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Account Code: code**Texas Association of School Administrators**406 East 11<sup>th</sup> Street • Austin, TX 78701-2617 • 512-477-6361 • fax 512-482-8658**FAX Cover Sheet**To: **ANDY ROTHERHAM**FAX #: **202-456-5581**From: **Johnny L. Veselka**Date: **September 17, 1999**# Pages: **4***(including cover sheet)*

Following is a summary of the Senate Bill 4 provisions relating to Social Promotion that were passed during the legislative session (spring 99) and signed into law by Governor Bush. You may go to our Web site ([www.tasanet.org](http://www.tasanet.org)) and work your way through the governmental relations information to find the actual text of this legislation. It is contained in Senate Bill 4 under "Bills Sent to the Governor." The links will take you to "Texas Legislature Online" for analysis and bill text. I hope this is helpful; please let me know if you have any questions. I can be contacted by e-mail at [jveselka@tasenet.org](mailto:jveselka@tasenet.org)

detailing any expenditure of more than \$50 made on behalf of a member of the board, the commissioner, or a TEA employee.

*Effective 9/1/99*

## SENATE BILLS

**SB 4 (Bivins)** *Relating to public school finance property tax relief and public education, making an appropriation.*

### School Finance and Property Tax Relief

- **Basic Allotment.** Increases the basic allotment to \$2,537.
- **Guaranteed Yield Allotment.** Provides that the guaranteed yield component may be used for any legal purpose "other than capital outlay or debt service." Establishes the guaranteed yield amount at \$24.99; maintains the limitation of the enrichment tax rate at 64 cents.
- **Equalized Wealth Level.** The equalized wealth level is set at \$295,000; allows the commissioner to adjust the taxable values of a school district that, due to factors beyond the control of the board of trustees, experiences a rapid decline in tax base; hold-harmless provisions are made permanent; provides a formula for adjusting the allowable hold-harmless wealth level per student per district.
- **Guaranteed Facilities Yield.** Establishes the amount at \$35. Establishes a minimum of 400 ADA for purposes of this formula.
- **Minimum Salary Schedule.** *Adds full-time counselor and full-time school nurse to the minimum salary schedule.* Modifies the formula for determining increases in the state minimum salary schedule and establishes a new indexed schedule that provides a \$3,000 increase at each step (\$300 per month for 10-month contract). *Provides that, in 1999-2000, classroom teachers, full-time librarians, full-time counselors, and full-time nurses are entitled to a \$3,000 salary increase.* The increase, as stated in the bill (\$300 per month), is in addition to "the monthly salary the employee would have received for the 1999-2000 or 2000-2001 school year,

as applicable under the district's salary schedule for the 1998-1999 school year, if that schedule had been in effect for the 1999-2000 or 2000-2001 school year, including any local supplement and any money representing a career ladder supplement the employee would have received in the 1999-2000 or 2000-2001 school year."

Requires that a classroom teacher, full-time librarian, full-time counselor, or full-time nurse employed by a school district in the 2000-2001 school year is, as long as the employee is employed by the same district, entitled to a salary that is at least equal to the salary the employee received for the 2000-2001 school year. The commissioner is authorized to establish rules relating to payments to persons employed in multiple capacities and may specify the credentials necessary for a school nurse to be eligible under these provisions.

Requires the placement of a counselor or school nurse on the minimum salary schedule based on credit for each year of experience in accordance with rules adopted by the commissioner, regardless of whether the experience was gained before, during, or after the 1999-2000 school year.

- **Additional State Aid for Professional Staff Salaries.** For the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 school years, a school district, including a Chapter 41 district, is entitled to state aid in an amount, as determined by the commissioner, equal to the difference, if any, between (1) an amount equal to the product of \$3,000 multiplied by the number of classroom teachers, full-time librarians, full-time counselors, and full-time nurses employed by the district and entitled to a minimum salary under Sec. 21.402; and (2) an amount equal to 80% of the amount of additional funds to which the district is entitled due to the increases made by SB 4 (1999) to: (a) the equalized wealth level under Section 41.002, (b) the basic allotment under Section 42.101, and (c) the guaranteed level of state and local funds per weighted student per cent of tax effort under Section 42.302.

**Salary Transition Aid.** For the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 school years, the commissioner shall increase the entitlement of a school district that experiences additional salary cost resulting from HB 4 (1997) that is not fully funded by an amount equal to 20% of the amount of additional funds to which the district is entitled due to the increases made by SB 4 (1999) to: (1) the equalized wealth level under Section 41.002, (2) the basic allotment under Section 42.101, and (3) the guaranteed level of state and local funds per weighted student per cent of tax effort under Section 42.302. The amount of additional salary cost shall be computed by determining what the district's salary cost for the 1996-1997 school year would have been if, for purposes of the minimum salary schedule under Section 21.402, as that section existed on September 1, 1996, the amount appropriated for purposes of the Foundation School Program for the 1997-1998 state fiscal year were increased by \$520 million and comparing that cost to the amount the district was actually required to pay under Section 21.402. The commissioner shall use 1996-1997 employment and salary data as reported through PEIMS.

- **Minimum Service Requirements.** Eliminates the escalator clause for determining the required number of days of service for educators on 10-month contracts, retaining the fixed number at 187 days.
- **Fast-Growth District Adjustment.** Reduces a district's wealth per student if the district has had substantial student enrollment growth in the preceding five-year period. The reduction is 5%, if enrollment growth is between 10 and 15%; 10%, if enrollment growth is between 15 and 30%; and 15%, if enrollment growth is 30% or more. Further, a district's wealth per student is reduced first by 10% if the district does not have any outstanding debt at the time the district applies for assistance.

