

JERRY BROWN

Governor | 2010

EDUCATION PLAN

California faces unique challenges in education. Despite passage of Proposition 98 in 1988, per pupil spending lags behind most other states. In 1972, California was in the top 20 for per pupil spending; by 2009, we had dropped to the bottom 10.

This is particularly challenging since one out of four K-12 students in California is not yet proficient in English, 17 percent live in poverty, and half qualify for free or reduced price meals. Despite these challenges California students have made significant gains on state tests. For example, in algebra just 106,000 students were proficient in 2003, but this doubled by 2009 to 212,000. Yet, we have a long way to go.

Higher education is also suffering in California, especially in the last decade. From a system that was essentially tuition free, fees have skyrocketed at both the University of California and California State University systems. When I was Governor, the price students paid for a higher education was a fraction of what it is today. At that time, the state devoted 3 to 4 times more to higher education than to prisons; today that ratio is even. That's not right.

I have been studying education and working on related issues ever since I was elected to the Los Angeles Community College Board of Trustees in 1969. I approach this task with some humility, and a realization that there is no silver bullet that will fix everything. Education improvement takes time, persistence, and a systematic approach. California's education problems are not limited to just the lowest performing schools and teachers.

The proposals below will start this journey to a better future for our students.

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MY RECORD:

I have increased education funding, given more authority to teachers and local school districts and helped launch innovative new schools and programs. Specifically:

As Mayor, I Founded Two Charter Schools in Oakland

- I personally founded two public charter schools in Oakland. One, the Oakland Military Institute, is a college preparatory academy in collaboration with the California National Guard. It is going into its 10th year and serves 600 students from 6th through 12th grade. Despite the fact that many students come from low income families (80% of the students qualify for free or reduced lunches), this year 25% of our graduates were accepted to the University of California system. In prior years, graduates have been admitted to such prestigious schools as West Point and Yale.
- I also started the Oakland School for the Arts, which is devoted to intensive pre-professional training in the arts within a college-preparatory curriculum. The school, going into its 9th year, is audition based and also serves 600 students from 6th through 12th grade.
- Both schools charge no tuition and are among the top-performing schools in Oakland.
- From my experience in starting and running these schools, I have gained first-hand experience in how difficult it is to enable all students to be ready for college and careers. Student outcomes are a complex interaction of student characteristics, teacher competence, instructional materials, and parental support. Any reforms and state educational policies must take into account this complexity and refrain from oversimplifying the problems and solutions.

As Governor, I:

- **Established Minimum Requirements for High School Graduates:** I signed legislation mandating every high school district to establish academic standards for graduation.
- **Significantly increased investment in K-12 and Higher Education:** During my governorship, through prudent management of the budget and state spending, we were able to make significant investments in our education system, both for K-12 programs and for higher education. The K-12 budget increased from \$2.1 billion in 1974-75 to about \$8.2 billion in 1982-83. The state budget for the University of California increased from \$474 million in 1974-75 to \$1.15 billion in 1982-83. And the California State University budget increased from \$454 million in 1974-75 to nearly \$987 million in 1982-83. [See Analysis of the Budget Bill, Report of the Legislative Analyst (1974-75), and Analysis of the Budget Bill, Report of the Legislative Analyst (1982-83)]
- **Promoted more Math and Science:** Through the State Board of Education and the Board of trustees of the CA State University System, we increased the graduation requirements to include 3 years of math and 2 years of science.

- **Increased Local Control and Flexibility:** I signed the School Improvement Program (SIP) giving local teachers and administrators more control over their schools. The SIP created local councils that evaluated schools, implemented plans to increase school effectiveness, and granted schools additional funding to implement these plans.
- **Increased Cal Grant Funding and Number of Cal Grants Awarded by 50%:** While I was Governor, we increased the funding for Cal Grant awards by 50% and the number of Cal Grants awarded from 4,550 to 6,825.
- **Increased Funding and Teacher Training in Math, Science and Engineering:** As Governor, I recognized the importance of strengthening math and science education to remain competitive in the emerging high tech economy. I increased funding and teacher training in math, engineering and science, established computer demonstration centers, high tech vocational education programs, joint public-private education and training programs, and worker training programs.
- **Created Education Programs Linked Directly to Jobs:** I significantly expanded apprenticeship programs and created the California Worksite Education and Training Act (CWETA). CWETA funded job training programs and guaranteed students jobs upon graduation. CWETA focused on areas where there were labor shortages, including farming, electronics, and nursing.

