

SANDABS

SAN Bernardino County District Advocates for Better Schools

SANDABS 2010 State Legislative Platform

San Bernardino County District Advocates for Better Schools (SANDABS) has adopted this legislative platform to provide the basis for reviewing and taking positions on policy and budget issues addressed by the State Legislature in 2010. Efforts will be made to meet directly with legislators and their staffs to discuss proposed legislation and its impact upon the education community. Senators and Assembly Members are encouraged to communicate directly with the SANDABS Executive Committee for clarification and background information for a clear and full understanding of educational issues.

School Funding

State funding for schools is based upon formulas and methods established over many years of piecemeal legislative mandates, state ballot initiatives, and court rulings. SANDABS is supportive of the full review and analysis of these formulas and methods that will eventually lead to changes to provide a long-term, stable predictable system of school finance for public education in California.

Priorities for 2010-11 State Budget Act

- Pass an on-time state budget with no mid-year cuts to K-12 education;
- Maintain the integrity of the Proposition 98 funding guarantee;
- Prohibit additional deferrals of revenue limit and categorical funds;
- Eliminate the class size penalty for grades 4-6;
- Apply COLA and growth funding formulas to ROC/Ps in the same manner as K-12 education, as they generate average daily attendance and provide classroom instruction for students;
- Establish the definition of cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to mean a cost-of-operations adjustment;
- Fully fund a cost-of-operations adjustment and growth for all existing programs, school district revenue limits, and county offices of education;
- Increase state support for special education and ensure that all federal dollars allocated for this program flow directly to local education agencies;
- Equalize funding among similar types of school districts and county offices of education;
- Protect the integrity and funding of alternative education programs;
- Fully fund class size reduction and 180-day school year;
- Fully fund reimbursements for mandated costs in a fair and timely manner without deferrals;
- Fund the development and maintenance of a statewide student data base system;
- Examine home-to-school transportation funding formulas for adequacy;
- Examine the impact of declining enrollment upon school districts and develop a reasonable approach to balance declining resources with ongoing expenses; and
- Restore full funding for instructional materials to align with future textbook adoptions.

In addition to these budgets priorities, SANDABS will review adequacy of education funding given objectives to improve student learning, narrow the achievement gap, and reduce dropout rates.

School Facilities

School facilities are an essential component of the educational program and an essential part of state and local infrastructure. SANDABS supports the following issues related to school facilities:

- Eliminate prevailing wage requirements to more accurately reflect local market conditions and to provide greater flexibility in school construction;
- Provide adequate funding for deferred maintenance to ensure necessary maintenance for all school buildings;

- Include schools in any provisions for planning and funding state and local infrastructure;
- Include a method to fund the increased need for school facilities as part of any property development and expansion;
- Fully fund ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) access requirements separately from other modernization funding;
- Require full participation of school districts and/or county offices of education in planning for local infrastructures before a government entity takes any action that would have an impact on schools; and
- Remove the timeline for ROC/P exemption in non-Field Act compliant facilities; and
- Review and determine the impact of rising construction costs and the resulting imbalance between state and school district contributions for building new schools and/or other facilities including offices, conference rooms, and professional development facilities.

Accountability

SANDABS supports holding schools accountable. SANDABS supports appropriate alternate tests for special education students and English language learners. SANDABS supports accountability based upon students' progress, i.e. a growth model. SANDABS believes that school accountability should focus on student results rather than on compliance issues. A comprehensive school accountability system must include a fair and equitable system to identify low-performing schools, and adequate timelines and resources to support improvement efforts.

SANDABS will continue to monitor the implementation of the Public Schools Accountability Act and any legislation introduced in 2010 relating to school accountability issues, including implementation of the Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA), the program enacted in 2006 to provide funding for decile 1 and 2 schools during the period of 2007-08 through 2013-14. On the other hand, SANDABS would remind lawmakers that when Proposition 98 funds are taken from K-12 education, that those funds should be returned equitably to all districts and that they not be redirected, as was the case with QEIA, into other programs for which only a limited number of districts can qualify.

SANDABS strongly encourages state and federal leaders to consolidate into one program the components of the state Public School Performance Accountability Program and the federal No Child Left Behind Act to eliminate duplication, reduce confusion, and create one accountability program that can be implemented by school districts and understood by parents. SANDABS will continue to promote an aligned accountability system which makes sense, one which includes standards of what students should know and when they should know it; assessment instruments which measure student progress and guide instruction; resources to support training related to new assessment requirements and teaching strategies; and shared responsibility of all stakeholders (students, parents, educators, community members, and state and federal leaders). SANDABS is also supportive of legislation that would provide for consistent accountability requirements for all career and technical education programs. Finally, SANDABS believes in providing students with a positive learning environment that balances the need for contextual-based learning with the fine arts and physical education.

Charter Schools

SANDABS acknowledges that charter schools are a recognized educational alternative to traditional public schools. SANDABS supports charter schools that offer quality programs that are innovative and uniquely different from traditional public schools. A strong collaborative partnership should exist between the authorizing entity and the charter. SANDABS asserts that charters should be held accountable for improved student achievement and sound business practices with fiscal transparency. SANDABS supports the following issues related to charter schools:

- Require charter schools to comply with Government Code Section 1090 et. seq., conflict of interest reporting and the Brown Act (open meeting law);
- Prohibit blanket submission of the same charter petition to multiple districts and multiple counties;
- Remove the 1 percent cap on charter oversight reimbursement to authorizing agencies in order to recover actual and necessary costs of oversight;
- Require charter schools to publicly disclose all contracts with management companies and make the records of the management company subject to the Public Records Act and subject to Education Code requirements to produce records when requested by the county superintendent or chartering authority;

- Require charter school board members and management employees to publicly disclose potential conflicts of interest to the chartering authority and file with the FPPC;
- Require charter schools to annually report to the chartering authority the total compensation of all officers and management employees and all large payments to vendors and independent contractors over a specified amount;
- Require charter schools to report to the chartering authority the purchase of all real property;
- Require charter schools to provide the chartering authority with a report of all vehicles purchased or leased;
- Prohibit a school district from approving a petition for a new independent charter school if the average daily attendance of the charter school in the first year of operation is projected to be larger than that of the chartering authority; and
- Authorize the California Attorney General to receive complaints and investigate charter school violations of the law and to bring legal action, both criminal and civil, against charter schools and their operators.

SANDABS further supports a mechanism to lessen the programmatic and financial impact on school districts that provide facilities to charter schools under Proposition 39.

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SANDABS Executive Committee