- **Tax Rate Compression.** For 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 school years, requires the commissioner to recalculate the limit authorized under Sec. 42.253(c) for each school district to a rate that would entitle the district to an amount of state and local funds per weighted student in the current year, using a guaranteed yield of \$23.10, that is equal to the amount of state and local funds to which the district would have been entitled for the current school year if there had been no change in law.
  - **Tier III: Existing Debt and Refinancing.** Creates a formula for determining the amount of state funds to be allocated to a district for assistance with existing debt; the dollar amount is set at \$35 per student per cent of tax effort up to 12 cents; eligible bonds include those for which taxes were levied to pay principal and interest on the bonds and were included in the district's audited debt service collections for the 1998-99 school year. The commissioner is authorized to establish rules for the payment of state assistance to refinance school district debt.
  - **Rollback Tax Rate.** Establishes a rollback tax rate of 3 cents for the 1999-2000 school year and a rollback tax rate of 6 cents for future years.
  - **Options to Achieve Equalized Wealth Level.** Current law is modified to allow a Chapter 41 district to achieve the equalized wealth level by "educating" nonresident students without contracting.
  - **Districts Not Offering All Grade Levels.** Establishes a formula for a property value adjustment for a district not offering all grade levels that contracts for students residing in the district to be educated in another district.
  - **New Instructional Facility Allotment.** Establishes an additional allotment for operational expenses associated with opening a new instructional facility. Beginning in 1999-2000, the allotment is set at \$250 for each student in ADA at the facility during the first school year in which students attend a new instructional facility, and \$250 for each additional student in ADA during the second year of operation. The total amount appropriated is limited to \$25 million per year. A Chapter 41 district is entitled to a credit in the amount of the allotments to which the district is entitled under this section against the total amount required for the district to purchase attendance credits.
  - **Additional State Aid for Homestead Exemption.** Establishes a permanent hold-harmless provision for additional state aid to compensate a district for ad valorem tax revenue lost due to the increase in the homestead exemption and the additional limitation on tax increases enacted in 1997.
  - **Rapid Decline in Taxable Value of Property and Adjustment for Optional Homestead Exemption.** Requires the commissioner to adjust the taxable value of property in a school district that, due to factors beyond the control of the board of trustees, experiences a rapid decline in the tax base in excess of 4%. Empowers the commissioner to make an adjustment, subject to the availability of funds, for the optional homestead exemption.
  - **Contracts and Tuition for Education Outside District.** For school districts that do not offer each grade level, establishes a limitation on the amount of tuition paid as the lesser of the amount specified in Section 25.038 or an amount specified by the commissioner.
- Program Improvements and Social Promotion**
- **Kindergarten and Prekindergarten Grants.** Establishes a grant program for school districts and open-enrollment charter schools to implement or expand kindergarten and prekindergarten programs by operating an existing half-day program on a full-day basis, or implementing a prekindergarten program at a campus that does not have a prekindergarten program; funds may be used to employ personnel and acquire curriculum materials or equipment, including computers; the commissioner is instructed to give priority to districts and open-enrollment charter schools demonstrating below-average performance on grade 3 TAAS assessments. A separate grant program is established for use in providing an educational component to federal Head Start programs or similar government-funded early childhood care and education programs.
  - **Basic Skills Programs for High School Students.** Establishes provisions for school districts to apply for funding for special programs for students in grade 9 who are at risk of not earning sufficient credit or who have not earned sufficient credit to advance to grade 10 and who fail to meet minimum skills levels established by the commissioner; provides for an extended-year program not to exceed 210 days; establishes program requirements.
  - **Probationary Contract Notice.** Modifies provisions relating to termination of a teacher employed under a probationary contract by stating that the notice of "decision" rather than notice of "intention" to terminate must be given within the prescribed time period.
- Social Promotion.**
- (a) Specifies that a student may not be promoted to grade 4 if the student does not perform satisfactorily on the grade 3 reading assessment instrument, grade 6 if the student does not perform satisfactorily on the grade 5 reading and mathematics assessment instruments, and grade 9 if the student does not perform satisfactorily on the grade 8 mathematics and reading assessment instruments.
  - (b) Any student who initially fails to perform satisfactorily on an assessment instrument will be provided at least two additional opportunities to take the assessment instrument. After failing an assessment instrument on two previous opportunities, a school district may administer an alternative assessment instrument that has been approved by the commissioner, and

the student may be promoted if the student performs on grade level on the alternative test.

- (c) Each time a student fails to perform satisfactorily on an assessment instrument, the school district is required to provide accelerated instructional services in the appropriate subject area.
- (d) After failing an assessment instrument the second time, the school must establish a grade placement committee (GPC) to prescribe the accelerated instructional services the student is to receive prior to taking the test a third time.
- (e) The GPC is composed of the principal or the principal's designee, the student's parent or guardian, and the teacher of the subject of an assessment instrument on which the student failed to perform satisfactorily. School districts are required to notify parents of the time and place for the meeting of the GPC and the purpose of the meeting.
- (f) The accelerated instructional program specified by the GPC may not have more than a student-teacher ratio of 1 to 10.
- (g) The school district must notify parents of students who have failed to perform satisfactorily on an assessment and must describe the accelerated instructional program to which the student has been assigned. Furthermore, the school district must inform the parents of the possibility that the student might be retained at the same grade level for the next year.
- (h) A parent may appeal the retention of a student and must be informed of the opportunity to appeal such decision. A GPC may, with unanimous consent of this committee, promote a student if it is determined that the student, if given accelerated instruction, is likely to perform at grade level.

- (i) School districts and open-enrollment charter schools must provide transportation for all students who are required to attend an accelerated program if the program occurs outside of regular school hours.
- (j) The requirements for satisfactory performance on assessment instruments, accelerated instruction, and parental notification apply to assessment instruments administered in grade 3 beginning with the 2002-2003 school year, grade 5 beginning with the 2004-2005 school year, and grade 8 beginning with the 2007-2008 school year.

- **Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).** Requires all school employees who serve as a head coach or chief sponsor for an extracurricular athletic activity, including cheerleading, must maintain and submit to the district proof of current certification in first aid and CPR.

- **Alternative Education Programs.** Provides that an elementary school student may not be placed in an alternative education program with any other student who is not an elementary school student and that a student who is younger than six years of age may not be removed from class and placed in an AEP.

*Effective 9/1/99, except 2.14 (CPR certification), effective 1/1/00*

**SB 472 (Ratliff) Relating to making emergency general appropriation.**

Provides an emergency appropriation of \$18.84 million for the purpose of training teachers to help children learn to read. These funds are linked to the first-year implementation of the Student Success Initiative.

*Effective 3/18/99*

## GOVERNANCE/OPERATIONS

### HOUSE BILLS

**HB 98 (Reyna) Relating to the fiscal year of a school district and the submission to a school district of an estimate of the taxable value of school district property.**

Allows each board of trustees to select July 1 or September 1 as the beginning of the school district's fiscal year. Requires the commissioner to adopt rules regarding the submission of assessment and financial data related to changes in the fiscal year.

Requires the tax assessor to provide the school district certified values no later than June 15. State aid will continue to flow on the same schedule, with the state fiscal year beginning September 1 of each year.

*Effective 9/1/01*

**HB 156 (Wolens) Relating to the application of the open meetings law for certain meetings at which a governmental body receives information from third persons, including governmental employees.**

Prohibits school boards from receiving information from employees or from questioning employees in a closed meeting. This prohibition effectively eliminates the staff briefing that was previously allowed. Creates an affirmative defense to prosecution for participating in an unauthorized closed meeting if a member of a governmental body acted in reasonable reliance on a court order or an opinion of a court of record, the attorney general, or the attorney for the governmental body.

*Effective 8/30/99*

**HB 211 (Hochberg) Relating to compliance by school districts and open-enrollment charter schools with the public information law and the open meetings law and to the governance of an open-enrollment charter school.**

Prohibits a school district or an open-enrollment charter school from filing suit challenging an open-records decision of the attorney general. The bill requires all provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act and Public Information Act to apply to open-enroll-



*Fax Transmittal*

TO: ANDY ROTHERMAN

FAX #: 456-5581 / 456-1677028

FROM: Olivia Morgan, Director

DATE: 9/29

PAGES (Including Cover) 13

COMMENTS: Thanks for your help.

**PROPOSED LANGUAGE RE: GGD'S SCHOOL REFORM SUCCESS**

In his first nine months in office, Governor Gray Davis has made strengthening California's schools his top priority.

He has turned partisan conflict into bipartisan consensus and passed a four-part, \$444-million plan to significantly raise student and teacher performance statewide. Called READ, Raising Expectations, Achievement and Development, the plan focuses on improving reading skills, enhancing teacher quality and increasing school accountability.