MY PLAN:

1. Higher Education

The California Master Plan was created in 1960. When I was Governor in the 1970s, the Master Plan was working far better to provide college access and success. In recent years, however, the master plan has been undermined, and it is unclear whether the current financial model for our universities can be sustained.

Recent state budgets have raised tuition drastically, reduced the number of new students--as well transfers from community colleges--to CSUC, cut class sections so that students cannot get basic classes they need, and driven good professors to other states. Students are dropping out because of high costs and the extended time needed to finish. California's historic public university research base is declining.

- This situation calls for a major overhaul of many components of the postsecondary system. We need to convene a representative group to create a new state Master Plan.
- We must also reverse the decades long trend of transferring state support from higher education to prisons. We can do this without sacrificing public safety. For example, as Attorney General, I recently blocked a proposed \$8 billion prison hospital expansion—which was unnecessarily expensive and which would have added substantially to our state's deficit. By relentlessly pursuing similar cost savings, we can channel needed funds to our higher education system.

- The introduction of online learning and the use of new technologies should be explored to the fullest, as well as “extended University” programs. Technology can increase educational productivity, expand access to higher learning, and reduce costs.
- Focus on Community Colleges:
 - California’s community college system has 72 districts, 110 colleges and more than 2.9 million students and plays a critical role in providing education in a wide range of occupational skills and courses for students intending to transfer to four-year schools.
 - Given the effective leadership demonstrated in local community colleges, burdensome state regulations and mandates should be kept to a minimum.
 - Transfer courses should be closely aligned with, and accepted by, the CSUC and UC systems. For example, transfer students are often forced to take redundant courses to graduate from the CSUC system even though they have completed equivalent coursework in community college.

2. Overhaul State testing program.

Our current State testing program costs over \$100 million, is more than 10 years old, and is not as helpful as it could be to parents and educators. It is time to make some basic changes to improve our testing system.

Typically, tests are given in the spring over a 3-day period and results come back in August. Final school accountability scores aren’t ready for almost a year.

- These tests should be reduced in scope and testing time, and results need to be provided to educators and parents far more quickly.
- These year-end tests should be supplemented by very short assessments during the school year. The assessment goal should be to help the teachers, students and their families know where they stand and what specific improvements are needed.
- Tests should not measure factoids as much as understanding.
- Finally, state tests should be linked to college preparation and career readiness, but current tests were not designed to do this.

3. Change school funding formulas and consolidate most of the 62 existing categorical programs.

- Instead of the current bureaucratic, report driven process—which has 62 different categories for funding—we should implement a simple pupil weighted formula based on specific needs of the students in the school district. The number of categories should be reduced to less than 20.

- The consolidated money from the categorical programs would then be distributed on the basis of the weighted formula, not expensive and complex processes. For example, extra funding should be provided for English language learners, low income families and other obvious needs.
- There will be a completely flexible “base amount” grant to all districts that is related to what the state expects students to know and be able to do.
- On top of this base will be a separate targeted amount to school districts based on identifiable needs. This new system would be phased in over time.

4. Teacher Recruitment and Training

Teachers are the most important resource for school improvement, but California has not devised a comprehensive and effective policy to recruit and prepare teachers. Currently, the principal elements of teacher effectiveness – college training, practice teaching, mentoring in the early years of teaching, professional development, evaluation and compensation-- are disjointed and unconnected to each other.

Many of the so-called reform efforts focus on either the very worst teachers (and how to get rid of them) or the very best teachers (and how to provide them bonuses and special compensation). Certainly we need to weed out the bad teachers and incentivize better and more creative teaching. However, the biggest challenge facing California education is improving the performance of the “average” teacher. It is this group—in most instances-- who educates our children and it is they who need both more preparation and better support.

We do not yet know how the laying off of thousands of teachers will affect people thinking about becoming teachers. The number of new teachers--and prospective teachers in universities--has dropped significantly in the last few years.

I propose the following:

- Work with teacher training institutions and state agencies to recruit more teachers from the top third of our high school graduates.
- Teacher preparation should begin in the undergraduate years and then continue into postgraduate programs in order to provide more in-depth training.
- Have local school districts play a role in alternative teacher preparation by offering apprenticeships that combine university coursework with extensive classroom experience. It is important that we attract new teacher candidates who will enter teaching as a second career from other jobs.
- Provide outstanding teachers with ample time and compensation to mentor novice teachers and help improve their effectiveness. These mentor teaching opportunities will also provide career advancement for our best teachers and be a training ground for the next generation of principals and school leaders.

