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CSBA disappointed in legislative and gubernatorial support for deeply flawed LAUSD legislation

(West Sacramento) - “The approval of Assembly Bill 1381 (Núñez) is a profoundly disappointing development, and clear evidence of the Legislature’s lack of understanding of what students, teachers, principals and governance teams need from the state in order to attain sustained improvement in student achievement,” stated Scott P. Plotkin, executive director of the California School Boards Association.

Equally disappointing, according to Plotkin, was Governor Schwarzenegger’s statement in support of the bill, issued almost immediately upon its passage by the State Assembly on Tuesday evening. “Notwithstanding the governor’s allusions to ‘bold leadership’ and ‘accountability,’ there is absolutely nothing in AB 1381 that represents a victory for the students of LAUSD. The bill diffuses accountability and includes not one single provision that will result in a quality education for students. In fact, rather than representing ‘fundamental reform,’ the bill will make it more difficult for the district’s schools to sustain the continuous improvement and innovations of recent years,” Plotkin said.

AB 1381 does not represent sound public policy. It was a back-room deal between the mayor and the teacher unions. It was only through the efforts of CSBA and LAUSD that the legislation did not result in complete mayoral takeover, a scheme for which there is scant evidence of success in major cities across the nation, including New York, Boston, and Chicago.

There remains little question that AB 1381 is unconstitutional. “The state constitution is quite clear on the matter of school governance,” stated Plotkin, “and we anticipate litigation will be forthcoming to prevent this wrong-headed, poorly drafted bill from becoming law.”

The LAUSD board has been and remains committed to addressing the needs of all its students. The district has made dramatic improvements academically and is fiscally sound. CSBA continues to support mayoral collaboration and hopes that the mayor will, in fact, collaborate with the locally elected board members in Los Angeles to ensure gains continue to be made in student achievement.

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