

California Association of Student Councils



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Student Advisory Board on Legislation
in Education

2012 Proposals

Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education (SABLE)
Proposals Developed February 27th-29th, 2012

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COMMENDATIONS

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education (SABLE) commends the Senate Committee on Education for allocating a significant portion of your agenda to dialogue with the students of California each year since the inception of the SABLE program.

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education commends Danny Alvarez, consultant for the Senate Committee on Education, for his enthusiasm, guidance, and initiative in expanding the impact of the SABLE program.

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education commends Sherry Skelly Griffith, legislative advocate for the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) for her support of student involvement in education policymaking and her willingness to speak at the SABLE program.

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education commends Eric Lerum, Director of National Policy for StudentsFirst, for his support of student involvement in education policymaking and his willingness to speak at the SABLE program.

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education commends Rick Pratt, consultant for the Assembly Committee on Education, for his enthusiasm and guidance in support of student engagement in education policymaking processes.

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education commends former Senator Gloria Romero for her career-long commitment to youth development, for her personal support of the California Association of Student Councils through her membership on CASC's Board of Directors, and for the example she set as a leader in the California legislature.

STAFF MEMBERS

Director: Tori Leder, Leland High School

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The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education

15th Annual Presentation to the Senate Committee on Education - Wednesday, February 29, 2012

Justified Absences – Life Skills Training

Presenters and Authors: Ronak Ahir, Leland High School, San Jose; Jordan Feri, West Campus High School, Sacramento

I. PRIORITY

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education, a program of the California Association of Student Councils, establishes the excuse of student absences garnered through the attendance of professional development and life skills training conferences as a priority.

II. RECOMMENDED LEGISLATIVE ACTION

The Student Advisory Board recommends that the legislature

1. Amend Education Code 48205, pursuant to student absences, to read: “A pupil shall be excused from school when the absence is... (7) For justifiable personal reasons, including...attendance at an educational conference on the legislative or judicial process or the development of leadership/life skills offered by a nonprofit organization when the pupil's absence is requested in writing by the parent or guardian and approved by the principal or a designated representative pursuant to uniform standards established by the governing board.”

III. PROVEN RESULTS AND RATIONALE

- Students are often barred from attending conferences associated with leadership training, civic engagement, and life skills training, such as the Youth Action Summit of California, the Student Advisory Board on Education, and the Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education. This results, often, from a concern for the loss of average daily attendance funding and from a lack of officially recognized reasons for excused absence. In addition, this condition results from the wording of existing education code, which restricts acceptable conference attendance to those with a focus “on the legislative or judicial process.” Such exceptions should also be extended to conferences focusing on life skills and leadership development.
- Conferences organized and directed by the California Association of Student Councils help to develop life skills officially recognized by the Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS, as established by the US Department of Labor) as necessary for success in the 21st century.
 - CASC addresses the Foundational Skills identified by SCANS, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening, through research, presentation skills training, communication skills training, and training in active

listening. More complex skills, such as creative thinking, decision-making, and problem solving are developed through an emphasis on teambuilding, group consensus, and experiential learning through structured activities.

- CASC addresses the Functional Skills identified by SCANS, including time management, technology usage, information maintenance and organization, and, especially, team dynamics, the teaching of others, and the exercise of leadership. Time management and information organization are developed through instruction in meeting and conflict management skills; technology is used in the process of researching; team dynamics are developed through structured activities, and the teaching of others and exercise of leadership are practiced via peer to peer training and the use of volunteer student staff members.
- Students who attend conferences hosted by the California Association of Student Councils have the opportunity to represent their peers in legislative and policy efforts and to instruct/be instructed by their peers on the usage of CASC's professional leadership curriculum.
- The Youth and Government program, the Model United Nations program, and the Boys'/Girls' State programs cite existing Education Code 48205 for the purpose of conference attendance. As a result, large numbers of students have been allowed to attend these programs, thus enriching their educations, and schools that delegates attend have been prevented from losing necessary and substantial funding.

