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FAX TRANSMITTAL MEMO

U.S. Department of Commerce
Office of the Secretary
Office of Policy and Strategic Planning
14th & Constitution Avenue, NW, Room 5519
Washington, DC 20230
Telephone: (202) 482-1707
Fax: (202) 482-4191

TO: Jon Schnur

DATE: 1/29/99

TELEPHONE: 456 - 5567

FAX: 456 - 7028

NUMBER OF PAGES (INCLUDING COVER SHEET): 2

FROM: Michael Drum
482-3312

Jon
MESSAGE:

Additional info on potential New Hampshire
and Vermont "best practice"

Michael

Program: Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center**Organization :** Consortia of manufacturing companies, Vermont Department of Employment and Training, the Vermont Economic Development and the U.S. Department of Commerce's Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center**Contact:** Paul Demers**Phone:** 802-660-2737 **E-mail:** vmec@together.net**Address:** 60 Main St., Burlington, VT 05401**Recommended by U.S. Department of Commerce****Previous Recognition:** DoC Manufacturing Extension Partnership innovative practice, MEP was recognized in the Council on Competitiveness' report *Winning the Skills Race* for workforce development involvement

Description: No stream of entry level machinists existed in the community. The improving economy needed machinists. In response, the Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center coordinated a consortium of manufacturing companies with the goal of developing a stream of entry level machinists, and improving the skills of incumbent workers. The program involved 500 hours of classroom time and 120 hours of hands on machining work. Because there was not a school with a machine shop within 50 miles, employees agreed to allow students to come into their shops one day a week and work on student type machining projects. While in these plants, students were supervised by full time machinists. While there was a budget set aside to pay for the labor of these employees, almost all of the employers donated the time of their employees and the equipment required. The program was modularized so that incumbent workers could take courses that they needed. For instance, workers who had a good background in math but did not have skills with Trig could take a 20 hour module and cover this material. Other workers with manual skills could take the CNC portion of the course. Approximately 25 incumbent workers took a portion of this course. While the course was taught in the local voc-tech schools, it was administered completely outside of that system because these institutions had few instructors or equipment. The success of this program rested on the consortium of manufacturers that was created to find a solution to the problem. The program is a unique model of an industry consortia put together in an incredibly short time to meet a demand for skilled workers. There are several lessons to be learned from this program, many of those are being addressed in its second incarnation.

Success Stories: There was a 19 year old who had never thought through his life or his work. There was a 55 year old Ph.D in chemistry, a waitress/artist who will be starting in machining and moving on to CAD/CAM engineering. There were a number of workers comp cases in which workers were looking for lighter work that required their brains and not just their brawn. One woman from the welfare roles will be graduating and finding employment in the next few weeks.

Suggested contacts for success stories are:**Students:** Jon Trahan 802-868-5427, Tom Stannley 802-524-1816, Martha Nunez 802-658-0532, Ami LaRoche 802-862-9259**Employers:** Bill Matthews, Vermont Indexable Tooling 802-893-865, Dick Feeser, Superior Tech Ceramics 802-527-7726, Gary LeRoux, Vermont Gage 802-868-2701, Ralph Shepherd, Edlund Co 802-862-9661**Program:** The Virtual Campus of New Hampshire (Promising Practice)**Organization :** New Hampshire's four Community Technical Colleges, the Eastern Region School to Work Partnership, the City of Somersworth, private industry and the U.S. Department of Commerce**Contact:** Dr. Kim Winkelman**Phone:** 603-334-6306 **E-mail:** k_winkel@tec.nh.us**Address:** 601 Spaulding Turnpike #36, Portsmouth, NH 03801**Recommended by U.S. Department of Commerce****Previous Recognition:** TIAP grantee

Description: The Virtual Campus of New Hampshire will extend the delivery of online course work, counseling, evaluation and assessment, and training for technical positions in such industries as biotechnology, telecommunications, and electronics. The goal of the project is to apply

interactive Internet technology as a means of extending technical education, leading to productive employment for underserved populations in New Hampshire. Residents will be able to participate in the online courses at access points on four college campuses and four additional pilot sites -- a public library, a high school, a public housing complex, and a community outreach center.

The project focuses on residents of lower income communities in rural New Hampshire, particularly those who lack basic technical skills and educational opportunities. The project offers online technical education and training for clients complying with Welfare to Work regulations and for workers who want retraining or new skills to obtain, keep, or change jobs. In addition to access to basic courses, students will also be able to use the Internet to interact with mentors in a variety of technology-based industries. The mentors will share their work experiences and help guide end users into meaningful employment opportunities.

Success Stories: Available from contact, if desired.

 *** ACTIVITY REPORT ***

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01/29 15:57	POLICY		6620	AUTO RX	ECM	2 OK 01'43
	202 482 4636					

*California School
Boards Association*

**Education
Issues Briefing**

Vice President Al Gore



*California School
Boards Association*

Education Issues Briefing

“Moving California Forward”

1999



California School Boards Association

The California School Boards Association is ...

- A nonprofit association representing nearly 1,000 K-12 school districts and county offices of education in California.
- A member-driven organization whose purpose is to support the governance team of school board members, superintendents and senior administrative staff in their complex leadership roles on behalf of California's 5.7 million schoolchildren.
- Governed by a Delegate Assembly of 230 representatives from 21 regions throughout California, a 31-member board of directors, and a four-member Executive Committee.

The California School Boards Association provides ...

- Sophisticated policy analysis and advocacy on behalf of public education and children.
- Professional development opportunities for school board members on critical issues.
- Open lines of communication through nationally recognized publications and through informing the media and public regarding school boards and public education.
- Comprehensive policy services, financial programs, legal services, executive search services and much more.

