

**California Association of Student Councils**



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**Student Advisory Board on Legislation  
in Education**

**2007 Proposals**

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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.

## 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.

### TOPIC OF CONCERN: Credit for Civic Engagement Activities

The California Association of Student Councils recommends that legislation be created to establish clear standards and guidelines for schools, districts and students to provide credit for out-of-class leadership and other civic engagement activities on the part of students.

Existing law does provide credit for some service learning activities. However, we strongly encourage legislation to expand existing law by allowing students, who are engaged in qualified leadership and civic engagement activities, to receive credit for this work. Further, school districts should receive funding as calculated by the average daily attendance (ADA) of students and students will be able to complete make-up work incurred over the duration of the activity. The Superintendent of Public Instruction would be authorized to prepare and disseminate an all-district letter that details the specified criteria for eligible student leadership and civic engagement activities.

Under this new law, the Student Advisory Board on Education (SABE) and Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education (SABLE) conferences will be considered educational field trips, encouraging more districts and schools to send students to the program, thereby better representing the student constituency of California. This will also prevent schools and their pupils from being penalized for the students' absences while attending the conference.

We strongly urge members of the Senate and Assembly Education Committees to consider drafting legislation to establish standards and guidelines to provide credit for civic engagement activities.



## **Accommodating Different Learning Styles**

**PRESENTERS:** Shaunt Attarian, Glendale High School; Miguel Fittoria, Palo Alto High School; Lange Luntao, Lincoln High School; Katherine Nguyen, Murrieta Valley High School; Jasmine Silva, Serrano High School; Erika Solanki, Castro Valley High School

### **OUR VISION FOR CALIFORNIA EDUCATION:**

All schools have programs and resources available to help accommodate students with various learning styles. All schools fully support every student's learning style and career aspirations through a wide variety of curriculum that tailors to the different learning needs of students. The school provides co-curricular activities for students that help the students exceed in their respective aspirations. Students are fully engaged and achieve their maximum learning potential due to their placement in classes that specifically tailor to their learning styles. Additionally, students are aware of their learning styles and are placed into classes that accommodate their specific needs.

### **AREAS OF FOCUS:**

#### *Teacher Awareness of Different Learning Styles*

##### *Actions Recommended:*

- Create a uniform evaluation to be filled out by administrators that assesses the teacher's ability to incorporate the student's various learning styles within the lesson plans.
- Create an evaluation for students to fill out for administrations regarding a teacher's ability to incorporate different learning styles within the lesson plans.
- As a part of the teacher evaluation by administrators, include administrator's interview of one or two students of a respective teacher to evaluate the effectiveness of their incorporation of different learning styles.
- Incorporate an evaluation of curriculum on catering to different learning styles in the WASC accreditation criteria.

#### *Students' Awareness of Personal Learning Styles*

##### *Actions Recommended:*

- Teachers are responsible for surveying student opinion on the student's specific learning styles.
- Inform students and parents of students' learning styles via a learning styles assessment.

#### *Emphasis on different learning styles in curriculum*

##### *Actions Recommended:*

- Expand teacher credentialing requirements 5.0 and 5.1 to include specific curriculum on how to teach to visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners.
- Facilitate a workshop training teachers how to incorporate various learning styles at staff development days within districts.

## **FISCAL ANALYSIS:**

Creating and distributing uniform student feedback forms and implementing staff development workshops that encompass various learning styles would incur minimal cost. However, spending money on preparing teachers to accommodate students with different learning styles will allow all students to become engaged. A classroom where students are more engaged creates a more rewarding environment for teachers and will ultimately boost the teacher retention rate. Additionally, students who become more engaged will improve academically, and raise their schools' overall achievement level, allowing the state to spend less money on trying to improve those schools and preserve money for other educational purposes. Teaching to different learning styles will allow students to perform better on state tests and be able to pursue a higher education, in turn, raising the numbers of productive members of society, contributing more to the overall state economy.

## **RATIONALE:**

As an individual, each student has his or her own way of learning and becoming engaged. Additionally, every student has the right to learn to his or her maximum potential. However, the current system of teaching does not accommodate for the different ways in which students interpret and understand curriculum. Because a person spends so much time in school, and because the degree of education they receive has such a direct impact on the quality of their future, we believe that a student should be engaged to their fullest potential by having teachers accommodate their specific learning style.