IV. KEY ISSUES

- Schools rely on student attendance for state funding.
- School administrator and/or teachers are often unwilling to excuse students for the purpose of attending leadership and legislative conferences.
- District attendance policies often prevent students from attending conferences which are of educational value.

V. FISCAL ANALYSIS

What will cost money?

- Schools will continue to receive funding for those students who are excused on the basis of conference attendance. Thus, the state will incur minimal costs.

What will not cost money?

- Schools will continue to receive funding for the proposed excused student absences, and thus will feel no financial impact.

VI. PREVIOUS ACTION

Relevant Education Code

- Section 48200 – Student Attendance

- Section 48205 (7): “For justifiable personal reasons, including... attendance at an educational conference on the legislative or judicial process offered by a nonprofit organization when the pupil's absence is requested in writing by the parent or guardian and approved by the principal or a designated representative pursuant to uniform standards established by the governing board.”

Current utilization of existing legislation

- YMCA Youth and Government program
- Boys’/Girls’ State programs
- Model United Nations program (hosted by the United Nations Association)

VII. SOURCES USED

- "Skills and Abilities." *Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills*. North Carolina Career Resource Network, 2008. Web. 28 Feb. 2012. <<http://www.soicc.state.nc.us/SOICC/planning/skillsjob.htm>>.
- "Education Code Section 48200-48208." *California Legislative Information*. Web. 28 Feb. 2012. <<http://leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/waisgate?WAISdocID=44645314945+2+0+0&WAIAction=retrieve>>.

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education
15th Annual Presentation to the Senate Committee on Education - February 29, 2012

Categorical Funding

- Presenters: Annie Hadley, Moorpark High School, Moorpark; Denzell Perry, Dominguez High School, Compton; Kes Rittenberg, Oakland Technical High School, Oakland
- Writers: Farah Billah, Mira Loma High School, Sacramento; Isha Patel, Simi Valley High School, Simi Valley
- Group Members: Crystal Carpenter, Foothill High, Redding; Navyjot Gill, Golden Valley High, Bakersfield; Kimiko Guillermo, Oakland Technical High School, Oakland; Frederick Horowitz, North Hollywood High School, North Hollywood; Belinda Li, Mira Loma High School, Sacramento; Darren Liu, Los Altos High School, Hacienda Heights; Gagik Movsisyan, Rio Lindo High School, Sacramento; Kathryn Nassar, Half Moon Bay High School, Half Moon Bay; Isabel Yglecias, Kit Carson Middle School, Sacramento
- Facilitator: Chany Kim, Troy High School, Fullerton

I. PRIORITY

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education, a program of the California Association of Student Councils, establishes support for an amended version of the 2012–13 Proposition 98 Spending Changes of Governor Brown’s 2012-2013 Budget Proposal.

VIII. RECOMMENDED LEGISLATIVE ACTION

The Student Advisory Board recommends that the legislature:

1. Support the 2012–13 Proposition 98 Spending Changes of Jerry Brown’s 2012-2013 Budget Proposal, amended to state that School Site Councils are ensured the power to control the allocation of general-purpose funds.
2. Maintain a checks and balances system between districts and School Site Councils that is consistent with the current processes dealing with the allocation of funds.

III. PROVEN RESULTS AND RATIONALE

Categorical funds don’t address each school’s needs. Schools often rationalize the spending of categorical funds to fulfill their priorities. Local control of these resources is essential during times of financial hardship, because without this authority, schools and districts are unable to perform their responsibilities to their communities.

Governor Brown's proposal addresses this immediate concern by transferring the majority of the categorical funds provided by the state into the basic fund, allowing districts to focus on their individual priorities and obligations to contracted professionals. To ensure that the needs of each school are addressed, we believe that site councils should be involved in this process.

Students desire a more effective method of allocating available funds to their designated areas of need. Many schools have irregular distribution of their monetary supply. As stated in Section II, titled *Recommended Legislative Action*, a system of checks and balances must be put in place in order for funds to achieve their full potential in each context.