This briefing will be available for viewing via the internet at:

www.csba.org

For more information, contact CSBA at:
California School Boards Association
3100 Beacon Boulevard
West Sacramento, CA 95691
(916) 371-4691
FAX: (916) 372-3369

**California School Boards Association
Education Issues Briefing**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part I: Introduction	Page 1
Aligning and Strengthening Existing Reforms	1
Funding and Facilities	2
Accountability	2
A Long-Range View	2
 Part II: Curricular & Instructional Reforms	 3
Class Size Reduction	3
CSBA Recommendations	4
Reading	5
CSBA Recommendations	5
Standards	7
CSBA Recommendations	7
Testing & Assessment	8
CSBA Recommendations	8
Social Promotion	10
CSBA Recommendations	10
Teacher Preparation & Development	11
CSBA Recommendations	12
English Language Learners/Bilingual Education	13
CSBA Recommendations	13
Charter Schools	15
CSBA Recommendations	15
Textbooks, Libraries & Computers	17
CSBA Recommendations	18
 Part III: Accountability: Finishing the Job	 19
Academic Accountability: Background	19
Academic Accountability: A Broad Approach	20
CSBA Recommendations	21
 Part IV: Budget & Fiscal Issues	 22
Raising Per Pupil Funding To National Average	22
Paying off the \$1.6 Billion Shortfall	23
COLA & Growth	23
The Minimum Isn't the Maximum (Proposition 98)	23
CSBA Recommendations	24
School Facilities	24
CSBA Recommendations	25
 Part V: A Long Range View: 2000 and Beyond	 26

PART I

OVERVIEW

California schools face an unprecedented number of substantive reforms enacted by the Legislature or by initiative during the past two years. In the coming years, the challenge at the state level will be to strengthen and align these reforms, provide the necessary funding for districts to succeed, and develop an integrated accountability system to ensure that all students meet high standards. Everything we do in developing meaningful public education policies must be focused on one goal: improving student achievement.

Aligning and Strengthening Existing Reforms

California's schools must implement an unprecedented number of major statewide initiatives that reform or restructure virtually every aspect of our local educational system. No less than 10 major reforms have been enacted in the past two years. These include:

- Implementation of class-size reduction;
- A complete overhaul of reading and mathematics instruction;
- Development and adoption of world-class standards in English language arts, mathematics, social sciences and physical sciences;
- Development and implementation of a new statewide testing system;
- Enactment of so-called "social promotion" legislation designed to end the practice of moving students to the next grade level unless they meet certain requirements;
- An overhaul of the teacher preparation and development system;
- A complete overhaul of bilingual education;
- A complete overhaul of the school facilities funding system;
- Major reform to the charter schools law; and
- An unprecedented new investment in textbooks, libraries and technology.

Each of these reforms on its own is comprehensive and will have a major impact on the educational system in California. Unfortunately, in many cases, these reforms were developed, debated and enacted in isolation from one another.

The challenge represented to teachers, administrators and local school boards in sorting out the new state requirements mandated by each of these initiatives is daunting. With the exception of developing a no-nonsense accountability system, what local communities need most now from the state is leadership in strengthening and aligning these reforms to ensure policy coherence. School

districts also need time -- time for our schools to implement a coherent package of reforms tied to resources and accountability, and time to make these new initiatives work toward raising student achievement.

Funding and Facilities

The governor and Legislature must allocate the resources necessary for our schools to succeed. Currently, California ranks well below the national average in per pupil funding. Unlike many other states that can call on local communities to raise local tax revenues for schools, California schools are almost exclusively dependent on the state for funding. We cannot meet the challenges ahead without a meaningful investment in schools, including facilities.

Accountability

As the many curricular and fiscal reforms are put into place, CSBA is eager to work with the governor and Legislature on a meaningful accountability system to identify schools in need of assistance. We must provide the necessary support to ensure their success. California has learned valuable lessons from states like Texas and Kentucky – through both their successes and failures. We must build on those lessons and craft an accountability system that will work for California's schools.

Long-Term Master Plan

California schools need a healthy diet of focus and stability. To that end, CSBA looks forward to working with the governor and Legislature in crafting a long-term master plan for K-12 public schools. This master plan would involve input from all of the educational stakeholders plus representatives from business, the public and state and local officials.

In local school districts, the most important role of the locally elected school board is to set the vision for the district based on the community's expectations and desires. This same approach to setting an overall vision at the state level would be immensely helpful. The past years have witnessed a wide range of school reform movements coming from all sides and lacking coherence as part of a larger vision for improving student achievement. The development of a K-12 master plan would ensure that each new reform is based on solid research and is effectively aligned with the state's ultimate vision for its public schools.

PART II

Curricular and Instructional Reforms: A Link to Accountability

The governor and Legislature have correctly placed an emphasis on finishing the job of establishing a statewide school accountability system as one of the first policy tasks in public education. Significant improvements can be made in education policy by pursuing this approach. However, accountability cannot be considered outside of the broader context of the major education reforms that have been undertaken during the past few years. These reforms, if aligned and implemented with sound principles, will make a meaningful difference in the education of California's students. State agencies, such as the California Department of Education and the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, must complete their role in the development of the state infrastructure dictated by these major education reforms. Districts then need time and adequate resources to implement the new directions.

The major curricular and instructional reforms areas that link to accountability discussed in this section are: standards, teacher preparation and development, testing and assessment, class-size reduction, textbooks, libraries and computers, reading, social promotion, and English Language Learners/Bilingual education and charter schools

CLASS SIZE REDUCTION

The Class Size Reduction program is among the most popular educational reforms, and certainly the most expensive, in the history of California. At an annual cost of nearly \$2 billion, it is one of the largest categorical programs. Prior to 1996, California's average class sizes were among the highest in the nation -- a typical classroom in the primary grades had more than 28 students. Despite recent studies indicating that smaller classes (defined as fewer than 20 pupils) can result in higher levels of student achievement, particularly in the elementary grades and among disadvantaged students, the price tag of such an effort seemed almost insurmountable. The cost of reducing class size was particularly difficult during the years of recession and competing demands on California's budget.

In the 1996-97 state budget, the Legislature and Governor Pete Wilson instituted the Class Size Reduction (CSR) program by providing \$771 million in on-going incentive funding to reduce class sizes from an average of 28.8 to 20 students in grades K-3. An additional \$200 million was provided for school facility needs related to reducing class sizes. The CSR program is implemented by school sites in the priority of first grade, second grade and then either kindergarten or third grades

if anything less than all four grades are reduced. In the first year, 51 percent of kindergarten through third grade students participated in smaller classes.