- Encourage teacher collaboration at school sites to improve instruction and student performance, using student assessments that encompass more than checking a box on a multiple choice exam.
- Create a system where the focus on evaluating and improving teacher performance in the classroom is the norm. For example, local school districts should consider on-site visitation programs aimed specifically at teacher performance.
- Principals are crucial to high performing schools and any reform effort must include programs to strengthen the recruitment, evaluation and training of these key educational leaders. I will seek funding from public and private sources to enable teachers to become principals through a new leadership academy that focuses on developing principals who can be true academic leaders.

5. Simplify the Education Code and Return more decision-making to local school districts

California's education code comprises 12 volumes and thousands of pages. It is the largest in the nation. From 1965 to 2000, California state education policy focused on regulation compliance and added more and more detailed rules to micromanage local schools. In 2000, the state went in a new direction by focusing on student outcomes. But with this new outcome focus, we never changed all the centralized requirements from the earlier decades. Now California controls both what schools should provide and how they should do it. This is regulation run amok.

- We need to dramatically simplify the Education Code and give school districts more flexibility on how best to meet state standards. We should hold schools accountable for outcomes, not issue minute prescriptions from Sacramento on how to achieve those outcomes.

6. A More Balanced and Creative School Curriculum

- Current federal and state policies encourage much more school time for basic math and language arts at the expense of other vital subjects. California's public schools need a broader vision of what constitutes an educated person. I will create local and state initiatives to increase school focus on science, history and the humanities--without reducing needed attention to math and English. We also need to experiment with on-line and other instructional approaches that will use the available school time in more efficient ways.

7. Place special emphasis on teaching Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)

- As part of the broader curriculum described above, we need to strengthen STEM teaching and increase the number of STEM graduates. California's economic growth depends on its continued leadership in innovation, technology, clean energy and other fields that require strong math and science training.

- We should expand curriculum and teaching materials in STEM subjects, including online and virtual programs, enhanced teaching materials, partnerships with high tech companies and hands-on learning opportunities.

8. Increase Proficiency in English

- The State Board of Education should adopt instructional materials that provide intensive intervention and support for English learners. These materials should include all levels of language proficiency.
- Use existing federal funds to expand after-school and summer school programs to supplement English Learning programs

9. Improve High School Graduation Rates

- California has a range of before and after-school programs that enjoy support from law enforcement, business leaders, educators, doctors, taxpayer rights organizations, and politicians from both parties. These programs help reduce juvenile crime rates and crimes committed against kids. They also improve performance in school and school attendance and should be encouraged.
- We must continue to focus on narrowing the achievement gap and reducing the State's drop-out rate, both of which disproportionately affect students from low income families. According to the California Department of Education, the drop-out rate for African American and Latino students is significantly higher than that for white and Asian students. Kids who cut class and drop out of school all too often end up on the wrong side of the law, behind bars instead of desks.

10. Charter Schools

- Charter Schools are an important part of the education fabric, providing parental choice and a source of innovation. The bad ones need to be closed and the good ones need to be encouraged. The flexibility and innovative programs that the charter schools make possible should also be made available to local schools and districts.
- Some reformers talk about massive increases in charter schools as our best hope. As someone who has started and sustained two charter schools in Oakland, I know first-hand the real world difficulties of this approach. True reform must include innovations that touch all students and school systems.

11. Magnet or Theme schools

This type of school expanded greatly in the 1970s as “magnet schools” to help with racial integration. Consequently, we know a lot about how to implement theme schools, but the 21st century requires new designs.

- Local school districts should consider innovative types of schools, including theme schools and career education. Schools that focus on a particular theme (e.g. the arts, public service, technology) can attract a broad range of students who are brought together for a common purpose. For example, the Oakland School for the Arts attracts students to downtown Oakland from many surrounding communities and provides a highly motivating and unifying atmosphere to a very diverse group of students. Such models should be replicated and encouraged.
- In addition, we should look at career focused schools supported by local businesses and other institutions that prepare students more directly for employment in valuable industries such as high tech, engineering, health care or the building trades.

12. Citizenship and Character

As a correlative of the right to a free and appropriate education, each student has the duty to exercise his or her best efforts and actively collaborate in the learning process. Education is a relationship between teacher and student and should be based on mutual respect and trust.

- Developing good character and the skills of citizenship are fundamental to a democratic society and must be an integral part of what is taught in our schools.
- In some instances, current school law or practices allow students to undermine classroom decorum and disrupt the learning process. This affects the right of other students to obtain the education they deserve. Teachers must have effective means to maintain discipline in the classroom.