Restrictions on categorical funds have become detrimental to the academic health of many schools. A school such as Dominguez High School in Compton, which has a counselor to student ratio of one to 750, is unable to use categorical funds that do not address the priorities of their school to pay for additional counselors.

At Golden Valley High School in Bakersfield, the first few weeks of the 2011 school year were spent taking students out of classes due to both a lack of staff and excess of students. This unfortunate teacher-student ratio is a result of the school's inability to hire and maintain teachers. Instead of spending funds on symptoms, we believe that schools should have the opportunity to negotiate the reallocation of resources to address their needs and priorities.

The Student Advisory Board conditionally supports the 2012–13 Proposition 98 Spending Changes of Jerry Brown's 2012-2013 Budget Proposal, in the case that school site councils are incorporated in the process of the allocation of resources, after school districts designate funds for contracted employees. We believe that this addition would ensure that the priorities and needs of each school are discussed and addressed at the local level.

IV. KEY ISSUES

- The categorical funds allocated to schools often do not parallel the needs and priorities of the school.
- Governor Brown's current proposal fails to take into account local voices at the school level, which school site councils have provided in the past and can continue to provide.

V. FISCAL ANALYSIS

- See state Legislative Analyst's fiscal impact report.

VI. PREVIOUS ACTION

Relevant Education Code

- 41300.1: Instructional Improvement and Accountability

Current legislative action

- Governor Brown's Proposed 2012-2013 Budget, specifically Proposition 98 spending changes

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education
14th Annual Presentation to the Senate Committee on Education – Wednesday, February 29, 2012

Teaching Incentives & Qualifications

- Presenters: Esha Lal, Granite Bay High, Granite Bay; Sarah Murray, Rosary High, Yorba Linda
Kunal Shah, Mira Loma High, Sacramento
- Writers: Sarah Murray, Rosary High, Yorba Linda; Ajay Shanmugham, Troy High, Brea; Mariah Steiger,
Windsor High, Windsor; Gina Wu, St. Francis High, El Dorado Hills
- Group Members: Wendy Cheung, Arcadia High, Duarte; Emily Duan, Mira Loma High, Carmichael; Rebeca
Corrales, Kit Carson Middle School, Sacramento; Dimiter Radonov, Redwood High, Tiburon;
Yvette Ramirez, Kit Carson Middle School, Sacramento; Joseph Rubin, Windward School,
Beverly Hills; Anton Saleh, Beverly Hills High, Beverly Hills; Maddie Thomas, Petaluma High,
Petaluma
- Facilitator: McKenna Bernosky, San Benito High School, Hollister

I. PRIORITY

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education, a program of the California Association of Student Councils, establishes incentivizing the entrance of top-tiered students into the teaching profession as well as ensuring the quality of California instructor credentialing as priorities.

II. RECOMMENDED LEGISLATIVE ACTION

The Student Advisory Board recommends that the legislature

1. Raise the current passing score of fifty-one percent on the California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST) to a seventy percent standard passing score.
2. Mandate the visibility of a numerical score breakdown of the CBEST scoring on all teacher transcripts.
3. Re-evaluate the CBEST so that it adequately reflects teacher competency.
4. Compel the University of California Board of Regents and the California State University Board of Trustees to offer a partial tuition reimbursement for students in the top thirty percentile of their graduating class who make a five-year commitment to serve as a public school teacher in the state of California.

III. PROVEN RESULTS AND RATIONALE

According to the State Department of Education, the State of California is committed to providing quality education to, “[prepare] students to live, work, and thrive in a highly connected world.” Unfortunately, low quality teachers and a lack of teaching incentives prevent this goal from being achieved. Because teachers are an integral part of student

achievement and the success of the State of California, we see improving teacher quality as an imperative.