We understand the dispute regarding the existence of different learning styles, but extensive research by Howard Gardner (*Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*) and Project SUMIT have examined the performance of a number of schools. This research concluded that there have been significant gains in SAT scores, parental participation, and discipline when learning styles are accommodated. Overall, the lack of awareness of different learning styles is a root problem that the legislature has yet to fully address. The goal is not to educate the individual as a group; the goal is to educate the group as individuals.

## **SUMMARY OF SOURCES CONSULTED:**

- Gardner, Howard. Frames of the Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences. New York: Basic Books. 1983
- Hotelwala, Mufaddal. Legislative Aid. Office of Senator Tom Torlakson. Author's Interview: February 20, 2007
- Ramirez, Fernando. Legislative Aid. Office of Senator Mark Ridley-Thomas. Author's Interview: February 20, 2007
- Salgueiro, Ambar C. Legislative Aid. Office of Assemblyman Hector De La Torre. Author's Interview: February 20, 2007
- Commission on Teacher Credentialing Standards, February 19, 2007. <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/>



## **Non-Native English Speakers**

**PRESENTERS:** Alexandria Icenhower, Coronado High School; Andrea Vazquez, Wallis Annenberg High School; Kate Epstein, Los Gatos High School

### **OUR VISION FOR CALIFORNIA EDUCATION:**

In an ideal scholastic environment, every student has an equal opportunity to learn and grow regardless of his or her native language. All English Learner (EL) students are able to understand the curriculum due to their increased English proficiency that is a result of a school's dissemination of bilingual literature. EL students are aware of EL programs, which are available to any student who requests them. All EL students pass the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) and California English Language Development Test (CELDT), allowing them to become educated and influential members of society. Support is given to all EL students through multiple channels, including peer-to-peer tutoring. Bilingual material is distributed to parents so that they can assist and support their children in their academic endeavors. EL students are taught by well-qualified teachers, all of whom have received the Bilingual, Cross-cultural, Language and Academic Development (BCLAD) training, enabling them to better instruct and relate to their students. EL students are all active members in their schools' social environments and comfortable within their schools, becoming culturally diverse leaders in society.

### **AREAS OF FOCUS:**

#### *Support for English Learner Students and Families*

##### *Actions Recommended:*

- Provide at least one bilingual counselor at every school for EL students, using a gradual system in which schools identified with the most need receive the highest priority in obtaining such counselors.
- Implement a peer-to-peer mentor program between current EL students and former EL students who are Fluent English Proficient (FEP) and another between EL students and native English learners that will foster cultural integration.
- Provide after school programs with bilingual tutors.
- Support Assembly Bill 50 (Soto), which enables teachers to provide parents, including those of English Learners, with direct feedback regarding their students

#### *Instruction of Teachers/Staff for EL Students*

##### *Actions Recommended:*

- Require that classes in which the majority of students are English learners be taught solely by BCLAD credentialed teachers.
  - Continue support of SB 395 (Escutia) requiring all EL teachers to obtain the CLAD or BCLAD certificate by 2008.
- Implement training programs for teachers to learn the best methods for instructing mixed classes of EL students and native English speakers.

- Provide teachers with specialized resources, materials, and textbooks for EL students (i.e. books with explanations of literary terms, Spanish-English glossaries in math and science books, etc.).
- Support AB 37 (Solorio), which serves to “provide public school teachers with professional development opportunities in order to improve the instruction of English Learners.”

### *Implementation of Feedback System*

#### *Actions Recommended:*

- Establish a system to annually evaluate EL students’ success given the:
  - EL-to-native English speaker ratio in schools.
  - EL program utilized, i.e. Structured English Immersion (SEI), Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE), English Language Mainstream, etc.
  - EL students’ comfort levels in their school environment.

### **FISCAL ANALYSIS:**

The majority of the costs resulting from the implementation of this proposal would be incurred in the hiring of trained counselors, distribution of literature regarding the assistance for English learners, special teacher training programs, and teacher resources (texts, etc). Despite this necessary funding, these costs will further the confidence of EL students and provide them with a more comfortable school experience. With these extra programs and texts, students will have a higher success rate of passing the CELDT and CAHSEE, which will in turn provide EL students with the opportunities needed to become successful members of society.

