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California State Senate

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AGENDA

Tuesday, January 20, 2026
10 a.m. -- 1021 O Street, Room 1200

JOINT INFORMATIONAL HEARING

SUBJECT: Presentation by California Association of Student Councils

Opening Remarks (10 minutes)

Introduction of the California Association of Student Councils
Mara (Fia) Nicolaescu, CASC Education Policy Director, Bella Vista High School, Fair Oaks

Panel 1 – Civic Education

- Sophie Martin, Corona del Mar High School, Newport Beach
- Ryan Wong, Mountain View High School, Mountain View
- Addie Luong, Vista del Lago High School, Folsom

Panel 2 – Student Representation in District Funding

- Sahej Dhindsa, Canyon High School, Anaheim
- Justin Ekholm, Simi Valley High School, Simi Valley
- Bud Yang, Troy High School, Fullerton

Panel 3 – Financial Literacy

- Ethan Hong, San Marino High School, San Marino
- Andrea Davila, Beaumont High School, Beaumont
- Lakshmi Julakanti, Santa Susana High School, Simi Valley

Panel 4 – Restorative Justice

- Raylen Chacko, Monte Vista High School, Danville
- Riya Manoj, Chino Hills High School, Chino Hills
- Kapil Shastry, Mountain View High School, Mountain View

Panel 5 – Mental Health

- Trystan Purugganan, Santa Susana High School, Simi Valley
- Josie Song, Cate School, Carpinteria
- Angelina Santos, Lincoln High School, Stockton

Panel 6 – AI Implementation in Classrooms

- Ariadne Tatsis, Piedmont High School, Oakland

- Brynne Jones, Piedmont High School, Oakland
- Arjun Prabhuram, Santa Susana High School, Simi Valley

Panel 7 – Supporting Students with Disabilities

- Heaven Ortega, Wheatland Union High School, Wheatland
- Weiwei (Serena) Zhang, Cate School, Carpinteria
- Itzia Enriquez, Calistoga High School, Calistoga

Closing Remarks (5 minutes)

Civic Education in Schools

Speakers: Sophie Martin (CDMHS, Newport Beach), Ryan Wong (Mountain View High School, Mountain View), Addie Luong (VDLHS, Folsom)

Writers: Rohan Shastry (Mountain View High School, Mountain View), Stella Knight (Casa Grande High School, Petaluma)

Council Group: Alisa (Can) Jiang (Saint Margaret's Episcopal School), Amyra Kedia (Mountain View High School, Mountain View), Ava Fowler (Pioneer High School, Woodland), Joaquin Meza-Arenas (Mountain View High School)

Facilitator: Ava Wong (Chino Hills High School, Chino Hills)

Research: Ethan Duncan (

informed decisions regarding their political actions.

BACKGROUND

What is the core issue you are addressing? Why does it matter? Include key data points, relevant laws/policies, or anecdotes. Cite 1–2 credible studies or reports to build urgency.

- We are addressing the lack of centralized civic engagement curriculum
- This matters because students are not actively educated about the systems of government and politics. Students are taught about political views and government in general by their parents and family from early age leading to them building their foundation and form their views based off of the biased opinions of their family members rather than facts or their own understanding
- Students do not see the importance of voting because they do not understand its relevance, leading to less youth voter turnout
 - In the 2024 election, 36% of youth (18-34) non-voters were disinterested and did not care about voting. [The Center for Civics Learning and Engagement](#)
- Anecdotes:
 - “Despite other options, the Woodland Joint Union School District school board is considering the removal of the 7th period to save money. School would remain the same length, while removing electives and CTE pathways. Many students do not want to

SUMMARY

What does your proposal do in plain terms? What problem does it solve, and what change will it create?

Mandatory civic engagement day

- At least 1 standards-aligned civic learning experience (either from recommendation list or schools choose based on their resources and capabilities)

Students lack knowledge regarding civic education and the various systems within the government. The proposed day will allow students to learn about civics, and give students a foundation to engage in civil discourse regarding political issues, and share their beliefs in terms of politics. Students will use this awareness to cast educated votes, increasing voter turnout in younger populations. It relieves pressure on students who face adversaries because of political beliefs, and sets precedent for future civic education propositions. A civic education day will enable students to make

talk to the school board about the possible removal of their 7th period because it will not affect them as they are graduating.