Today, after decades of educational neglect, California is making great strides on the long, long road to higher expectations and better schools:

- California has adopted the nation's toughest high school exit exam.
- California has instituted the nation's first statewide peer-review program for teachers.
- California has launched a "rewards for results" program to hold every principal and every school accountable for improved performance.
- California has invested nearly \$200 million in reading programs to drastically improve the reading skills of its children.

When Governor Davis called a special session to consider school reform back in January, a lot of people in Sacramento snickered. They said it couldn't be done. Too much gridlock, they said.

But Governor Davis turned school reform into a statewide crusade, successfully beating back Sacramento's special-interest status quo.

And, now, the promise of a world-class public education is being renewed in California.

## Improving Teacher Quality

### *Teacher Peer Review and Assistance*

Governor Davis sponsored legislation to enact the first statewide program of peer review and assistance for veteran teachers. Programs, to be developed through collective bargaining at school districts, will strengthen teacher evaluation and provide support for struggling veteran teachers. Particularly as California moves toward a system which holds schools accountable for student academic achievement, it is in teachers' best interest to promote professionalism among their peers. Those who do not improve despite assistance are likely to be counseled out of the profession.

### *Incentives to increase salaries of qualified beginning teachers*

The Governor's budget includes \$50 million in incentives to school districts whose salaries for certified, qualified (holding at least a B.A. degree) beginning teachers are at least \$32,000 annually.

*Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA)* program, to provide mentor support from quality veteran teachers to all 1st and 2nd-year teachers. This program has increased teacher retention in the first five years from 50% to 90%.

*Certification Incentives* -- Cash awards (\$10,000) for teachers who obtain National Board of Professional teaching Standards certification.

### *Professional Development Institutes*

This summer, more than 6,000 teachers of reading were trained in systematic, assessment-based reading instruction methods at weeklong institutes held on college and university campuses statewide. This national model for teacher staff development was given to school teams composed of beginning and veteran teachers and an administrator. Follow-up sessions will be held throughout the year at the training campuses and school sites. This successful model, developed and administered through the University of California, allows for school team collaboration and in-depth instruction throughout the school year, unlike many "one-shot" exercises in staff development.

### *Governor's Teachers and Principal Leadership Academies*

Governor Davis sponsored legislation to establish a rigorous, masters-level Teacher Scholar program at the University of California, aimed at attracting the best and brightest to the teaching field through provision of scholarships to students who agree to teach in the most difficult to staff schools.

### *California School Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program*

Governor Davis' budget includes funding to prepare an additional 3,300 paraeducators to become fully credentialed teachers.

### *Performance Incentives*

Governor Davis' budget includes \$50 million to provide performance bonuses of up to \$25,000 for teachers in low-performing schools whose students show significant academic achievement. This will help with retention of qualified teachers in schools which are difficult to staff.

### *Community College Partnerships*

Governor Davis is working on several fronts to create better linkages between California's higher education and K-12 systems, so that more students will be prepared for success in college. Among these initiatives is the development of partnerships among community colleges, neighboring higher education institutions and K-12 schools within their common service area to provide teacher internships. This will give prospective teachers earlier exposure to classroom teaching, and also support better cross-system communication.

## **Strengthening Accountability for Results**

### *Testing*

California has adopted world-class academic standards that detail what students should learn at each grade, and is developing a test to measure student progress against those standards. The state is in the third year of a nationally normed statewide testing and reporting program to gauge how schools are doing compared to others in the state and nation.

### *Measuring School Progress*

Shortly after taking office, Governor Davis sponsored legislation in a special session of the Legislature on education to link higher standards and assessments to a system for holding schools accountable. The California Public Schools Accountability Act establishes a comprehensive system of public reporting on school achievement by ranking all schools and measuring their performance annually.

### *Rewards for Improvement*

All schools will be assigned a target for improvement on an Academic Performance Index. Schools that meet growth targets for all student groups -- at least 5 percent improvement on the index -- may qualify for funding awards of up to \$150 per pupil under the High Achieving/Improving Schools Program.

### *Intervention and Assistance for low-performing schools*

In its first year of implementation, 430 schools scoring below the 50th percentile on statewide tests have been chosen (from among 1400 volunteers) to receive extra funding to develop and implement school improvement plans. After the first year in the program, a public hearing will be held. If a school fails to show adequate improvement, it may face local sanctions. After two years in the program, schools that fail to meet growth targets or show adequate progress are subject to state sanctions, including reassignment of staff, school closure,

allowing students to attend any public school with space or assignment of the school's management to a university or other educational institution.

#### *High School Exit Exam*

To hold students, as well as schools and teachers, accountable, Governor Davis sponsored a measure that will require all students to pass a high school exit exam linked to rigorous new standards, as a condition of graduation beginning in 2004.

#### *Accountability for Teachers*

Under legislation sponsored by Governor Davis, teacher evaluations for the first time may include progress of their students on criterion-referenced exams.

### **CALIFORNIA'S EDUCATION PROGRESS AND SUCCESSES**

California has one of the most challenging student populations in the country:

25% of students reside in poverty and 25% of students are not fluent in English.

Despite these obstacles, Governor Davis believes that all children can succeed academically if they are held to a high standard and receive the resources and support they need. He has called for an "Era of Higher Expectations" in education to engage students, teachers, parents, school administrators and all Californians in an effort to improve student academic performance. By rewarding achievement, sanctioning failure and holding students and educators accountable for success, California's public schools can again be the pride of our state.

#### **PROGRESS**

*Teacher Peer Review and Assistance* - Gov. Davis established the first statewide program of peer review and assistance for veteran teachers. Legislation signed earlier this year provides \$41 million as an incentive for districts to implement teacher peer review programs for veteran teachers by July 1, 2000.

*Teacher training* - Gov. Davis sponsored legislation establishing Teacher Reading Professional Development Institutes. This summer, 6,000 teachers and principals participated in training sessions to learn best practice techniques in reading instruction

*Accountability* - Gov. Davis created a comprehensive accountability system through legislation earlier this year, which will rank schools and measure academic improvement. The legislation also provides 430 schools with the opportunity for state assistance to improve (1,400 schools applied to be part of the program). Schools that improve are rewarded and those that fail will be sanctioned.

*Exit Exam* -- this legislation, sponsored by Gov. Davis, requires all high school students to pass an exam as a condition of graduation beginning in June 2004.

*Textbooks* -- Last year, the Legislature committed \$1 billion to new textbooks over the next four years at \$250 million per year. Gov. Davis increased this funding by \$134 million, which will enable students to have new standards-aligned textbooks in three core academic subjects.

*Per-Pupil Funding* -- Governor Davis increased per-pupil funding in the state budget to \$6,025 for 1999-2000, up from \$5,751 in 1998-1999

### **SUCSESSES**

*Class Size Reduction (CSR)* -- California has a successful K-3 CSR program in place -- in FY 1998-99, 92.4% of K-3 students participated in the CSR program.

Governor Davis secured a waiver from the federal government that allowed \$129 million in federal funding to be used for 9th and 10th grades, rather than the K-3 grades for which the money is earmarked.

*Standardized Test Scores* -- According to the most recent SAT9 test results, students who are proficient in English are scoring above the national average in most subjects and grade levels. (per Eastin 7/22 press release).