### **RATIONALE:**

There are 1.6 million students in California whose native tongue is a language other than English. To put that in perspective, this state has one third of the nation’s entire EL population enrolled in its schools. This only reinforces the sentiment that any issue involving California’s EL students is one of staggering importance. Effective programs have been initiated in the elementary and middle schools of this state, but the secondary level EL curriculum standards need to be amended in a manner that enables high school EL students to succeed. Only 28% of EL students passed the CAHSEE exam in 2006, and therefore 72% of them will not graduate from high school. Moreover, students must be encouraged; a support system of understanding counselors and peers alleviates this need. When parents are provided with resources and advice for motivating their children in the home, students will be dedicated to participating in school even when facing adversity. Assessing and thoroughly evaluating the quality of EL programs will allow for a better understanding as to the exact nature of the problems plaguing such programs and provide decision makers with an improved foundation in their endeavors towards addressing them. Because EL students make up such a large part of our culture and economy, we need to make sure they are provided with the best tools to help them succeed and reach their full potential.

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

- Keigwin, Adam. Director of Communications, Office of Senator Leeland Yee, Ph.D. Author’s Interview: February 20, 2007
- Luna, Yanet. Legislative Aide. Office of Assemblywoman Nell Soto. Author’s Interview: February 20, 2007
- Mason, Sarah. Legislative Aide, Office of Assemblyman Senator S. Joseph Simitian. Author’s Interview: February 20, 2007

- Salguiero, Ambar C. Legislative Aide. Office of Assemblyman Hector De La Torre. Author's Interview: February 20, 2007
- Schieck, Jennifer. Legislative Aide. Office of Assemblyman Curren D. Price Jr. Author's Interview: February 20, 2007



## **Equal Access to Higher Education**

**PRESENTERS:** Will Bronitsky, San Mateo High School; Andrea Collins, Desert High School; Ingrid Harris, John Glenn High School; Morgan Michaels, Serrano High School

### **OUR VISION FOR CALIFORNIA EDUCATION:**

Higher education in California is superb and affordable and available to all students. California businesses have excellent leadership because all of the employees are products of the state's education system. Furthermore, students are completely informed as to how to obtain and pay for higher education through fully staffed career centers on their campuses. The availability of such resources facilitates the achievement of their lofty goals, and those same students are aware of all higher education and job opportunities so they can attend their ideal college and work in their ideal career. When students are highly qualified in a specialized field, they contribute greatly to society and are extremely enthusiastic and motivated in their careers. California's unemployment rate is zero. High school graduation requirements are in line with four-year university requirements for acceptance, so all students can pursue a university education directly after high school. A college degree is a common and achievable goal for all students. Furthermore, our state's social environment fosters a highly educated society and Californians are highly competitive on an international level.

### **AREAS OF FOCUS:**

#### *Disseminating Information on Post-Secondary Educational Opportunities*

##### *Actions Recommended:*

- Support our legislation on "Equal Access to Higher Education" extending Education Code 48431.6 and 48431.7, the "Tenth Grade Counseling" program, to grades 9-12, so that all students, regardless of Grade Point Average are to be seen annually by a counselor to discuss post secondary information. This bill is currently un-backed, but is to be co-authored by Tony Mendoza.
- Establish a system in which counselors are required to meet with every high school student annually to discuss post secondary education opportunities and admissions processes.
- Create a checklist detailing what must be discussed at the counselor-student meetings each year, which would include information regarding all post-secondary options such as trade schools, tech schools, community colleges, and four year universities.

#### *Guidance Counselor Training*

##### *Actions Recommended:*

- Create a system in which all counselors are trained to provide adequate post-secondary information to students at each grade level, from at least 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Mandate that all high school students in the same graduating class be paired with one guidance counselor who will follow them throughout their high school careers.

### **FISCAL ANALYSIS:**

Costs for additional counselor training may be incurred; however, districts may have already allocated funds to such training. The state can profit from our proposed standards for counseling because the number of high school drop-outs will decrease as a result of the increased encouragement and preparation counselors will offer. The state would also benefit fiscally as more students will be able to enter the UC and CSU system, developing into more educated members of society, who will have the knowledge and ability to actively work in the competitive labor market, thereby developing California into a more prosperous state in the global marketplace.