- Studies/ Reports:
 - Rebecca Winthrop, the Director of the Center of Universal Education at the Brookings Institution, [finds](#) that civic engagement and education is necessary to maintain a democratic government because the government would not accurately represent the opinions of citizens.

If applicable, identify the existing policy (or lack thereof) you're aiming to change. What currently exists? Is there already a policy in place, or is this filling a gap?

- Issue is a lack of civic education curriculum that is centralized
- Already voter registration weeks right now, doesn't really focus on civics and the curriculum

PROBLEM

What is the underlying cause of the issue? What are the symptoms and surface-level consequences? What systems, structures, or norms are enabling the problem?

- The cause of this issue is lack of knowledge and education within the topic of civic education and the systems of government
- Due to this, students:
 - Remain quiet regarding political issues
 - 18-24 y/o aren't voting as much as older people
 - Students don't know how to take action to make change
 - Not a lot of political discourse happening within school

- Students are being bullied and excluded for political views
- Students are pressured by teachers to believe certain political agendas
- The social norm is to not talk about political beliefs because it can cause controversy
- The "clique" structure of high schools creates a hostile environment for students who do not relate to other students in regards to politics
- Students are not actively educated about the systems of government and politics and different political agendas
- Students are taught about political views and government by their parents and family from early age, leading to them building a foundation and forming their political opinions based off their family's biased opinions rather than facts and unbiased experience
- Social media is pressuring students to believe false information and pushing political agendas based on misleading facts
- Civics education is coming too late in a student's academic career, leading to little influence as students have already formed hard-set opinions

SOLUTION

What exactly are you proposing? Be specific. Include a bulleted list of 2-4 actionable steps. What's your rationale—why is this the best course of action? What values or outcomes does this solution promote?

- California civic education day
- 1 optional day for high school and middle schools

Our proposed solution is to suggest a Civic Education Day in California for all middle and high schools. The Civic Education day would allow for students to be more informed regarding their political decisions and would be a pressure-free zone where

students have the right to express their political beliefs in a positive manner. This would consist of four phases. The first phase includes getting the resolution passed. The second phase involves spreading the word to schools across the state suggesting that school districts may implement a Civic Education day. Our third phase consists of schools beginning to plan this day out, either using the state-recommended list of activities or using their own resources. This would occur in a team of student leaders. Our final phase requires schools to fully implement this day and carry out the specific ideas. We recommend that this day be implemented in both middle schools and high schools to provide students with an early foundation in civics education and exposure to governmental systems, as well as to learn how to form political opinions early on.

RATIONALE

When would implementation begin?

What are the phases or milestones?

What is the projected completion or review date?

What are the success metrics—how will success be measured? Who is responsible for reviewing progress?

- Implementation would begin as soon as the 2028-29 school year.
 - Date suggestion: Around early November to align with major political events in order to acclimate students to civic engagement.
 - In public high schools and middle schools(7th-12th)
- Civil education day addresses:
 - Lack of centralized civic education curriculum
 - Low voter turnout among ages 18-24

- Younger individuals would be exposed to civic education fostering the growth of individual beliefs

PRECEDENT & MODELS

Has this been done anywhere before? (City, state, school district?)

What results or best practices can we borrow from? Can be federal, state, or local action

- The National Council for Social Studies hosts an annual [civil engagement week](#) open to all students and educators, where Supreme Court Justices answered questions about the judicial system and highlighted civic education.
- [Voter Registration Weeks](#) (Ed Code section 49040 (a)), SCR48, requiring schools to host a “voter registration week”, where students are able to learn how to and preregister to vote - leading to 1.4 million being registered and 1.1 million registered voters.
- [Election Hero day](#) - a nonpartisan holiday dedication to civic leaders and election workers who make voting possible.
- NYC Public Schools *Civics Week*, where they bring in civic leaders and policy makers to K-12 schools, with voter registration drives that have led to over 90,000 registered voters.
- National Civics Day that honors the publishing date of the federalist papers on October 27th.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

What is the estimated cost to launch and sustain the program? Will it require funding from the state, district, or other sources? Identify potential cost-saving measures or partnerships.

Our estimated cost to launch Civic Education Day in public schools is between \$0 and \$15,000. These costs would account for the amount of money necessary to update guidance in districts. All other costs would be covered by the school district.