*School Facilities* -- California voters last November passed the largest school bond measure in state history, approving \$9.1 billion to build new schools and repair aging school facilities.

*Teacher Staff Development and Assistance* -- Under Gov. Davis, California has developed a model comprehensive system for teacher training and staff development. Beginning teachers are given mentor support in the first two years of teaching, and veteran teachers are given assistance and evaluation through the nation's first statewide peer review program.

### **CALIFORNIA'S ACCOUNTABILITY ACHIEVEMENTS COMPARED TO OTHER STATES**

Governor Davis enacted a series of landmark accountability reforms that place California among a small group of states that are leaders in accountability measures. Only Texas, New Mexico, Indiana, Maryland, North Carolina and Kentucky have accountability standards that match California's. These standards include the following categories (all information from *Education Week* 1/99):

- ® Assessment: (State has tests for measuring student achievement)
- ® Report Cards (State has a report card for each of its schools - in CA, these report cards have been beefed up in recent years to provide more information)
- ® Ratings (State assigns overall ratings to schools or identifies low-performing schools - GGD reform)
- ® Rewards (State provides monetary rewards to successful schools - GGD)

reform)

® Assistance (State provides assistance to schools it names low-performing - GGD reform)

® Sanctions (State has the authority to close, take over or reconstitute failing schools - GGD reform)

Other states have enacted some of these reforms, but there are only six states in addition to California that have implemented all six reforms.

# Davis Ready To Overhaul School System

Special legislative session on education reform likely

By Robert B. Gunnison  
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

SACRAMENTO — Governor Gray Davis will ask the Legislature to overhaul the state's system of evaluating teachers and schools and require that high school pupils pass an "exit examination" before graduating.

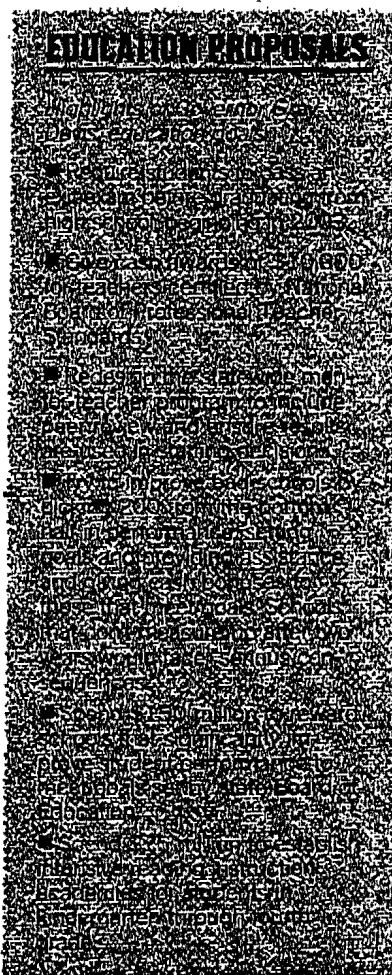
The new governor will propose the measures as part of a \$444 million spending package for public education, administration officials said yesterday.

During his first State of the State speech tonight, Davis is expected to call a special session of the Legislature to deal with education, which the governor intends to make the centerpiece of his administration.

Davis will submit his state budget for the next fiscal year Friday, detailing how he intends to allocate the rest of the more than \$31 billion the state will spend on kindergarten through 12th-grade education.

A major component of the reform package released yesterday would rewrite the state's 15-year-old "mentor teacher" program. The program is designed to improve teaching by pairing experienced teachers with novices. But critics contend it does little to fulfill its goal because too often the mentors

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become administrators and leave the classroom.

Davis' proposal would add a new component: having the mentors evaluate less-experienced teachers, with the results being used in staffing decisions. That idea matches proposals by the nation's largest teachers unions and their California affiliates.

"Teachers are in the best position to know and be of assistance to their colleagues," said one senior Davis administration official.

The state now spends about \$75 million a year on the mentor teacher program; Davis wants to increase that to \$100 million.

Teachers unions in San Francisco and Los Angeles have scheduled a news conference today in Sacramento to announce their support for a peer-review program that uses experienced teachers to train and evaluate new teachers and to retrain veteran instructors.

United Teachers of Los Angeles and United Educators of San Francisco also said they want the state to provide financial incentives for teachers who earn certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Davis' proposal would give \$10,000 to teachers who earn the certificate. The incentive program was created last year, but the Legislature included no money for the payments.

The governor's other proposals include:

- Providing \$75 million for reading programs for pupils in kindergarten through fourth grade.

- Asking the University of California to create "California Reading Development Institutes" to instruct 6,000 teachers on how to teach reading to their pupils.

- Requiring a high school exit examination as a requirement of graduation starting in 2003.

Davis also plans to spend \$200 million to create a system to make schools more accountable to students and the public.

He proposed randomly selecting 200 of the state's worst-performing schools and giving them two years to improve or face penalties, such as intervention by outside administrators.

Assemblywoman Kerry Mazzone, D-Novato, chairwoman of the Education Committee, generally lauded Davis' proposals, but said she fears that his school accountability plan would not reach the worst schools.

Mazzone said she prefers to see a system of "triage" in selecting schools for special assistance that is focused "on the worst of the worst."

She also said unions may oppose any mentor teacher program that "begins to look like merit pay" — a concept long supported by former Governor Pete Wilson, who was a frequent antagonist of teachers unions.

Bob Cherry of the California Teachers Association echoed that concern, saying the union supports a single-tier pay system for teachers. He said that the union expects to help shape any new legislation and that it has concerns about how schools labeled as "underachieving" would be chosen.

Senator Dede Alpert, D-Coronado, Mazzone's counterpart in the Senate, praised Davis for focusing on teacher performance. "We really have shorted teachers, I think, in some of our teacher training and staff development," she said. "I was really pleased to see the money going into the mentor teacher program."

Davis' proposals to help improve teacher quality match recommendations from the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers and their local affiliates in San Francisco and in Los Angeles, the state's largest school district.

Union leaders say they like the plan because teachers who need help would get it, even though Davis' proposal could make it easier to remove bad teachers. Firing a teacher now can take years and cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The unions favor employing only those teachers with state certification, and they say the Davis proposals would go a long way toward easing the state's shortage of certified teachers. Statewide, about 15 percent of classrooms are staffed by underqualified instructors.

But the idea for an exit exam for high school seniors met with less approval from the unions, which, together, were among the top donors to the Davis gubernatorial campaign last year, pumping more than \$1 million into the race.

Educators see such an exam as a potential problem because it could mean holding troubled students back if they did not pass.

"What happens if a child does not score a certain percentage?" said Dennis Meyers of the Association of California School Administrators. "Do they stay another year? Take another course? What's the impact on school facilities?"

Davis did not account for how all of the \$444 million in his proposal would be spent.

The special legislative session on education will help the governor score a public relations victory by suggesting that he takes seriously his campaign promise of making education his first priority.

In practical terms, it also allows him to speed new education laws into the system so they may be in place by September, when school starts.

*Chronicle staff writer Mariette Azimov contributed to this report.*

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WEDNESDAY, February 17, 1999

# Education secretary praises Davis' agenda for students

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONG BEACH — U.S. Education Secretary Richard Riley praised state leaders Tuesday for focusing on schools, singling out Gov. Gray Davis for putting students' reading skills on the top of his agenda.