In 1997-98, approximately \$1.2 billion was apportioned to districts to provide smaller classes. Currently, there are approximately 1.6 million California children in kindergarten through third grade participating in the CSR program. Out of 895 eligible school districts, 875 are receiving CSR funds. As of the 1997-98 school year, 99 percent of first graders, 96 percent of second graders, 67 percent of third graders, and 69 percent of kindergartners are participating in the CSR program. In the 1998-99 state budget \$1.5 billion was allocated for reducing class sizes in the early grades (K-3).

In addition to K-3 class size reduction, the 1998-99 state budget agreement allocated \$88.9 million for reducing class sizes in the ninth grade (classes must average 20 students) for up to two classes in the core curriculum areas of English, mathematics, science, and social studies, with the requirement that one of the two classes must be English.

The CSR program is currently being evaluated by a consortium including West ED, PACE and others in the education community. Thus far, the evaluation has been challenging because it is difficult to separate CSR from the other myriad reforms in reading, teacher preparation, instruction materials, etc., in California.

CSBA Recommendations

- Increase the resources allocated for class-size reduction from the current \$40,000 per classroom, to actual costs which are roughly \$60,000 per classroom.
- Continue the practice of counting only K-6 classrooms as available space under CSR. (Districts should not be required to include leased facilities and seventh and eighth grade classrooms as available space since it doesn't reflect the true primary grade facilities needs of the district).

Allow districts with three or fewer classrooms per grade level to be exempt from the CSR penalty, if the average class does not exceed 22 at any one grade level and the average of all classes in CSR is less than 20.

READING

The governor and Legislature have correctly recognized that the single most important skill a child can learn is to read. California's reading scores suffered for a decade under a state-directed approach to the instruction of reading. With the introduction of whole language to the state's curriculum frameworks and instructional materials, most districts were left with a reading curriculum that significantly lacked in the areas of phonics and phonemic awareness.

As a result of the state's dwindling reading scores, state education agencies and organizations closely examined the research on how children learn to read in an effort to develop a framework of what the state's reading program should look like and how reading should be taught. These initial recommendations and program outline lead to the creation of the California Reading Initiative in 1996, a statewide effort to develop a comprehensive reading program that focuses on basic skills instruction in the early grades. The initiative focused on:

- components of the reading program (what is taught)
- instructional materials
- teacher preparation and staff development
- leadership training
- class-size reduction

Over \$200 million was allocated for the initiative to strengthen teacher training and instructional materials. In addition, the state Legislature and Governor Wilson provided nearly \$1 billion in the 1996-97 state budget for class-size reduction in grades K-3 with the intention of providing more individualized attention to students in these grades in order to improve reading and other basic skills. Current year funding for the Class Size Reduction program is \$1.5 billion; this does not include the \$90 million dedicated to reducing class sizes in English and other core curriculum in the ninth grade.

The 1998-99 state budget also provided more than \$200 million for the purchase of phonics-based textbooks for every kindergarten through third grade student and for training in instructional methods to all K-3 teachers. In addition, for those students who are testing below grade level in reading and mathematics proficiency, \$60 million is provided for remedial instruction to bring those students in grades 3-6 up to grade level or higher in those subject areas.

Finally, the state's academic standards were aligned with the principles of the California Reading Initiative.

CSBA Recommendations

- Support the California Reading Initiative. The reading reform is not complete. The transition back to more basic, phonics based reading

programs will take time and need the continued support of the state. Local districts need to know that the state will not change direction again and that the new administration supports the reading reform initiative.

- Encourage the state Board of Education to complete the adoption of curriculum frameworks that are aligned with the state's comprehensive reading standards. In addition, the state board must select an array of instructional materials that are aligned with the frameworks – providing districts with meaningful options for the delivery of instruction without compromising the content standards.

STANDARDS

The first major plank in the accountability structure are statewide standards. These are the state benchmarks against which all children will be measured. Academic standards guide teaching and learning by determining the expectations for what all children should know and be able to do. Simply adopting state standards, however, will not determine the skills and knowledge children will ultimately possess. Children must have access to well-trained teachers, solid curriculum, up-to-date instructional materials, tailored instructional strategies and any other resources necessary to ensure they master academic standards. Without addressing all of the implementation issues inherent in a standards-based educational system and the linkages to other educational reforms, we will have failed the children we are entrusted to serve.

In 1995, AB 265 and SB 430 created the Commission for the Establishment of Academic and Performance Standards. The commission was charged with developing academic content and performance standards, to be adopted by the state Board of Education, in all core curriculum areas for all grade levels. These standards are intended to drive the state's assessment, curricular frameworks and instructional material adoptions. The content standards have been completed and the performance standards and corresponding assessment will be finished by the year 2000.

CSBA Recommendations

The content standards are completed and represent significant consensus from most of the education community. The major challenge ahead is the development of performance standards. While the law requires that performance standards be developed, the state Board of Education must take great caution not to adopt performance standards so detailed that teachers will have no flexibility in the classroom. Districts must be allowed to determine instructional approaches based on teacher expertise, resources, needs of their students and priorities of the community. CSBA also recommends:

- Ensure all legislative proposals are evaluated based on how they support and link to the state's academic standards.
- Discourage substantive modifications to the state standards. The education system needs stability and continuity. Curriculum frameworks are already being developed to align with the state standards. Any substantive revision could have a domino effect – throwing the frameworks, instructional materials and assessment out of alignment with the standards.

TESTING & ASSESSMENT

A fundamental part of any comprehensive accountability system is student assessment. 1998 was the first year in nearly a decade that the state of California administered a test to all of its K-12 students that had the hope of providing longitudinal data on student performance. A history of assessment debacles caused by CAP and CLAS created a vacuum in the state's assessment system. As a result, there has been limited accurate data for the state to rely on to determine pupil achievement. Student assessment systems are particularly important because they are increasingly used as the yardstick by which schools are judged. If the statewide assessment system is flawed or it is not aligned to the statewide standards, then its use as a cornerstone for an accountability system is seriously compromised.