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education

Tuesday, January 20, 2026

Student Representation in District Funding

Speaker: Sahej Dhindsa, Canyon High School (AD- 59 SD- 37), Justin Ekholm, Simi Valley (AD-42, SD-27)', Bud Yang, Troy High School(AD-41, SD-25)

Writer: Luis Hernandez (AD-30, SD-17), Krishna Kulkarni, Lincoln (AD-13, SD-5)

Members: Adamari Maay Bautista (Mountain View High School, SD-13, AD 23), Martin Navarro Gomez, Woodland High School, (AD-4, SD-3), Anika Khanna (Lynbrook High School, AD-26, SD-15), Kayla Lee (Fairmont Preparatory Academy), Esmeralda Guadalupe Loyola Ruiz, Lincoln (AD-5, SD-6), Frida Pascual Perez (Woodland High School, AD-4,SD-3), Shagoon Patel, Canyon High School(AD- 59 SD- 37)

Research: Kaylin Wen, Maria Carrillo High School (AD-2)

Facilitator: Maeve Cottin-Rack, Lincoln (AD-13, SD-5)

I. Summary

This proposal aims to ensure that unified districts and high school districts establish at least one student board member, following the implementation of [EDC 35012], and to guarantee that student board members receive *equal* training as elected board members, and the ability to establish motions and seconds in addition to their existing preferential voting rights. Student members must be presented with the LCAP to follow [EDC 52062], and would be present during all open sessions where budget decisions regarding student programs are made, in accordance with existing guidelines. This proposal arose from the occurrence of improper pupil representation in district funding, specifically regarding how districts allocate their funding to students and their resources. Following this proposal, it will ensure sufficient representation of student-based needs on how districts allocate their funding to empower and support students.

II. Background

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education has recognized the ongoing shortfall of community engagement, specifically regarding the encouragement and implementation of student representation within fiscal decisions, which are linked to funding issues in districts. BlueShield proves the incline in students' mental health challenges and academic gaps which are drastic.

Budget deficits directly impact students' daily learning environments and wellbeing as they can cut access to counselors, enrichment programs, etc. Recent statistical results from Youth Truth Surveys or worsened by budget deficits, reflecting real experiences within districts.

Many students, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds, remain in the dark on how their district's money is allocated, which is why their needs are often left unmet.

Districts create and implement funding mechanisms such as the LCAP to combat these issues, aiming to protect and drive student wellbeing, but structural limitations and mishandling of budgets undermine these goals.

III. Problem

Funding issues are primarily linked to the lack of student representation in district board funding discussions. Without the proper inclusion of student-led voices and experiences, the funding crisis will not see improvement.

The position of student board member is only mandated by a student-initiated petition, which is allowed by [EDC 35012].

Current legislation does not ensure that student voices are heard and implemented to the necessary amount. As a result, funding decisions may be insufficient to meet the needs of students.

Student board members also have limited and ambiguous rights, leading to regional discrepancies in the powers of student board members. In order for student board members to receive standardized rights and effectively represent the student body, legislation must be concrete and clear in terms of the powers they hold.

IV. Solution

This proposition amends [EDC 35012] to establish a student board member in unified and high school districts. The amendment would also ensure student board members receive appropriate training that board members receive on non-sensitive topics relevant to student concern, especially LCAP/funding related training. Student board members must also have the ability to make motions and maintain current preferential voting rights and access to LCAP proposals as outlined by existing [EDC 35012] and [EDC 52062].

If any logistical challenges are preventing a unified or high school district from establishing a student board member by state-determined date. The District Board Office must send an appeal with logistical reasoning behind the prevention of the establishment of a student board member.

V. Rationale

This proposal is logistically and fiscally feasible because it would not require a drastic change in district board procedures and dynamics. It would amend an already existing Education Code and simply include students in the already present training procedures for new district board members, which is logistically simple and not fiscally straining as districts would only need to add one person to a group among five or nine other board members. Mandating a student board member present in each district guarantees representation of the student body in district financial decisions, ensuring the responsible and effective mobilization of funds.

VI. Precedent & Models

California education code 35012 allows students to petition districts to create a student board member position. The districts are then required to establish a procedure for choosing an SBM. These members have preferential voting and can equally participate in board discussions. It is also up to the discretion of districts whether SBMs have motioning and seconding rights.

[EDC 52062] & [EDC 52063] state that district boards must present the LCAP to a student advisory committee.