"This is an exciting time for American education and a time of great change and that is why I have come to California," Riley told about 1,200 educators and college students. "You have set out to rebuild and reclaim the glory of your broad system of public education. I believe that you are up to the challenge."

Riley, appointed by President Clinton in 1992, gave his sixth annual State of American Education address at California State University, Long Beach. The university is known as a center for teacher recruitment.

The 22-campus CSU system produces about 80 percent of the state's teachers.

Davis made education the primary theme of his campaign last year. Some of Davis' more controversial reforms — such as high school exit exams and teacher peer review — earned Riley's endorsement Tuesday.

Riley singled out only a few of Davis' ideas, but he mentioned several Clinton proposals that parallel the governor's plans.

Riley said he thinks every American child should be fluent in at least two languages, the practice of social promotion needs to end and the

use of emergency credentials should cease — all things Davis has advocated.

Davis had been scheduled to speak before Riley, but he attended a funeral for a slain police officer instead. Davis' education adviser, Gary Hart, attended the speech, but did not comment.

Riley said that while education scores have improved nationally, the country has a "very long way to go" before every child can read successfully by the end of third grade.

"I believe, for example, that every elementary school should have the reading specialists they need to make a difference. Gov. Gray Davis here in California is right on the money in putting reading at the head of his education agenda," Riley said.

Riley also praised state Superintendent of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin, who addressed the crowd after Riley, for her work to create universal preschool.

"There is still, however, much to be done, and I urge local and state leaders to help give child care providers much more extended training when it comes to early language and reading development," Riley said.

Eastin, in turn, applauded Riley's proposed national model for states to use in licensing teachers. The model includes initial licensing for up to three years for new teachers, the creation of a professional license and the implementation of a voluntary advanced license.

"The secretary has been downright brave," she said of his plans to elevate and reward the profession of teaching more.

# California's bold quest to reinvent

84  
**■ New 'education governor' unveils an ambitious but risky plan to recapture state's academic prestige.**

By Paul Van Slambrouck  
 Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

**SAN FRANCISCO** - For decades, California has been a national leader on a wide range of social and economic issues. But recently, education hasn't been one of them.

Now, the necessary forces - politics, popular sentiment, and a fractious education establishment - seem to have lined up to give California a shot at classroom leadership once again. As Bruce Fuller, a public-policy and education professor at the University of California Berkeley, puts it: "We finally have all the horses moving in a common direction."

California's newly installed Democratic Gov. Gray Davis has unveiled a controversial \$440 million package of school reforms. The direction of the reforms appears to be, generally, toward greater centralization and standardization across

California's education system. Proposals range from forcing students to pass a tough "exit" exam to graduate from high school to more rigorous performance reviews of teachers.

Such standardization is already evident in some other large states, such as Texas, but it would be exceptionally influential if achieved in California, America's largest and most diverse state.

Some of the proposals push the boundaries of what's been tried in other states. Others follow paths trod elsewhere, or they continue programs begun under Republican predecessor Pete Wilson.

## Mood is ripe for reform

Yet the context is wholly new. In Governor Wilson's first term, early budget deficits forced him into a "bad cop" role which - when coupled with his antipathy toward California's powerful teachers' unions and an opposition-controlled legislature - frequently created an atmosphere



ANDY KUNG/REUTERS  
**VISION:** California Gov. Gray Davis says his term will focus on education.

of war rather than reform.

Governor Davis's much friendlier record with labor, as well as his party's strengthened grip on the legislature, has created a dramatically altered environment that's expected to be more receptive to reform. First indications will come as soon as Jan. 19, when a special legislative session is expected to meet to debate the reform package.

Davis has made himself "the education governor," wedding himself to a single issue to an unusual degree in a state with many divergent needs

and issues. Education has been "the centerpiece of his campaign, of his inaugural [address], and of his state of the state speech," notes Steve Scott, political editor of the California Journal. The strategy carries risks, handing opponents a ready club to wield four years from now if the schools aren't performing better. But that political risk is also what makes many analysts believe the odds of change are higher than they've been for more than a decade. Fl-

## schools

nally, the context is framed by a public that ranks education as its top concern and has sky-high expectations, now that the candidate who promised the most on education has been installed as governor.

## Reversing the decline

The problem with California's schools, says Sue Burr, the state's new undersecretary of education, is simple: lousy academic achievement. In national tests, California "ranks near the bottom in reading and math" compared with other states, Ms. Burr says.

The remedy proposed by Davis is a combination of incentives and penalties meant to improve teacher quality and reading skills and demand more of students. Under the plan, for example, California will develop a new, statewide high school graduation exam that will be tougher and more standardized than the current basic proficiency tests. This fits a nationwide trend toward graduation exams, administered in 17 states and approved but not implemented yet in five others, according to FairTest, a Massachusetts group critical of the trend toward greater reliance on standardized tests.

Boston, MA  
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JAN 12 1999

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# San Francisco Chronicle

THE VOICE OF THE WEST

## EDITORIALS

### The Education Governor

**I**N KEEPING with his pledge to make education his first, second and third priorities, Governor Davis last night devoted the bulk of his State of the State address to fixing California's elementary and secondary schools.

It was not a symbolic gesture. Davis proposed adding more than \$400 million for public schools and other initiatives designed to improve kindergarten-through-12th-grade education. He also was able to set a less adversarial tone for gubernatorial relations with teachers that will pay off with classroom cooperation on reform.

Teachers do need more training and expertise in their academic subjects, and, as Davis said, "some are simply not making the grade," but they also do not deserve blame for every education ill, as Governor Wilson had a tendency to do.

In his education blueprint, Davis included both carrot and stick.

He called for an easier path to firing bad teachers, but he showed confidence in teachers to evaluate each other.

He proposed a first-ever exit examination to graduate from high school, but he also called for more money for after-school and summer programs to get faltering students up to speed.

In the carrot to schools, Davis would provide added assistance to those that do not

measure up, while the stick would be a two-year deadline for improvement. Cash bonuses to bad schools that meet their goals seem like overkill, however. Why reward schools for doing the minimum?

Davis' proposal to pay more to teachers who get an advanced credential — which continues a Wilson initiative — may get sneers from teachers unions that traditionally believe in uniformity of wages, but the plan could help professionalize teaching.

And adding money to the teacher mentoring program also is based on solid evidence that mentoring programs have been a real boon in retaining young but inexperienced instructors whose first years are often spent in isolation and frustration.

Davis' plan to bring the University of California more into the lower-grades reform movement through reading academies and teacher and administrator

training is inspired. Getting UC involved could both improve the quality of educators and add prestige to the idea of an education career for California's best and brightest.

Davis did not leave out the environment, higher education, public safety, water policy or transportation in his first State of the State, but his strong focus on education was well-placed. Many of his proposals have the potential to make a real difference in California public education.

*Governor Davis' education proposals lack the venom against teachers' unions of his predecessor.*

# San Francisco Chronicle

THE VOICE OF THE WEST

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### He Kept His Focus

**G**OVERNOR GRAY DAVIS proved two points this week with his signing of a \$79.3 billion state budget. One, he could stand up to the pressure of his fellow Democrats in the Legislature when it came to spending on health and welfare programs.

