involved in the program to become more comfortable with teaching, thus increasing teacher retention and school performance. Counties' allocation of money for supplementary materials in addition to that provided for by the Williams settlement will allow teachers to use their own innovative methods to better teach their students. If the state puts aside money for the teacher training workshops, they will be producing more prepared and comfortable teachers at underperforming schools, eventually improving the schools' performances. By allowing teacher-administrator conferences to take place during the 40-hour work week, this proposal avoids the necessity of reallocating funds toward overtime pay for teachers.

## **RATIONALE:**

There is no overvaluing the importance of a good teacher. Quality teachers are familiar not only with their subjects, but also relate to and engage with their students. These teachers are especially necessary at underperforming schools because they can push students academically, explain the relevance between academics and application in the real world world, and create a comfortable learning environment for students, making them feel at ease as they find their niche at school. In already troubled schools, where students may be lacking many adequate resources, talented and experienced teachers are especially necessary. With the recommendation of an allocation of the time to meet with the administration, teachers will feel as they have a direct say in how the school is run. Since teachers see the impact of decisions by the administration on students first-hand, they should be given even greater voice within the administrations of underperforming schools in order to work towards growth.

A credential renewal workshop will assist teachers who were credentialed before the new state standard was set to gain experience in cultural competency. Expanding the peer-to-peer program that is currently in place will provide first-hand knowledge for new teachers, within an atmosphere in which colleagues can be responsive towards one another. Expansion of this peer-to-peer program is also important to provide a space for more experienced teachers to share their wisdom. In addition, when teachers have adequate resources and materials that they had input in acquiring, it will help them to teach more innovatively and effectively. While quality teachers are important for every student in every school, they are especially important for students at underperforming schools who may have even less access to other resources.

## **SUMMARY OF SOURCES CONSULTED:**

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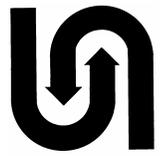
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*Williams v. State of California*, 1998.



## Student Health and Nutrition

**PRESENTERS:** Aaron Fruer, North Hollywood High School; Linda Khamoushian, Canyon High School; Katrina Ortiz, Nogales High School; Amanda Pyle, Pacifica High School

### OUR VISION FOR CALIFORNIA EDUCATION:

Every day, schools in California serve many choices of appetizing, fresh, and healthy foods in satisfying portions that all students can afford. Students have healthy eating habits and weight-related diseases are nonexistent. Healthy food choices in schools result in improved student behavior and academic performance. All schools teach students how to live a healthy lifestyle through physical education and academic courses. The community also plays an active role in promoting and ensuring overall student health.

### AREAS OF FOCUS:

#### *Quality of Health Education Curriculum*

##### *Actions Recommended:*

- Support goals set forth by the California Department of Education’s white paper, “Healthy Children Ready To Learn,” including:
  - Support high-quality instructional programs in health education and physical education that provide students with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to develop and maintain active, healthy lifestyles.
  - Implement nutritional standards for all food and beverages sold on campus.
  - Create a school environment that supports the health of students.
- With input from health professionals, expand upon the existing health curriculum, adding curriculum that addresses:
  - Benefits of a healthy lifestyle.
  - Comprehension of nutrition labels and the new food pyramid with practical applications.
  - Health risks associated with poor eating and exercising habits.
  - Clarification of dietary myths and misconceptions.
  - Importance of developing positive self-image and strong self-esteem.
- Implement health curriculum starting in the first grade.
- Recommend that schools organize farmers markets to increase community involvement and provide healthy food options.

#### *Availability of Healthy Food Options*

##### *Actions Recommended:*

- Implement healthy meal options, recommended by a statewide committee of health officials and students, in all schools within two years.
- Provide “brain food” that promotes alertness and information retention.
- Hold schools to accountable to health requirements that are comparable to those of restaurants and require school cafeterias to publicly post the results of their most recent health inspection.
- Require periodic student evaluations to poll student opinion of food options and adjust meals accordingly.

- Require nutrition facts of all school-provided food be posted in the cafeteria or on individual packages.

### *Quality of Physical Education Curriculum, Requirements, and Extra-Curricular Opportunities*

#### *Actions Recommended:*

- Support Assembly Bill 1779 (Karnette), which would require elementary school students to engage in no less than 20 minutes of physical education each day.
- Diversify sports options available during and after school for all ages, including non-traditional individual and team physical activities.

### *Influence of Media*

#### *Actions Recommended:*

- Restrict advertising that promotes unhealthy lifestyles within school zones,

### **FISCAL ANALYSIS:**

Because healthier alternatives to current food choices will not increase the amount of money spent in most cases, the related financial costs are creating and implementing the new curriculum and awareness programs, developing improved, healthier menus, and providing additional training for staff. In return, the long-term physical benefits of an aware student population would equalize if not surpass any monetary deficits, especially in terms of reduced health care costs. With an increased interest in sports, fewer students would be involved in crime, gangs, and other dangerous activities. Students would also gain invaluable qualities and skills such as teamwork, determination, and time management.

### **RATIONALE:**

The health of today's youth is in critical danger. There is strong evidence that diabetes, cholesterol, and other obesity-related diseases are clearly on the rise. The California Department of Education reports epidemic growth of obesity with 32% of the state's youth overweight and 74% unfit. Because physical fitness is essential to overall wellness, offering a variety of sports activities would provide students with a method of exercise that is both enjoyable and accessible.

Media influences in the form of advertising also impede students' ability to lead a healthy lifestyle. According to the Institute of Medicine, "There is strong evidence that marketing of food and beverages to children influences their preferences, requests, purchases, and diets. The dominant focus of marketing to children and youth is on foods and beverages high in calories and low in nutrients and is sharply out of balance with healthful diets." Curtailing advertising of unhealthy foods near schools would decrease students' exposure and thus hopefully their consumption of unhealthy food and beverages.

Complaints from students attest to their dissatisfaction with current meal options and their interest in healthy alternatives. Teaching healthy habits would not only immediately affect student motivation and self esteem, but would provide students with the necessary knowledge to practice healthy habits both presently and in the future. Moreover, by implementing these recommendations in schools, student academic performance will increase. With many students eating one or two meals a day at school, it is imperative that we offer healthy, balanced meals for students.

## **SUMMARY OF SOURCES CONSULTED:**

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