In 1995, AB 265 created the California Assessment of Academic Achievement program and mandated the adoption of statewide academic content and performance standards, as well as the development of a new, high-quality testing system to determine whether school districts were meeting those standards. This new system of student assessment also included the Pupil Testing Incentive Program (PTIP), which allowed local districts to administer their choice of an assessment based on a wide array of tests approved by the state Board of Education. The PTIP was ultimately replaced by the STAR assessment – a single, nationally norm-referenced test to be administered by all districts.

The STAR program significantly changed existing law with regard to the assessment of English Language Learners (ELL). While districts could formerly exempt ELL students for up to 36 months from taking the district's standardized assessment, the STAR program requires districts to assess ELL students in the STAR assessment after one year of enrollment in public school, regardless of their English proficiency.

STAR provides individual student results to each student and parent, and become part of the student's permanent record. Test scores are also available by grade, school, district, county and the state (no classroom data is provided).

CSBA Recommendations

- Discourage adding standards-based items to the STAR test. STAR is a nationally norm-referenced test that provides California with valuable information about how our students compare with others throughout the nation. Adding 30 items to STAR – just a fraction of the standards – cannot adequately measure student progress towards standards and risks jeopardizing the value it provides as a norm-reference test.
- Exempt students who do not speak, read or write English from the STAR test.

- Place an urgency on the development of the standards-based assessment. STAR and the standards-based assessment will complement one another and ensure the integrity of both assessments.
- Ensure that the standards-based assessment ultimately developed does not *de facto* dictate instructional methodology in mathematics. One way to accomplish this is to allow flexibility in the grade levels that are assessed in math. This will ensure that schools providing an integrated approach to mathematical instruction and those that use the traditional discipline approach will be evaluated on an even playing field.

SOCIAL PROMOTION

One of the hottest political issues for state policy and legislative leaders this past year was "social promotion." Although the Legislature and Governor Wilson failed to reach consensus on a comprehensive school accountability proposal, the administration and legislative leaders were able to agree upon a compromise to end social promotion, the practice of advancing a child who is not achieving at grade level from one grade to another. In 1998, the Legislature passed and the governor signed, AB 1626 (Wayne), AB 1639 (Sweeney), and SB 1370 (Polanco), requiring local school districts to establish a policy regarding student promotion and retention in the following grades:

- two through six
- between elementary and middle school
- between middle school and high school

CSBA, along with members of the Education Coalition and the Speaker's Office successfully sought to include three key feature in the legislation:

1. Identification and retention of students, when appropriate.
2. Local education agencies retain decision-making regarding achievement and retention decisions.
3. Decisions concerning student retention based on multiple factors, including the teacher's professional judgement.

Additionally, districts must provide supplemental education for those students who are failing, or at risk of failure, in the critical areas of math, reading and/or writing. Students who are at risk of retention should be identified as early as possible in the school year.

CSBA Recommendations

- Support the program adopted by the state last year in order to provide stability for districts implementing the program.
- Provide additional resources to meet the demand for summer school/intersession and other remediation programs.

TEACHER PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Another essential component of the accountability structure goes to the heart of the learning experience: teaching. The issue of teacher preparation and development has been the subject of significant activity over the last couple of years. Skyrocketing student enrollment, teacher attrition and retirement, and the Class Size Reduction program have brought into focus the urgent need for new teachers. In fact, between now and 2005, it is estimated that California will need 190,000 new teachers to accommodate a projected population of 6.4 million students. Other reforms, such as the new academic content standards, the California Reading Initiative and the passage of Proposition 227, underscore the need for not only a greater quantity of teachers, but also a higher quality.

The November 1997 report of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future highlighted multiple studies confirming that teacher quality is the most influential variable in student achievement. However, the fact that approximately 30,000 teachers held emergency permits and waivers in 1997-98 is illustrative of a crisis in teacher quality. Perhaps of even more concern is that a high concentration of these teachers are serving in urban and rural locations, and teaching in the elementary grades.

The 1998-99 state budget devotes an unprecedented \$95.6 million to teacher initiatives. Many of these initiatives arose out of the work of the SB 1422 Advisory Panel for the Comprehensive Review of Credential Requirements. In 1997, after nearly two years of research and deliberation, the SB 1422 Advisory Panel issued recommendations for improvements in all aspects of teacher development. The primary legislative vehicle for their recommendations was SB 2042, an omnibus teaching bill passed in 1998. With its passage, SB 2042:

- Implements new standards for subject matter studies, preparation, induction (i.e. support and assessment for beginning teachers) and professional development.
- Ensures that subject matter standards will be aligned with the newly adopted academic content standards for students.
- Allows for blended teacher preparation programs for undergraduate students that combine subject matter studies with teacher preparation coursework and opportunities for field study.
- Adds a standards-based teacher performance assessment to the requirements for obtaining a teaching credential.
- Expands induction to every beginning teacher during his or her first two years of service.

In addition to the comprehensive reform enacted by SB 2042, there have been several piecemeal teacher reform efforts during the last legislative session. They address staff development, out-of-state credential holders, and incentives for National Board certification. Additionally, the Commission on Teacher

Credentialing began administering the Reading Instruction Competency Assessment (RICA) in 1998 to all multiple subject teaching credential candidates as a requirement for licensure. As a result of AB 1023, passed in 1997, all teacher candidates will also be required to demonstrate basic computer competency in the use of computers in the classrooms beginning in the year 2000.