And two, he never lost sight of the priorities he spelled out during the 1998 campaign and in his inaugural address. His top three priorities, then and now: "Fix the schools, fix the schools, fix the schools," he reiterated in a conference call with editorial writers after signing the budget Tuesday.

Overall state aid to schools will rise by \$2.3 billion to a record \$26.4 billion in the budget signed by Davis. Even so, Davis used his veto pen to line out from the Legislature-passed budget about \$113 million in K-12 spending and \$72 million from higher education. Davis aides said the governor would not go along with outlays for duplicative programs or budgets that schools were not prepared to spend prudently.

It is noteworthy that a good chunk of the new money will flow toward some specific reform efforts — such as establishing teacher accountability and graduation standards — while giving local districts greater leeway to spend state aid.

California schools have plenty of catching up to do, as reflected in the statewide

achievement tests released yesterday, which show students performing below the national average. Also, with this budget, per-student spending in California will average \$6,025 when all funding sources are added in. That remains \$1,500 below the national average.

The governor called the budget "tough minded and big hearted" with good reason, though a few Republican victims of his veto pen would add "mean spirited" to some of his actions against programs in their districts.

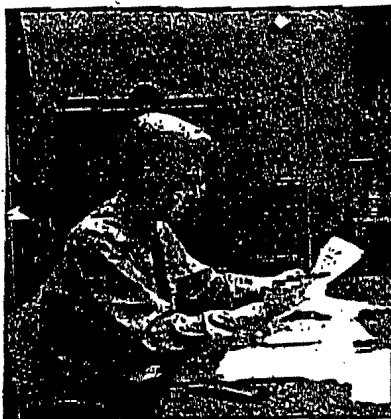
However, Davis' generally austere approach should allay fears that Democratic control of the legislative and executive branches will lead to a good-times spending spree that would saddle the state with lasting commitments. He vetoed \$262 million in spending for health programs, for example.

To its credit, the Legislature refused to deliver Davis' request for \$335 million for a new state prison in Delano,

instead providing \$24 million for land acquisition and design work.

The "big hearted" components included money for what Davis called "responsible onetime investments" in open space, roads, commuter trains and ferries. Car owners will get another 10 percent cut in license fees, following this year's 25 percent reduction.

All in all, the state budget signed by Davis was on time, restrained and relatively generous to education — a responsible approach all around.





*Fax Transmittal*

TO: ANDY ROTHERMAN

FAX #: 456-5581/456-477028

FROM: Olivia Morgan, Director

DATE: 9/29

PAGES (Including Cover) 13

COMMENTS: Thanks for your help.

**PROPOSED LANGUAGE RE: GGD'S SCHOOL REFORM SUCCESS**

In his first nine months in office, Governor Gray Davis has made strengthening California's schools his top priority.

He has turned partisan conflict into bipartisan consensus and passed a four-part, \$444-million plan to significantly raise student and teacher performance statewide. Called READ, Raising Expectations, Achievement and Development, the plan focuses on improving reading skills, enhancing teacher quality and increasing school accountability.

Today, after decades of educational neglect, California is making great strides on the long, long road to higher expectations and better schools:

- California has adopted the nation's toughest high school exit exam.
- California has instituted the nation's first statewide peer-review program for teachers.
- California has launched a "rewards for results" program to hold every principal and every school accountable for improved performance.
- California has invested nearly \$200 million in reading programs to drastically improve the reading skills of its children.

When Governor Davis called a special session to consider school reform back in January, a lot of people in Sacramento snickered. They said it couldn't be done. Too much gridlock, they said.

But Governor Davis turned school reform into a statewide crusade, successfully beating back Sacramento's special-interest status quo.

And, now, the promise of a world-class public education is being renewed in California.

## Improving Teacher Quality

### *Teacher Peer Review and Assistance*

Governor Davis sponsored legislation to enact the first statewide program of peer review and assistance for veteran teachers. Programs, to be developed through collective bargaining at school districts, will strengthen teacher evaluation and provide support for struggling veteran teachers. Particularly as California moves toward a system which holds schools accountable for student academic achievement, it is in teachers' best interest to promote professionalism among their peers. Those who do not improve despite assistance are likely to be counseled out of the profession.

### *Incentives to increase salaries of qualified beginning teachers*

The Governor's budget includes \$50 million in incentives to school districts whose salaries for certified, qualified (holding at least a B.A. degree) beginning teachers are at least \$32,000 annually.

*Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA)* program, to provide mentor support from quality veteran teachers to all 1st and 2nd-year teachers. This program has increased teacher retention in the first five years from 50% to 90%.

*Certification Incentives* – Cash awards (\$10,000) for teachers who obtain National Board of Professional teaching Standards certification.

### *Professional Development Institutes*

This summer, more than 6,000 teachers of reading were trained in systematic, assessment-based reading instruction methods at weeklong institutes held on college and university campuses statewide. This national model for teacher staff development was given to school teams composed of beginning and veteran teachers and an administrator. Follow-up sessions will be held throughout the year at the training campuses and school sites. This successful model, developed and administered through the University of California, allows for school team collaboration and in-depth instruction throughout the school year, unlike many "one-shot" exercises in staff development.

### *Governor's Teachers and Principal Leadership Academies*

Governor Davis sponsored legislation to establish a rigorous, masters-level Teacher Scholar program at the University of California, aimed at attracting the best and brightest to the teaching field through provision of scholarships to students who agree to teach in the most difficult to staff schools.

### *California School Paraprofessional Teacher Training Program*

Governor Davis' budget includes funding to prepare an additional 3,300 paraeducators to become fully credentialed teachers.

*Performance Incentives*

Governor Davis' budget includes \$50 million to provide performance bonuses of up to \$25,000 for teachers in low-performing schools whose students show significant academic achievement. This will help with retention of qualified teachers in schools which are difficult to staff.

*Community College Partnerships*

Governor Davis is working on several fronts to create better linkages between California's higher education and K-12 systems, so that more students will be prepared for success in college. Among these initiatives is the development of partnerships among community colleges, neighboring higher education institutions and K-12 schools within their common service area to provide teacher internships. This will give prospective teachers earlier exposure to classroom teaching, and also support better cross-system communication.

## **Strengthening Accountability for Results**

*Testing*

California has adopted world-class academic standards that detail what students should learn at each grade, and is developing a test to measure student progress against those standards. The state is in the third year of a nationally normed statewide testing and reporting program to gauge how schools are doing compared to others in the state and nation.

*Measuring School Progress*

Shortly after taking office, Governor Davis sponsored legislation in a special session of the Legislature on education to link higher standards and assessments to a system for holding schools accountable. The California Public Schools Accountability Act establishes a comprehensive system of public reporting on school achievement by ranking all schools and measuring their performance annually.

*Rewards for Improvement*

All schools will be assigned a target for improvement on an Academic Performance Index. Schools that meet growth targets for all student groups -- at least 5 percent improvement on the index -- may qualify for funding awards of up to \$150 per pupil under the High Achieving/Improving Schools Program.

*Intervention and Assistance for low-performing schools*

In its first year of implementation, 430 schools scoring below the 50th percentile on statewide tests have been chosen (from among 1400 volunteers) to receive extra funding to develop and implement school improvement plans. After the first year in the program, a public hearing will be held. If a school fails to show adequate improvement, it may face local sanctions. After two years in the program, schools that fail to meet growth targets or show adequate progress are subject to state sanctions, including reassignment of staff, school closure,

allowing students to attend any public school with space or assignment of the school's management to a university or other educational institution.