Hiring more counselors may not be necessary, because 3,000 new counselors have arrived at middle schools and high schools across California, with the goal for high schools being a 300 to 1 student-to-counselor ratio. Though no statistics have come through about the new counselors' effect in schools, a 300 to 1 ratio should be sufficient to afford counselors the time to spend with each student to plan for their post secondary education.

## **RATIONALE:**

Above-average students who are labeled as “college bound” are given disproportionate access to college preparation resources and are pushed more towards post-secondary education. At- or below-average students are given exceptionally less access and encouragement to pursue higher education because they are viewed as students who are incapable of succeeding in a challenging higher education environment, despite its importance. This categorizing of students into distinct levels early in their educational careers causes students to grow apathetic about their post-secondary education and furthers the idea that it is not a necessity to provide these “lower achieving” students with information about opportunities after high school as they are assumed to not have the potential to acquire this education and/or are uninterested in this education.

A study done by the University of California/All Campus Consortium for Research Diversity (UC/ACCORD) and UCLA Institute for Democracy, Education and Access (UCLA/IDEA) indicates that 75% of high school students in a graduating class are not college ready, meaning they have not completed their A-G University of California requirements. In another statistic, African American and Latino students reportedly have a 46% increased odd of having low levels of experiencing the “college-going school culture” relative to other racial/ethnic group. If time, energy, and resources are directed towards all students equally, students would be more likely to take advantage of the sufficient information about opportunities given to them on higher education. With equal knowledge given to any and all students regarding college opportunity, student peers of higher level and lower level classes will have purposes for communication and encouragement based on higher education, which will provide a more comfortable school setting influencing and motivating students to continue their education.

In addition, Assembly Bill 1802, passed last year on the Governor's agenda, is a great first step towards what we want to achieve. By requiring that “at risk” students, who are projected to not graduate either because of failure to fulfill requirements or failure to pass the California High School Exit Exam, to meet with counselors about their post secondary options for continuing education, the state is moving in the right direction. Yet we propose that all students be given these mandatory meetings with their counselors, so students not only receive information equally, but so that no one slips through the cracks, i.e. students who are not labeled “at risk,” yet still are not considering post-secondary education. We want to expand upon this bill to make all of this information be provided to every student, so that every high school student is equipped with the knowledge to continue with his or her education beyond high school.

## **SUMMARY OF SOURCES CONSULTED:**

- Gao, Helen. “State Gives \$200 Million for the Hiring of 3,000.” Union-Tribune. 22 January 2007.
- Hernandez, Alma. Legislative Director to Tony Mendoza
- Keigwin, Adam J. Aide to Senator Leland Yee, Ph.D.
- Luna, Yanet. Aide to Assemblymember Nell Soto
- Mason, Sarah. Aide to Senator Joseph Simitian
- Mitchell, Valory F. Chief of Staff to Bill Marc
- Mullin, Gene.
- Ramirez, Fernando. Aide to Senator Mark Ridley-Thomas
- Salgueiro, Ambar Carlisle. Aide to Senator Hector de la Torre
- Rivas, Rick. Aide to Senator Anna Caballero
- Shelton, Gerry. Chief Consultant to the Assembly Committee on Education
- Wadle, Dane M. Legislative Director to Senator Sam Aanestad



*The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education*  
*Eighth Annual Presentation to the Senate Education Committee – February 21, 2007*



## **Awareness of Student Rights**

**PRESENTERS:** Amanda Bettencourt, Lower Lake High School; Anthony Mercurio, San Mateo High School; Joshua Salazar, Lower Lake High School

### **OUR VISION FOR CALIFORNIA EDUCATION:**

In all schools across the state of California, students are completely aware of all of their rights and civil liberties as endowed by the California Education Code, state and federal governments, and other existing laws. Students understand their rights and know how to use them effectively and responsibly to better their education. All students have an easy and accessible way to request enforcement of their rights. The students' rights are posted in every classroom, on each individual school website, and are distributed to students in a clear and concise manner that is accommodating to students' varying learning styles. Since students comprehend all of their rights, they enjoy going to school, feel comfortable, and are safe. There is a mutual respect between students, teachers, and administrators, which fosters a positive learning environment where students are able to reach their full academic potential.