CSBA Recommendations

- Support increased funding for scholarship and loan assumption programs, such as the Assumption Program for Loans in Education (APLE), to cover the cost of teacher preparation, including the student teaching component, for talented individuals desiring to enter the profession.
- Support increased funding for the California School Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program. This program is a promising way of recruiting individuals with a demonstrated commitment to their local public schools and diversifying the teaching force.
- Support requiring all teachers who were prepared prior to the alignment of our state's teacher education programs to statewide academic content standards, to take a formative assessment as part of the credential renewal process.
- Establish a state grant program for experienced teachers to train and assist educators in the development and implementation of new induction programs throughout the state.
- Increase beginning teacher salaries. Attract talented individuals into the teaching profession, particularly in shortage subject matter areas such as mathematics by requiring a re-examination of beginning teacher salaries in relation to beginning salaries in other fields competing for such employees.
- Establish a state funded grant program for districts and county offices of education to develop innovative alternatives to the current step salary schedule for teachers. Knowledge and skills based compensation systems deserve further examination as a possible component of an accountability system.
- Support ongoing funding for meaningful staff development outside of the 180 days of student instruction.
- Evaluate recent education reforms to determine effectiveness.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS / BILINGUAL EDUCATION

The issue of bilingual education and strategies for teaching English language learners has been hotly debated for decades. State law has provided little direction or consensus on the issue. The state's Bilingual-Bicultural Education Act of 1976 (revised in 1980) became inoperative on June 30, 1987. However, the Legislature continued funding for the general purposes of the act. Meanwhile, the California Department of Education determined that the general purposes of the act included providing bilingual learning opportunities to each English learning pupil enrolled in a public school. This interpretation was met with resistance from many educators and policymakers who wished to provide other instructional strategies for the English learners.

Since the sunset of the BBEA, the state Legislature has been sharply divided on a state program for English learners. Case law and state board policy added further ambiguity for districts and their programs. The Legislature's inability to enact comprehensive reform addressing the deficiencies of the state's bilingual educational programs, combined with the perception that children in public schools are not learning English, created a vacuum in leadership ripe for the initiative process.

In June 1998, California voters approved Proposition 227 to limit the types of educational programs for English language learners. The initiative requires all children in California public schools to learn English through instruction in English and that all children be placed in English language classrooms – strictly limiting English language learners to sheltered or structured English immersion programs. Parents can waive their children out of a structured English immersion program, but only after the child has spent thirty days in an “English-only” classroom.

CSBA Recommendations

School districts have requested that the state not take away the limited amount of flexibility afforded to districts by Proposition 227. However, there are some minor statutory changes that can be made to remove some of the obstacles in the initiative while still adhering to its goals. Additionally, further data is necessary on the impact of Proposition 227 on student performance. Other CSBA recommendations include:

- Take every means possible to provide school districts with the time and flexibility to develop effective programs to implement Proposition 227, prior to mandating new requirements and regulations.
- Provide resources to school districts to gather data on student performance in the various programs provided to English learners. The state needs accurate data on the effectiveness of all programs provided to our English learner students.

- Enact legislation that allows parents to keep their children in the instructional program of their choice without interruption at the beginning of every school year. Parents who have requested a waiver from a sheltered English immersion program should not be required to place their child in such a class for 30 days at the beginning of *every* school year or whenever the student transfers to a new school.
- Address the myriad of issues relative to teacher credentialing and the CLAD/BCLAD requirements. Now more than ever, all teachers must possess the knowledge and skills to deal effectively with language acquisition.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

In 1992, CSBA supported and the Legislature enacted SB 1448, the state's original charter school law (Statutes of 1992, Chapter 781). The enactment of SB 1448 was in concert with a national movement to challenge existing concepts of school reform and to foster improvement in public schools. To many policy makers and educators, SB 1448 provided a meaningful opportunity for California's schools to expand their reform efforts above and beyond conventional practices. By limiting state regulation, encouraging innovation and requiring governing board oversight, California's original charter school law was innovative and flexible and supported California's system of local school governance and accountability.

By 1997 school districts had approved enough charter petitions to reach the state-imposed cap of 100 charter schools. Although many districts approved charter petitions, a number of policy and operational issues had developed in some charter schools that forced many local educators to approach the continued development of charter schools with caution. Much of this concern was generated by issues that revolved around fiscal and academic accountability, funding, liability and student access.

In response to these and other issues, the Legislature requested the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) to conduct an interim evaluation of the state's charter schools. This evaluation was completed in December 1997 and contained a number of conclusions and recommendations that encouraged the state to conduct another, more extensive study of charter schools. The report essentially concluded that more time and better student achievement data was needed before any final conclusions could be drawn about charter schools' performance and position in the public school system.

Earlier this year and without a more extensive study of charter schools, the Legislature approved AB 544 (Statutes of 1998, Chapter 34) which dramatically altered the state's original charter schools law. AB 544, among other things, raised the statewide cap on charter schools, reduced the oversight and authority of elected governing boards over charter schools, permitted additional agencies to grant charters, allowed charter schools to organize as nonprofit public benefit corporations and altered the petitioning process. Many of these changes were designed to greatly expand California's balanced charter schools law in a manner that is beneficial to charter schools.

CSBA Recommendations

- Include charter schools in any state accountability system.

- Ensure effective oversight of charters by preventing districts from approving charters purely for revenue purposes, by requiring that charter schools be operated within the boundaries of the district that approved the charter.
- Support legislation to clarify that mandate relief under the Charter Schools Act applies to the district and not just the schools in the district.
- Relieve districts from any liability for the debts and contracts of a charter school organized as a non-profit public benefit corporation.
- Require charter schools to share in a district's encroachment costs.
- Allow districts to apply for charter status in order to be relieved of state bureaucracy, provided they are held accountable to the same standards as charter schools.

Textbooks, Libraries and Computers

Over the years, the textbook and library supplies in California public schools have become worn, out-of-date or, in some cases, nonexistent, because other budgeting priorities have come first. Now, with the recent turnaround and expansion in the state economy, the Legislature and governor have been able to commit long overdue resources for updated textbooks that will be aligned with the new state standards, plus important new investments for libraries, library staff, computers and other new education technology.

Local school districts receive funding for instructional materials from the State Instructional Materials Fund. Allocations to districts statewide from this fund totaled approximately \$172 million in the 1997-98 budget year, that translated into roughly \$29 per student in grades K-8 and \$19 per student in grades 9-12. This funding, while helpful, did not come close to meeting the actual costs of textbooks, much less all instructional materials, needed by schools.

In this year's state budget, Governor Wilson and the Legislature agreed to commit \$1 billion over four years for the purchase of instructional materials in the core curriculum areas of language arts, mathematics, history/social science and science. The intent is to provide the funding in four equal installments of \$250 million beginning in the 1998-99 budget year. In the first year, the additional funding translates into about \$43 per student for textbooks and related materials. In grades K-8, the funds are specifically directed toward the purchase of math books, unless the school district has math materials certified by the state Board of Education as consistent with the new state content standards. In grades 9-12, purchases are limited to basic instructional materials that have been certified by the local governing board as aligned to the new state standards.