#### *High School Exit Exam*

To hold students, as well as schools and teachers, accountable, Governor Davis sponsored a measure that will require all students to pass a high school exit exam linked to rigorous new standards, as a condition of graduation beginning in 2004.

#### *Accountability for Teachers*

Under legislation sponsored by Governor Davis, teacher evaluations for the first time may include progress of their students on criterion-referenced exams.

### **CALIFORNIA'S EDUCATION PROGRESS AND SUCCESSES**

California has one of the most challenging student populations in the country:

25% of students reside in poverty and 25% of students are not fluent in English.

Despite these obstacles, Governor Davis believes that all children can succeed academically if they are held to a high standard and receive the resources and support they need. He has called for an "Era of Higher Expectations" in education to engage students, teachers, parents, school administrators and all Californians in an effort to improve student academic performance. By rewarding achievement, sanctioning failure and holding students and educators accountable for success, California's public schools can again be the pride of our state.

#### **PROGRESS**

*Teacher Peer Review and Assistance* - Gov. Davis established the first statewide program of peer review and assistance for veteran teachers. Legislation signed earlier this year provides \$41 million as an incentive for districts to implement teacher peer review programs for veteran teachers by July 1, 2000.

*Teacher training* - Gov. Davis sponsored legislation establishing Teacher Reading Professional Development Institutes. This summer, 6,000 teachers and principals participated in training sessions to learn best practice techniques in reading instruction

*Accountability* - Gov. Davis created a comprehensive accountability system through legislation earlier this year, which will rank schools and measure academic improvement. The legislation also provides 430 schools with the opportunity for state assistance to improve (1,400 schools applied to be part of the program). Schools that improve are rewarded and those that fail will be sanctioned.

*Exit Exam* - this legislation, sponsored by Gov. Davis, requires all high school students to pass an exam as a condition of graduation beginning in June 2004.

*Textbooks* -- Last year, the Legislature committed \$1 billion to new textbooks over the next four years at \$250 million per year. Gov. Davis increased this funding by \$134 million, which will enable students to have new standards-aligned textbooks in three core academic subjects.

*Per-Pupil Funding* -- Governor Davis increased per-pupil funding in the state budget to \$6,025 for 1999-2000, up from \$5,751 in 1998-1999

### **SUCSESSES**

*Class Size Reduction (CSR)* -- California has a successful K-3 CSR program in place -- in FY 1998-99, 92.4% of K-3 students participated in the CSR program.

Governor Davis secured a waiver from the federal government that allowed \$129 million in federal funding to be used for 9th and 10th grades, rather than the K-3 grades for which the money is earmarked.

*Standardized Test Scores* -- According to the most recent SAT9 test results, students who are proficient in English are scoring above the national average in most subjects and grade levels. (per Eastin 7/22 press release).

*School Facilities* -- California voters last November passed the largest school bond measure in state history, approving \$9.1 billion to build new schools and repair aging school facilities.

*Teacher Staff Development and Assistance* -- Under Gov. Davis, California has developed a model comprehensive system for teacher training and staff development. Beginning teachers are given mentor support in the first two years of teaching, and veteran teachers are given assistance and evaluation through the nation's first statewide peer review program.

### **CALIFORNIA'S ACCOUNTABILITY ACHIEVEMENTS COMPARED TO OTHER STATES**

Governor Davis enacted a series of landmark accountability reforms that place California among a small group of states that are leaders in accountability measures. Only Texas, New Mexico, Indiana, Maryland, North Carolina and Kentucky have accountability standards that match California's. These standards include the following categories (all information from *Education Week* 1/99):

- ® Assessment: (State has tests for measuring student achievement)
- ® Report Cards (State has a report card for each of its schools - in CA, these report cards have been beefed up in recent years to provide more information)
- ® Ratings (State assigns overall ratings to schools or identifies low-performing schools - GGD reform)
- ® Rewards (State provides monetary rewards to successful schools - GGD)

reform)

® Assistance (State provides assistance to schools it names low-performing - GGD reform)

® Sanctions (State has the authority to close, take over or reconstitute failing schools - GGD reform)

Other states have enacted some of these reforms, but there are only six states in addition to California that have implemented all six reforms.

# Davis Ready To Overhaul School System

Special legislative session on education reform likely

By Robert B. Gunnison  
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

SACRAMENTO — Governor Gray Davis will ask the Legislature to overhaul the state's system of evaluating teachers and schools and require that high school pupils pass an "exit examination" before graduating.

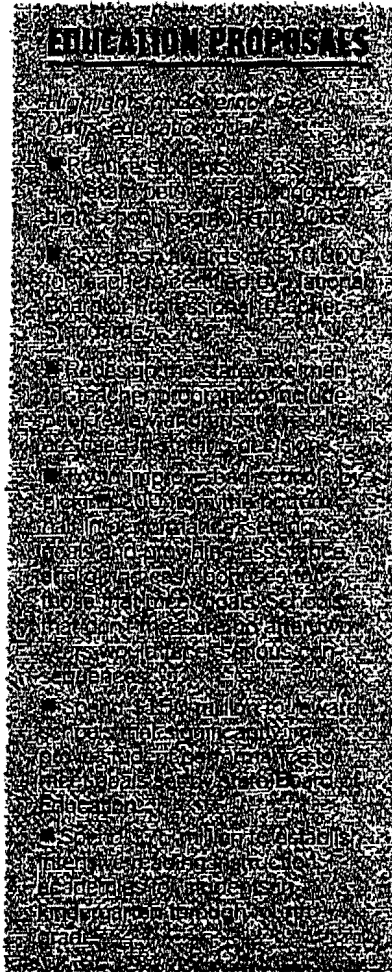
The new governor will propose the measures as part of a \$444 million spending package for public education, administration officials said yesterday.

During his first State of the State speech tonight, Davis is expected to call a special session of the Legislature to deal with education, which the governor intends to make the centerpiece of his administration.

Davis will submit his state budget for the next fiscal year Friday, detailing how he intends to allocate the rest of the more than \$31 billion the state will spend on kindergarten through 12th-grade education.

A major component of the reform package released yesterday would rewrite the state's 15-year-old "mentor teacher" program. The program is designed to improve teaching by pairing experienced teachers with novices. But critics contend it does little to fulfill its goal because too often the mentors

► SCHOOLS: Page A9 Col. 1



## ► SCHOOLS

From Page 1

become administrators and leave the classroom.

Davis' proposal would add a new component: having the mentors evaluate less-experienced teachers, with the results being used in staffing decisions. That idea matches proposals by the nation's largest teachers unions and their California affiliates.

"Teachers are in the best position to know and be of assistance to their colleagues," said one senior Davis administration official.

The state now spends about \$75 million a year on the mentor teacher program; Davis wants to increase that to \$100 million.

Teachers unions in San Francisco and Los Angeles have scheduled a news conference today in Sacramento to announce their support for a peer-review program that uses experienced teachers to train and evaluate new teachers and to retrain veteran instructors.