In order to do this, we recommend that the State Legislature address the fifty-one percent score necessary to pass the CBEST and receive a teaching credential. By raising the required passing score to seventy percent, we can ensure that more qualified candidates make it through the credentialing process. This standardization is aligned with the standard score to receive a passing mark, or C average. It is reasonable and logical to ask our teachers for the same level of performance.

Furthermore, the lack of transparency regarding teachers' CBEST scores results in an incomplete knowledge of teachers' capability. With this in mind, we suggest a mandatory score breakdown be included in all teacher transcripts in order to better provide districts with an understanding of teacher quality. In addition, we propose that the Senate Education Committee endorse more rigorous content for the CBEST. The questions, which resemble those of a seventh-grade standardized assessment, do not adequately reflect the knowledge and skills necessary for service as a teacher. Therefore, we recommend an in-depth analysis of the current test to ensure rigor in its content so that it better identifies quality teachers.

Finally, public education has been unable to wrest elite and promising college students from competing career paths. This is a detriment to the public education system, and in turn, California students. We recommend that the State Legislature compel the University of California Board of Regents and the California State University Board of Trustees to offer a partial tuition reimbursement program for students in the top thirty percentile of their graduating class who commit to five-years as a public school teacher in the state of California. By considering these implementations, the California State Legislature can make great strides towards improving the quality of teachers and the public education system.

IV. KEY ISSUES

- There are few widespread incentives to motivate top-tiered college graduates to enter the teaching field. There is also a lack of interest in becoming teachers as a result of the social stigmas associated with the teaching profession.
- The inadequate passing requirement (minimum 51%) necessary for the CBEST adversely affects the quality of education in California.
- CBEST scores on teachers' transcripts are reported as a pass or fail grade, rather than a numerical score.
- Content of the CBEST does not adequately ensure quality teachers.

V. FISCAL ANALYSIS

What costs money?

- Re-evaluating the content of the California Basic Educational Skills Test and strengthening the test standards would require mild to moderate costs.
- Implementing the reimbursement program would require substantial costs. However, we anticipate that, in due time, the benefits will far outweigh the costs.

What doesn't cost money?

- Changing the accepted score of the California Basic Educational Skills Test as well as the transparency of the numerical scores on aspiring teachers' transcripts would not result in any cost.

VI. PREVIOUS ACTION

Relevant Education Code

- E.C. 44525 and 4258, regarding basic skills proficiency and teacher credentialing

Student/CASC action

- 2001 SABE Proposal – Teacher Recruitment and Retention; Creation of a Committee to campaign for teacher recruitment
- 2002 SABE Proposal – Teacher Quality; Prevent the usage of emergency teacher credentialing
- 2005 SABE Proposal – Quality Teaching in Underperforming Schools; Training for teachers at underperforming schools
- 2006 SABE Proposal – Integrated Evaluation of Teacher Quality; Student participation in the evaluation of teachers
- 2010 SABE Proposal – Teacher Effectiveness; Teacher evaluation by students implemented in all California schools

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education
15th Annual Presentation to the Senate Committee on Education - Wednesday, February 29, 2012

Teacher Accountability

Presenters:	Michael Abbott, Terra Linda High School, San Rafael; Brandon Barry, Placer High School, Auburn; Rikki Hu, Mira Loma High School, Sacramento; Chelsea Lim, Palos Verdes Peninsula High School, Rancho Palos Verdes; Sergio Lopez, Leland High School, San Jose
Writers:	Chloe Acebo, South Pasadena High School, South Pasadena; Eden Concoff, Malibu High School, Malibu
Group Members:	Alma Almanza, Wasco High School, Wasco; Covey, Brandon, Kit Carson Middle School, Sacramento; Felisa Cruz, American Canyon, American Canyon; Hector Delgado, Wasco High School, Wasco; Amrit Narwan, Granite Bay High School, Sacramento; Connor Regan, Troy High School, Villa Park; Amanpreet Sidhu, Mira Loma High School, Sacramento
Facilitator:	Ronak Ahir, Leland High School, San Jose

I. PRIORITY

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education, a program of the California Association of Student Councils, establishes ending the California teacher tenure policy and instituting an effective evaluation system as a priority.