Textbook funding was also provided through the governor's Reading Initiative, which earmarked \$152 million to purchase every K-3 student in the state textbooks "rich" in phonics-based instructional methods.

Beyond textbooks, the Legislature and governor agreed this year to provide \$158.5 million in ongoing funding for school district libraries and library materials and \$71.5 million in one-time funding for the purchase of science laboratory equipment and materials. On a per pupil basis, this equals to about \$28 for library materials and to nearly \$13 for science resource materials.

Significant efforts have also been made to provide additional state funding for classroom computers, Internet access and other new education technology. In 1997, Governor Wilson initiated his four-year, \$1 billion (\$500 million from the state plus a \$500 million local match) Digital High Schools program to provide every California high school student with computer training and access to the resources of the Internet. During the 1997-98 school year, 216 Digital High Schools were funded through a state budget allocation of \$100 million. In the 1998-99 state budget, an additional \$136 million was provided to fund the second

round of the program. After implementation, the program is expected to fund system upgrades.

CSBA Recommendations

- Support placement of a bond dedicated to technology on the ballot in the year 2000.
- Support the commitment made by Governor Wilson and the Legislature to augment funding for instructional materials over the next four years.

PART III

ACCOUNTABILITY: FINISHING THE JOB

The state has not completed the task of developing a coherent system of accountability for our public schools. Now that the state has established its expectations for student performance, districts are working toward meeting those rigorous standards. The state must give school districts maximum flexibility to design programs and then hold districts accountable for results. The state must also provide the necessary resources for districts to accomplish their goals as well as meaningful support should schools fall short.

The critical foundation of a comprehensive accountability system -- standards, assessment, teacher preparation and key curriculum components, reading, bilingual education, social promotion, as well as structural changes such as class-size reduction and charter schools -- have at times been developed, debated and implemented in isolation. The result is a patch quilt of independent reforms, each with its own timetable, rules and regulations that are often uncoordinated and sometimes in conflict. It is striking that all of the major pieces of accountability have been so far accomplished without the benefit of an overall institutional structure.

The task that we now face in designing an accountability system is similar to trying to design a building after each of the rooms has already been built. From the school district perspective, the most important thing that the governor and Legislature can do is to align the various existing reforms around a rational accountability system and to provide time and resources for districts to implement the many major education reforms that have been enacted in the past few years.

CSBA is committed to working with the entire education community and with business in developing a consensus on accountability. The education coalition has already begun this dialogue and we are very optimistic. A meaningful school accountability system must align the numerous recent reforms and provide necessary resources to deliver excellence in education.

Academic Accountability: Background

In 1992, CSBA sponsored legislation to create an accountability system for the public schools of California. That legislation, SB 171 (Watson), enacted the "Focus Schools" law, intended to provide assistance and support for the state's lowest performing schools. However, the Legislature never provided funding to implement SB 171 and the law "sunsetted" on July 1, 1998.

In response to the imminent sunset of SB 171 and national education reform efforts linking standards, assessment and school accountability, a flurry of activity on the part of state policymakers ensued to implement a new vision of school accountability for California. In addition to numerous legislative proposals by

Sens. Alpert, Vasconcellos and Leslie and Assembly Member Mazzoni, Superintendent Eastin developed the report, "Steering by Results." While a bi-partisan legislative consensus was ultimately achieved, it was not consistent with Governor Wilson's vision for accountability, and the legislation was ultimately vetoed last year.

Academic Accountability: A Broad Approach

As we embark on the discussion about academic accountability, the strength of our policies on academic content and performance standards will have a profound impact on the fairness and effectiveness of the school accountability system we adopt. The same can be said for the nature of our statewide testing and assessment programs, the caliber of teacher preparation and staff development efforts, the curriculum frameworks, instructional materials, technology, facilities and per pupil funding levels. It is all connected.

Any statewide school accountability proposal enacted into law must have the following components:

- The state must provide the resources to ensure that schools can be successful. This has not been the case.
- We must ensure that schools are making improvements every year. Districts should develop growth targets for student achievement and be held accountable for meeting those targets.
- A single test on a single day is not an adequate assessment of student progress. Multiple measurements must be used to determine school performance – local assessments, statewide assessments, dropout rates, attendance, and student grades should all be considered.
- We cannot allow ethnic minorities and children from low socioeconomic levels to slip through the cracks. Districts must be evaluated based in part on how they are meeting the needs of those student populations.
- Parents must be partners in developing strategies for school improvement.
- School boards are responsible to the public for school performance and must be full participants in designing any support and intervention.
- Districts must be provided flexibility to enter into site-specific exemptions from provisions of state law or collective bargaining agreements that specifically impede student achievement at that school site.
- The level of intervention for a school should correspond to its inability over time to make progress for its students.

- We must build the capacity of school communities to operate high performing schools. In the case of continued failure, local voters should possess the authority to initiate and impose a variety of educationally sound options for turning the district around.

It is essential that the governor and Legislature support an accountability plan that is simple, easy to understand and realistic. Any accountability plan adopted must be based on a fundamental commitment to build capacity at the local community level to overcome the barriers to student achievement. Long term, sustainable reform can best be accomplished at the local level, by local leaders, business professionals and the community.

The most meaningful “takeover” is one that happens locally, where the community takes ownership of their schools. In Sacramento, for example, the voters and community leaders exercised accountability through the ballot box. This is democracy, and it works. Tendencies to fall back on various types of temporary “takeover” plans must be resisted.

Simply sending in one person to a school site or substituting a district governance structure assumes that the problems with low student achievement rests solely at the leadership level. These proposals assume that by replacing the person or persons in charge, a school will be turned around. We know that not to be the case. Intervention must be targeted at supporting the entire school community and building capacity to create and sustain meaningful improvements.