United Teachers of Los Angeles and United Educators of San Francisco also said they want the state to provide financial incentives for teachers who earn certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Davis' proposal would give \$10,000 to teachers who earn the certificate. The incentive program was created last year, but the Legislature included no money for the payments.

The governor's other proposals include:

- Providing \$75 million for reading programs for pupils in kindergarten through fourth grade.

- Asking the University of California to create "California Reading Development Institutes" to instruct 6,000 teachers on how to teach reading to their pupils.

- Requiring a high school exit examination as a requirement of graduation starting in 2003.

Davis also plans to spend \$200 million to create a system to make schools more accountable to students and the public.

He proposed randomly selecting 200 of the state's worst-performing schools and giving them two years to improve or face penalties, such as intervention by outside administrators.

Assemblywoman Kerry Mazzoni, D-Novato, chairwoman of the Education Committee, generally lauded Davis' proposals, but said she fears that his school accountability plan would not reach the worst schools.

Mazzoni said she prefers to see a system of "triage" in selecting schools for special assistance that is focused "on the worst of the worst."

She also said unions may oppose any mentor teacher program that "begins to look like merit pay" — a concept long supported by former Governor Pete Wilson, who was a frequent antagonist of teachers unions.

Bob Cherry of the California Teachers Association echoed that concern, saying the union supports a single-tier pay system for teachers. He said that the union expects to help shape any new legislation and that it has concerns about how schools labeled as "underachieving" would be chosen.

Senator Dede Alpert, D-Coronado, Mazzoni's counterpart in the Senate, praised Davis for focusing on teacher performance. "We really have shorted teachers, I think, in some of our teacher training and staff development," she said. "I was really pleased to see the money going into the mentor teacher program."

Davis' proposals to help improve teacher quality match recommendations from the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers and their local affiliates in San Francisco and in Los Angeles, the state's largest school district.

Union leaders say they like the plan because teachers who need help would get it, even though Davis' proposal could make it easier to remove bad teachers. Firing a teacher now can take years and cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The unions favor employing only those teachers with state certification, and they say the Davis proposals would go a long way toward easing the state's shortage of certified teachers. Statewide, about 15 percent of classrooms are staffed by underqualified instructors.

But the idea for an exit exam for high school seniors met with less approval from the unions, which, together, were among the top donors to the Davis gubernatorial campaign last year, pumping more than \$1 million into the race.

Educators see such an exam as a potential problem because it could mean holding troubled students back if they did not pass.

"What happens if a child does not score a certain percentage?" said Dennis Meyers of the Association of California School Administrators. "Do they stay another year? Take another course? What's the impact on school facilities?"

Davis did not account for how all of the \$444 million in his proposal would be spent.

The special legislative session on education will help the governor score a public relations victory by suggesting that he takes seriously his campaign promise of making education his first priority.

In practical terms, it also allows him to speed new education laws into the system so they may be in place by September, when school starts.

*Chronicle staff writer Nanette Asimov contributed to this report.*

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WEDNESDAY, February 17, 1999

# Education secretary praises Davis' agenda for students

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONG BEACH — U.S. Education Secretary Richard Riley praised state leaders Tuesday for focusing on schools, singling out Gov. Gray Davis for putting students' reading skills on the top of his agenda.

"This is an exciting time for American education and a time of great change and that is why I have come to California," Riley told about 1,200 educators and college students. "You have set out to rebuild and reclaim the glory of your broad system of public education. I believe that you are up to the challenge."

Riley, appointed by President Clinton in 1992, gave his sixth annual State of American Education address at California State University, Long Beach. The university is known as a center for teacher recruitment.

The 22-campus CSU system produces about 60 percent of the state's teachers.

Davis made education the primary theme of his campaign last year. Some of Davis' more controversial reforms — such as high school exit exams and teacher peer review — earned Riley's endorsement Tuesday.

Riley singled out only a few of Davis' ideas, but he mentioned several Clinton proposals that parallel the governor's plans.

Riley said he thinks every American child should be fluent in at least two languages, the practice of social promotion needs to end and the

use of emergency credentials should cease — all things Davis has advocated.

Davis had been scheduled to speak before Riley, but he attended a funeral for a slain police officer instead. Davis' education adviser, Gary Hart, attended the speech, but did not comment.

Riley said that while education scores have improved nationally, the country has a "very long way to go" before every child can read successfully by the end of third grade.

"I believe, for example, that every elementary school should have the reading specialists they need to make a difference. Gov. Gray Davis here in California is right on the money in putting reading at the head of his education agenda," Riley said.

Riley also praised state Superintendent of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin, who addressed the crowd after Riley, for her work to create universal preschool.

"There is still, however, much to be done, and I urge local and state leaders to help give child care providers much more extended training when it comes to early language and reading development," Riley said.

Eastin, in turn, applauded Riley's proposed national model for states to use in licensing teachers. The model includes initial licensing for up to three years for new teachers, the creation of a professional license and the implementation of a voluntary advanced license.

"The secretary has been downright brave," she said of his plans to elevate and reward the profession of teaching more.

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Such standardization is already evident in some other large states, such as Texas, but it would be exceptionally influential if achieved in California, America's largest and most diverse state.

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ANDY HUNG/REUTERS

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JAN 12 1999

Allen's P. C. B. Est. 1888

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### He Kept His Focus

**G**OVERNOR GRAY DAVIS proved two points this week with his signing of a \$79.3 billion state budget. One, he could stand up to the pressure of his fellow Democrats in the Legislature when it came to spending on health and welfare programs.

And two, he never lost sight of the priorities he spelled out during the 1998 campaign and in his inaugural address. His top three priorities, then and now: "Fix the schools, fix the schools, fix the schools," he reiterated in a conference call with editorial writers after signing the budget Tuesday.

Overall state aid to schools will rise by \$2.3 billion to a record \$26.4 billion in the budget signed by Davis. Even so, Davis used his veto pen to line out from the Legislature-passed budget about \$113 million in K-12 spending and \$72 million from higher education. Davis aides said the governor would not go along with outlays for duplicative programs or budgets that schools were not prepared to spend prudently.

It is noteworthy that a good chunk of the new money will flow toward some specific reform efforts — such as establishing teacher accountability and graduation standards — while giving local districts greater leeway to spend state aid.

California schools have plenty of catching up to do, as reflected in the statewide

achievement tests released yesterday, which show students performing below the national average. Also, with this budget, per-student spending in California will average \$6,025 when all funding sources are added in. That remains \$1,500 below the national average.

The governor called the budget "tough minded and big hearted" with good reason, though a few Republican victims of his veto pen would add "mean spirited" to some of his actions against programs in their districts.

However, Davis' generally austere approach should allay fears that Democratic control of the legislative and executive branches will lead to a good-times spending spree that would saddle the state with lasting commitments. He vetoed \$262 million in spending for health programs, for example.

To its credit, the Legislature refused to deliver Davis' request for \$335 million for a new state prison in Delano,

instead providing \$24 million for land acquisition and design work.

The "big hearted" components included money for what Davis called "responsible onetime investments" in open space, roads, commuter trains and ferries. Car owners will get another 10 percent cut in license fees, following this year's 25 percent reduction.

All in all, the state budget signed by Davis was on time, restrained and relatively generous to education — a responsible approach all around.