II. RECOMMENDED LEGISLATIVE ACTION

The Student Advisory Board recommends that the legislature

1. Remove the teacher tenure protection clauses of the California Education Code, eliminating permanent employment status in the state education system.
2. Implement a multi-faceted, merit-based system that includes peer, student and administrative evaluation, as well as student test scores, to assess the effectiveness of a teacher.

III. RATIONALE

The qualifications for a teacher to obtain and maintain tenure are not indicative of his or her daily classroom performance, ability, or effectiveness. This current system does not provide for any type of annual evaluation to ensure quality teaching, thus negatively impacting students' wellbeing and motivation. As the Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education, we believe that it is of great importance to create an evaluation system that will monitor educators' teaching effectiveness and the success of their students. We recognize teachers' desire for the job security provided by the tenure

system, but we believe that to improve of our education system the state must hold teachers to a higher standard throughout their teaching career. Research recently conducted by economists from Harvard University and Columbia University has determined that effective teachers can increase a classroom's lifetime income expectancy by as much as \$700,000.¹ Students want teachers who have an honest desire to teach and utilize innovative practices, such as an emphasis on experiential learning. As students, we believe that abolishing tenure will put us on a better track to achieve this goal.

We see the most effective alternative to the current tenure system to be a multi-faceted evaluation process that would continually monitor teachers' effectiveness. This system would encompass administrators' observations, peer and student evaluations and value-added testing scores on an annual basis to more accurately account for all aspects of a teacher's ability as an educator. This type of merit-based evaluation will be more effective than the seniority based tenure system. In a merit-based system the quality of instruction would continuously improve. In the current system, long-term tenured teachers are allowed to become complacent and often cease to improve their practices because their jobs are protected. Moreover, there is no other industry in which employees are granted job protection after a two-year period of loyalty. Because education directs the future of the world, teachers must be held accountable for the development of their students.

IV. KEY ISSUES

- There are no qualifications for teacher tenure.
 - i. Tenure is not indicative of a teacher's daily classroom performance, ability or effectiveness after having received their tenure.
 - ii. No merit-based alternative system exists for evaluating teachers in public education.
 - iii. Students are forced to accept the current tenure system, and often suffer from teachers' inabilities, ineffectiveness, and poor performance.
- Educators and administrators agree that there are poorly performing teachers, but nothing is being done to ameliorate the situation.
 - i. Eighty-one percent of administrators and fifty-eight percent of teachers state that there is a tenured teacher on their campus who is performing poorly.²
 - ii. It can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to go through the complex due process procedures to fire a tenured teacher.³

V. FISCAL ANALYSIS

What will cost money?

¹Lowrey, Annie. "Big Study Links Good Teachers to Lasting Gain." *The New York Times*, (Education section. 6 January 2012).

²Daniel Weisberg, Susan Sexton, Jennifer Mulhern, and David Keelin, "The Widget Effect" (The New Teacher Project: 2009), 6.

³Song, Jason. "Firing tenured teachers can be a costly and tortuous task." *The Los Angeles Times*, (Local section. 03 May 2009).

- Moderate costs will be incurred in the development of an effective system of peer, administrative, and student evaluation.

What will not cost money?

- No fiscal costs will be incurred in the repeal of tenure policies.

What will save money?

- Districts will not have to go through complicated instructor termination processes.

VI. PREVIOUS ACTION

Relevant Education Code

- E.C. 44944--Procedures for Dismissing Teachers
- E.C. 44929--Permanent Status/Tenure Regulations

Student/CASC action

- This is the first time the California Association of Student Councils is denouncing state tenure policy.
- In November 2011, the California Association of Student Councils recommended that, if the State Board of Education agreed to the U.S. Department of Education ESEA Flexibility Waiver, a teacher evaluation system include multi-faceted assessment.
- For decades, the California Association of Student Councils has endorsed the use of student evaluation of teachers.