CSBA Recommendations

- Focus on aligning the various education reforms already enacted around a central accountability process.
- Give school districts time to implement the education reforms already enacted before rushing to judgement.
- Incorporate sound principles into any accountability framework.
- Build capacity at the local level to overcome barriers to student achievement.
- Ensure that resources, both fiscal and programmatic, are in place.
- Provide flexibility to local districts and schools so that they can utilize their energy and expertise in solving local problems.

PART IV

BUDGET & FISCAL ISSUES

Since the enactment of Proposition 13 in 1978, there has been a steady disinvestment of financial resources in California's schools. This disinvestment has occurred simultaneously with a dramatic increase in the number of students who require specialized programs to meet their needs. As we move forward with a commitment to ensure that all students have access and can meet high academic standards, we must also ensure that commensurate resources are provided. School districts welcome the challenge to meet standards, but are also painfully aware that the resources they need to meet that challenge are beyond the scope of their control. The partnership between the state and local districts must be reciprocal. World class expectations are incongruous with the level of funding provided to the schools by the state.

Raising Per Pupil Funding to the National Average

California public schools are funded at nearly \$1,000 below what it would take to be **average** in national per pupil funding among the states. During the budget debate earlier this year, the Education Coalition reported that 40 other states outspend California in per pupil spending, a drastic reduction in investment compared the 1960s when our state invested significantly more in comparison to other states. Despite broadly held opinion, Proposition 98 has not created a "windfall" for public schools, but has merely slowed the erosion of financial support for schools. Real funding, adjusted for inflation, is \$8 per student less than when Proposition 98 was created a decade ago. Basic funding for schools has fallen faster than overall funding because of state actions to cut basic unrestricted funding and replace it with state-controlled categorical support. Categorical funding is earmarked for specific programs. The return to excellence in education cannot occur without adequate funding and resources to make program and accountability reforms work. We cannot have world-class schools with third-world investment. Along with students, parents, teachers, administrators and school boards, state policy makers need to be held accountable for providing the necessary resources for us to ensure that students succeed. As part of the special legislative session on school accountability, CSBA will actively pursue the integration of funding and resource issues.

Paying off the \$1.6 Billion Shortfall

In dealing with local school budgets, the term "revenue limit deficit" refers to the amount of revenue limit COLAs that were not provided to schools over the last several years. State law stipulates that schools shall receive a specific amount for inflation increases in a number of programs, including district revenue limits. CSBA and education groups keep close watch on this deficit figure in order to track the state's unpaid statutory obligation. The existing funding shortfall attributable to the deficit is over \$1.6 billion. While this amount has accumulated over the past several years, the Legislature and governor acknowledged the issue in two prior budgets by allocating funding to very modestly bring down the deficit to current levels. Paying down the deficit can be done with resources applied toward meeting the national average per pupil investment. Deficit reduction also provides local schools with greater flexibility and prevents the erosion of funding for basic education services.

COLA & Growth

Basic allowances for inflation and new increases in student enrollment are an essential part of a school district budget. A lack of funding for these costs result in direct cuts to the existing programs of our schools. The priority for funding the "base" programs of K-12 schools has been an annual ritual of the Education Coalition because it is so important. For too long we have watched as governors strip away basic funding in order to establish new categorical programs that serve political interests over the interest of our students.

The Minimum Isn't the Maximum

Since the passage of Proposition 98 in 1988, we have argued that the constitutional funding guarantee in the measure is only a minimum guarantee and that there is nothing that prevents lawmakers and the governor from exceeding that minimum. However, during the last two years of the Deukmejian administration and seven years of Governor Wilson's tenure in office, Proposition 98 was treated as a funding maximum. Not until last year did the governor and the Legislature provide funding that shattered that maximum funding myth. We urge the Legislature to budget based upon the investment level that California should make toward kindergarten through community college, not based on only what it is required to do as a minimum.

CSBA Recommendations

- Support the efforts of the education community to raise funding for public education to the national average.
- Provide flexibility in how education dollars are allocated to schools. Districts must have the flexibility to use resources in the manner that will meet the needs of their student population.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Providing the facilities in which to teach California's 5.7 million public school children is among the state's highest priorities, if not its most difficult. Just to keep up with the growth of our student population, the state and local school districts must spend over \$3.5 billion annually for the construction and modernization of facilities and for the acquisition of land needed to build new schools. The California Department of Education has projected the need for school facilities in this state to be as high as \$46.6 billion over the next 10 years. The Department of Finance estimates the state's K-12 public school enrollment will increase by nearly one million students over the same time period. With statewide bonds as the state's only contribution to school construction projects, it is no wonder there are currently more than \$5 billion in unfunded projects awaiting state funding. The recently passed state school facility bond should provide some relief, at least temporarily. However, what is needed is a long-term, comprehensive solution to financing school construction.

Proposition 1A on the November 1998 ballot not only signaled the passage of the largest school facility bond in history, but also the implementation of numerous reforms to the state school building program and developer fee collection. These reforms are contained in Senate Bill 50 (Greene). As with any major reform undertaken, there is a need for follow-up legislation to resolve identified problems.

Proposition 1A provides for \$6.7 billion for constructing new schools and modernizing school buildings over 25 years of age. The \$6.7 billion is allocated over two cycles, \$3.35 billion after Nov. 4, 1998, and \$3.35 billion after July 1, 2000. When matched with local school district funds, Proposition 1A will provide for over \$10 billion in new schools and modernization of existing ones. This represents one-fourth of the anticipated total school facility financing needs over the next 10 years.

The new state school building program is a 50:50 match program. SB 50 established a hardship program for those districts unable to raise the required 50 percent. However, the money is limited and many school districts will be unable to meet the requirements to receive these funds.

CSBA Recommendations

- Allow a simple majority vote for the passage of local school facility bonds. A constitutional amendment should be introduced during the 1999-2000 session in order for it to be placed on the ballot in 2000. A majority vote bond was taken off the table by Assembly Republicans, even though the majority bond was supported by Governor Wilson and the Senate. Now is the time to return power to local voters.
- Return the ability of cities and counties to phase-in development.
- Change the standards regarding the number of students in special education classrooms.
- Clarify funding for multi-track year-round education.
- Resolve how school districts pay for services, before the state provides its share of funding.
- Remove the statewide average requirement for state funding of facilities and replace it with actual costs for construction and modernization.