### **AREAS OF FOCUS:**

#### *Clarification of Student Rights*

##### *Actions Recommended*

- Designate a section of the California Education Code for existing student rights to be specified so students, teachers, administrators and parents can easily access student rights information.
- Compile student rights into a clear and understandable manner with the aide of outside student rights organizations (i.e. American Civil Liberties Union, Center for the Protection of Human Rights in Education, National Youth Rights Association).

#### *Information on Student Rights*

##### *Actions Recommended:*

- Require that schools exhibit student rights in classrooms and administrative offices.
- Regulate distribution of student rights information to all schools.
- Post student rights on California Department of Education website in clear language for students, teachers, administrators, etc. to access and use freely.

#### *Administrator and Teacher Roles in Student Rights*

##### *Actions Recommended:*

- Incorporate student rights curriculum into all teacher credential training programs. This curriculum could include:
  - Activities that illustrate how rights can be incorporated into the classroom
  - Student rights organizations that can speak and participate in the programs in order to further the education of student rights from a different perspective

- Establish how schools can effectively deal with different types of student rights violations by sharing with peers in the program.
- Various workshops that test teachers' knowledge of students rights
- Mandate that student rights curriculum be included in the Administrator Training Program (AB 430).

## **FISCAL ANALYSIS:**

Our proposal is cost effective and also beneficial to the education system because we are not creating new rights; we are simply reorganizing and distributing existing rights. The costs incurred in this proposal consist of mainly development and printing costs, which would be minimal at most considering the systems already put in place for the distribution of informational materials at each school in the state. Costs would be very limited to reorganize and set up the California Education Code to make it more clear and accessible to students, teachers, administrators and parents. Since various Teacher Credential programs are already fully funded and supported (including those implemented by AB 430), the only costs would be in designing and implementing the new curriculum into the already existing set of courses. Ultimate economic benefits of having such program include fewer lawsuits against schools for abuses against student rights and a better educated work force entering the economy.

## **RATIONALE:**

The rights of students are an increasingly important issue facing today's education system. If students, teachers, and administrators know the rights to which students are entitled, relationships of mutual respect can be formed to help create an ideal learning environment. Though students obviously have the largest role in the direction of their education, administrators and teachers can greatly improve students' experiences by fostering an environment where students feel comfortable and are able to achieve all of their goals. By implementing student rights curriculum into the AB 430 program and especially into teacher credential training, the most influential people in a student's education will be given the power to teach them in an environment that promotes education as a positive force in their lives. Also, the distribution of the student rights in a way that is accessible to all students, whether online or in paper form, will allow students to take a newly vested interest in their education.

## **SUMMARY OF SOURCES CONSULTED:**

- August, Boyer P. *A Handbook on Student Rights & Responsibilities with an Emphasis on California Law*. July 4, 2006 - 20<sup>th</sup> Edition
- Hotelwala, Mufaddal. Education Consultant. Office of Senator Tom Torlakson. Author's Interview: February 20, 2007
- Mullin, Gene. Assemblyman, California State Legislature. Author's Interview: February 20, 2007
- Wilson, James – Chief Consultant & Staff Director, Senate Committee on Education.



## **Student Evaluation of Teachers**

**PRESENTERS:** Chris Delgado, Malibu High School; D'George Hines, Tamalpais High School; Ericka Craytor, Terra Nova High School; Jennifer Heath, Los Gatos High School; Kayla Myrick, Lower Lake High School; Kellen Walker, E.V. Cain Middle School; Monica Liu, Palos Verdes Peninsula High School; Tucker Morgan, Serrano High School

### **OUR VISION FOR CALIFORNIA EDUCATION:**

All teachers meet student-proposed and state-approved standards for teacher quality. Instructors demonstrate competence through proper credentialing and knowledge of core subject matter. Furthermore, teachers demonstrate educational effectiveness in the classroom and enhance student performance. To facilitate student learning in a positive classroom atmosphere, teachers exhibit passion for the subject matter, patience, and tolerance of a culturally diverse student body. Educators ensure student success by serving as positive role models, delineating reasonable expectations for student achievement, and providing guidance when necessary. Most importantly, teachers and administrators recognize the importance of student input in improving teacher performance by guiding the adaptation of teaching methods to accommodate student needs. Teachers will accept constructive student feedback on course curricula and teaching methods, using the results of student evaluations as a resource for professional development. Teachers who take advantage of continuing education programs offered by districts will maximize student performance and classroom satisfaction.

