

13 November 2007

Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Office of the Attorney General
1300 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

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INITIATIVE COORDINATOR
ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE

Dear Mr. Brown:

I hereby request you to prepare a title and summary of the "Quality Teacher Recruitment and Retention Initiative" enclosed.

I am submitting herewith the required \$200 fee.

I have been a resident of the State of California since 1954.

Sincerely,

William H. Schindler
2070 Lyric Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90039

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Quality Teacher Recruitment and Retention Initiative

Whereas the recruitment and retention of experienced, well-qualified teachers in the classroom is an essential component of fixing what is broken in public education, and whereas the primary business of every school district is classroom instruction, this initiative mandates that no employee of any public school district in the State of California shall receive a salary higher than that received by the highest paid classroom teachers, and therefore that all certificated school personnel (teachers and administrators) henceforth shall be paid on the same salary schedule according to their years of experience, level of education, and number of days worked per year.

Proponent Arguments for the Initiative:

- At present certificated employees with equivalent years of experience and education receive higher salaries for positions outside the classroom, thus providing a powerful incentive for teachers to leave classroom teaching to enjoy higher salaries and deprive students of their instructional experience and expertise. This initiative would remove the financial incentive for teachers to leave the classroom for other district jobs;
- Certificated employees who occupy administrative positions get paid on a separate, higher pay scale than classroom teachers, again creating an incentive for experienced classroom teachers to seek such positions and deprive students of their instructional experience and expertise. This initiative would remove the financial incentive to seek administrative over classroom positions;
- Paying out-of-classroom employees more than classroom teachers creates the false impression that their positions and duties are more important to the business of education than those of classroom teachers, thus demeaning the teaching profession. This initiative would send the clear message that classroom teachers perform the most essential activity in school districts, and that all other district positions exist solely to provide support either directly or indirectly to classroom teachers. This change will help districts recruit and retain the best and brightest as teachers;
- These pay inequities and administrative structures are based on for-profit business models that are inappropriate in publicly funded education where administrators do not have to demonstrate measurable results to obtain or retain their jobs, and where nepotism and misappropriation of funds (as recently uncovered in the Los Angeles Unified School District) are all-too-common when the foxes are left to guard the henhouse. This initiative puts financial resources more directly in classrooms, encouraging rethinking of the respective roles of teachers and administrators;
- An example of this new thinking would be having teacher performance evaluated primarily by those best qualified to judge teacher performance, i.e. other teachers, with some input from a local administrator. Each faculty would elect one or more experienced teachers (five years or more service) from their school to serve on a panel of at least five (5) evaluators for a limited term. The panel of evaluators would be composed of no more than one teacher and one administrator from the same school to avoid undue influence or personal bias as much as possible;

- Opponents of the initiative object that it would be difficult to find qualified persons to occupy administrative and district superintendent positions under this mandate. However, this initiative will likely put upward pressure on certificated salaries, encouraging the best and brightest to serve where they can contribute the most. It will also likely create added incentive for teachers to upgrade their profession through cooperative mutual evaluation and training. This initiative will encourage those who left classroom teaching motivated primarily by higher salaries to move on to other careers in the for-profit sector more appropriate to their goals.
- Society has been operating for decades paying higher salaries to administrators and superintendents, but we have not seen these expenditures pay off in terms of effective and lasting changes in facing the challenges of education in our complex and ever-changing society. It is time to put the financial resources back in the classroom, as this initiative mandates, and redefine the role of administrators as professional support staff to classroom teachers.