PART V

A LONG RANGE VIEW: 2000 AND BEYOND

In this briefing report we have strongly urged the governor and Legislature to focus on three critical issues in the immediate future: accountability, bringing the state to the national average in school funding and strengthening and refining the major reforms that have been mandated on schools in the past two years. We have pleaded for time for districts to implement these massive changes before we rush to judgement. However, given the governor and Legislature's strong commitment to public education, we also feel deeply the need for long-term planning in K-12 education. While we are letting districts grapple with the difficulties of change and innovation, we at the state level should be looking over the horizon and into the next century.

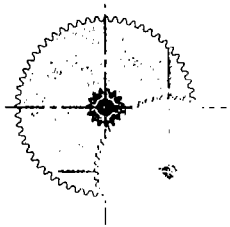
We have pledged to join with Governor-Elect Gray Davis, state Legislators, the state superintendent, the state Board of Education and our colleagues in organizations representing every major constituency in our educational system to create a master plan for K-12 education. This plan should address the broad range of issues – governance and the roles of the state, the local districts, the schools, the classrooms and the family; it should address standards, assessment, curriculum, teacher support, and every other aspect of public education. Most significantly, it should address resources and how much the public is willing to pay to support its public schools. We strongly believe this could be the major contribution of Governor-elect Davis' administration—and we, representing the local governance of public education in California, are prepared to help.

**California School Boards Association
Education Issues Briefing**

INDEX

Accountability, Background	Page 2, 19
Accountability, Proposals	3, 20, 21
Aligning Existing Reforms	1
Bilingual Education	13
Budget Issues	22
Charter Schools	15
Class Size Reduction	3
COLA & Growth	23
Computers	17
Curricular Reforms	3
Existing Reforms	1
Facilities	2, 24
Instructional Reforms	1, 3
Libraries	17
Long Term Master Plan	2
Overview	1
Per Pupil Spending	2, 22
Proposition 98	23
Reading	5
"Revenue Limit Deficit"	23
Social Promotion	10
Standards	7
Teacher Preparation	11
Testing & Assessment	8
Textbooks	17

MANUFACTURERS' PARTNERSHIP



There is a shared belief that the key to becoming world-class competitors is investing in workforce development. *The Manufacturers' Partnership* is an association of Rhode Island based manufacturers

who share the belief that investing in workforce development is the key to becoming world-class competitors. *The Manufacturers' Partnership* provides a vehicle to bring companies together to pursue training and development in common skill areas. We focus on communication, collaboration, and the exchange of resources, knowledge, tools and skills among companies.

TRAINING OPTIONS

The partnership offers a wide array of courses and programs to meet the individual and collective needs of Rhode Island Manufacturers. An extensive range of cost effective, quality programs are offered in Manufacturing related training, Management/ Supervisor Training, Computer Skills/ MIS, and other categories. Curriculum is developed relevant to companies' individual/collective workforce development needs, ensuring the needs of all Rhode Island manufacturers are being met. Training is provided at various locations throughout the state.

MANUFACTURERS' PARTNERSHIP

LINKAGES

The Manufacturers' Partnership aides in the effort of offering RI manufacturers a more cohesive process of attaining services through various providers by developing a strong network between agencies providing services to manufacturers state-wide. At the present time, we have strategic alliances with: the Rhode Island Manufacturing Extension Service (RIMES), RACE for Quality of Management, Rhode Island Technology Transfer Center (RITTC), Rhode Island Manufacturers Association (RIMA), National Tooling and Machining Association (NTMA), Rhode Island Plastics Partnership Council (RIPPC), and the Manufacturers' Jewelers and Suppliers of America (MJSA).

TAX CREDITS

By participating in this consortium, you could offset some of your training costs by obtaining Federal and State tax credits. These tax credits will allow you to trim your taxes by training your workforce.

- RI Jobs Training Tax Credit
- Adult Education Tax Credit
- Employers' Apprenticeship Tax Credit
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

MANUFACTURERS' PARTNERSHIP

EXECUTIVE ROUND TABLE

As we foster an environment emphasizing communication and collaboration, we are also asking our leading executives to examine the growth of networks and other innovative responses which might be created through collective leadership. These executives will also explore any number of innovative network-driven strategies such as cooperative networks, buying cooperatives, technology purchase cooperatives and other industry-wide alliances.

STEERING COMMITTEE

A Steering Committee has been formed in order to create a broad array of cost-effective training programs to serve the needs of Rhode Island manufacturers and to understand and respond to the training needs of the manufacturing community in Rhode Island through regular needs assessment activities.

*Supported by the Human Resource Investment Council

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
PLEASE CONTACT:**

Lisa V. Medeiros, Program Coordinator
Manufacturers' Partnership
(401) 272-5478 ext. 107

Tanna R. Wagner, Training Coordinator
Manufacturers' Partnership
(401) 272-5478 ext. 108

STEERING COMMITTEE

Bernie Brown, Central Tools, Inc.
(401) 821-1000

Brian Fielding, Fielding Mfg.
(401) 461-0400

Ted Grove, Pilgrim Screw
(401) 274-4090

Toni Ledversis, Taco, Inc.
(401) 942-8000

Jocelyn LeMaire, Vitrus, Inc.
(401) 724-9350

Dave Patenaude, Arkwright Inc.
(401) 821-1000

Joan Pratt, Wardwell Braiding Machine Co.
(401) 724-8800

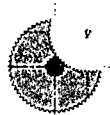
Isabel Valente, Hirsch-Speidel
(401) 457-6180

Mike Wilkenson, Droitcour Co.
(401) 737-4646

Scott H. Young, Precision Industries, Inc.
(401) 273-0011

Dave Nardilillo, RI Precision Co.
(401) 421-6661

229 WATERMAN STREET
PROVIDENCE, RI 02906



MANUFACTURERS' PARTNERSHIP

*Enhancing the global
competitiveness of the
Rhode Island
manufacturing sector
through collaboration,
world class education,
and technology.*

229 WATERMAN STREET
PROVIDENCE, RI 02906
401-272-5478
FAX: 401-272-3742
• WEB ADDRESS: www.mfgri.com •