### **AREAS OF FOCUS:**

#### *Components of the Evaluation Process*

##### *Actions Recommended:*

- Appropriate funds to design teacher evaluations based on student-defined criteria.
- Create evaluation form with a universal list of criteria ranging from management to instruction, professionalism, and personal attributes.
- State objective of the evaluation process on each evaluation form.
- Evaluation developers ensure that survey questions are unbiased.
- Each evaluation has indication of date, course title, etc. for documentation to track improvement.

#### *Implementation of Evaluations*

##### *Actions Recommended:*

- Allocate necessary funding for the creation and distribution of evaluations.
- High school students complete the evaluation as scheduled by their individual districts no less than once a year.
- The California Department of Education and the legislature stress the importance of evaluations to teachers, helping them to see their utility.

## *Effectiveness of Student Evaluations*

### *Actions Recommended*

- The legislature, state school districts, and individual schools encourage students to provide honest and constructive feedback to their instructors by participating in the evaluation process.
- Implements a data system for student evaluation of teachers through the distribution of student surveys.
- In order to increase the reliability of the evaluation system, the legislature encourages district-appointed employees to screen evaluations for biased or derogatory assessments and to eliminate those evaluations from the survey pool and help ensure a fair evaluation.
- Outline the criteria used to assess teacher effectiveness and communicates the objectives of the evaluation process to teachers.

### *Post-Evaluation Development*

#### *Actions Recommended:*

- Districts encourage department heads and administrators to discuss evaluation results with individual teachers and to recommend continuing education opportunities for teachers with low evaluation scores. (Evaluation results will be made available only to department heads and administrators; they will not be open to public scrutiny and may not be used to threaten job security.)
- The state legislature and Department of Education allocate financial and administrative resources towards the expansion of professional development opportunities.
- Districts, in partnership with state policymakers, encourage teachers to participate in continuing education opportunities and professional organization (e.g. conferences, online forums, etc.).
- Adopt measures to protect teachers from denigration or job insecurity under the evaluation system.

## **FISCAL ANALYSIS:**

Previous research has shown that teacher quality, not funding, is the principal indicator of student success. Thus, the benefits students will derive from enhanced teacher quality far outweigh any costs for implementing a teacher evaluation process. Although the development and distribution of evaluation surveys will incur some material costs, districts will avoid the colossal legal expenses associated with firing tenured teachers and hiring new instructors.

While the allocation of finances and personnel for professional development initiatives will entail state funding, the simultaneous improvement in teacher quality and student performance will compensate for these costs. Gradual improvements in teacher quality will soon decrease the need for remedial continuing education programs, thereby minimizing the expenditure of district funds for professional development. Most importantly, enhanced teacher quality will equip California students with the academic resources to pursue higher education opportunities that will increase the viability of the American workforce.

## **RATIONALE:**

Student assessments of teacher quality will allow instructors to receive constructive feedback on course curricula and teaching styles that they can get from no better source. By informing teachers both of their

strengths and their shortcomings, student evaluations of teachers enable teachers to tailor their teaching methods to student needs. Teachers can also maximize the academic success of their students by pursuing opportunities for professional development. In addition, by emphasizing communication between teachers and administrators to improve teacher performance in the classroom, the evaluation system allows teachers to benefit from professional collaboration and organization. State-enforced protection of teachers from defamation and from unwarranted criticism allows instructors to maintain job security. Thus, the evaluation system improves teacher performance without affecting teacher retention rates.

Since student expectations for teacher quality parallel the standards set forth by the federal No Child Left Behind Act and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, the legal frameworks of a process for the student evaluation of teachers currently exists. Creating a statewide, standardized method of evaluating teachers is crucial to give our educators practical feedback on a regular basis. While we test our students on their knowledge and skill sets, let us also ask students how they can better learn the standards we have put in place by allowing them to evaluate their teachers.

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

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- Mullin, Gene. Assemblyman, California State Legislature. Author's Interview: February 20, 2007
- Karnette, Betty. Assemblywoman, California State Legislature. Author's Interview: February 20, 2007
- Scheick, Jen. Education Consultant, Office of Assemblywoman Curren D. Price. Author's Interview: February 20, 2007