Generation Up: The California Student Board Member Association (CSBMA) is a student-led organization of student board members from different districts. The association trains members and allows them to come together to strengthen school board governance through advocacy. It also aids students in creating student board member seats on district boards using already present laws like education code 35012 and AB261. The organization holds conferences where student board members from different districts can collaborate to respond to problems in individual districts.

The Elk Grove School District Provides training on boardmanship, the Brown Act, ethics and how to responsibly engage in community relations. The board passed its on by law which states: “The Superintendent or designee may, at district expense, provide learning opportunities to the Student Board Member through trainings, workshops, and conferences, such as those offered by the California School Boards Association and other organizations, to enhance their knowledge, understanding, and performance of leadership skills and their Board responsibilities”.

The California Student Boards Association (CSBA) offers virtual board member curriculum that can be used to train new student board members. Online networking opportunities and Q&A sessions are also available to provide SBMs with aid.

VII. Fiscal Analysis

The district may have to pay for training resources to be administered to SBMs, with the cost depending on the training procedures districts follow for adult voting members but typically falling between \$600-\$1200 yearly for each member. Districts may also choose to partner with the CSBA to provide SBMs with curriculum to minimize training costs.

Financial Literacy

Speakers: Ethan Hong (San Marino High School, San Marino), Andrea Davila (Beaumont High School, Beaumont), Lakshmi Julakanti (Santa Susana High School, Simi Valley)

Writer: Vyan Kumar (Amador Valley High School, Pleasanton)

Group Members: Sawyer Muth (Woodland High School, Woodland), Beatrice Nestorov (Corona Del Mar High School, Newport Beach), Bella Liang (Irvington High School, Fremont), Justine Tsao (Valley Christian High School, San Jose), Sophia Win (Lincoln High School, Stockton), Suri Charlu (Orange County School of the Arts, Santa Ana)

Facilitator: Kevin Hur (Sunny Hills High School, Fullerton)

Research: Claire Pohlmeier (University Preparatory School, Redding)

SUMMARY

In light of the future implementation of a required personal finance course in high school, the Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education urges the Senate and Assembly Committees on Education to consider taking two actions. First, this proposal would require the Legislature to direct the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing to guarantee that training credentials for teacher accreditation require financial literacy. Second, we call on the Instructional Quality Commission to advise the State Board of Education on updating the state curriculum to require integrated financial literacy instruction in middle school.

BACKGROUND

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education has identified that California needs a statewide strategy to integrate instruction of financial literacy into middle schools. Our proposal takes inspiration from AB 2927, the 2024 statute adding a personal finance course to the California graduation requirements.

Per AB 2927, only teachers with single-subject credentials in the fields of social science, business, mathematics, or home economics are authorized to teach the new course. Still, no statute includes an understanding of personal finance in required training credentials for teachers. Making financial literacy a component of such credentials will ensure that new units will be effectively staffed.

Middle schoolers demonstrate interest and enthusiasm to learn about personal finance when given the opportunity. For example, Arcadia's Branhart Middle School in California already offers a financial literacy class for eighth-graders. Per an ABC News report, one student there said learning about investing will guarantee "a better, more successful life" and another believes that because of this, she "wouldn't be struggling with money."

With these anecdotes in mind, high school students will greatly benefit from having the option to take a semester of personal finance. Nevertheless, introducing similar content in middle school will increase long-term interest and comprehension due to earlier exposure.

PROBLEM

With the rising cost of living, being able to manage one's finances well has become an increasingly valuable ability. According to the California Department of Education, only 27% of Californian high school students have access to courses on financial literacy. This lack of common knowledge on financial literacy perpetuates economic inequality across district lines.

At the same time, students' spending habits typically develop early - manifesting in middle school and beyond. A study conducted by the University of Michigan demonstrates that spending habits can develop as early as the age of 10 due to emotional responses. In the study, 225 children ages 5-10 were asked how they would choose to spend money; some made poor financial decisions while acting on emotion. In the article, research investigator Craig Smith stated that "early spending behavior might foreshadow poor financial decisions later in life." Therefore, it's important to intervene early to encourage students to make wise financial decisions.

According to a Brookings study, introducing adolescents to concepts of financial literacy pays dividends later in life by serving as an investment in long-term professional success. Similar to other subjects like math and foreign languages with classes taken before high school, introducing personal finance in middle school itself will provoke greater student interest and understanding.

To summarize, financial illiteracy takes root at a young age, translating to uneducated financial

decisions later on. If we can introduce our proposal for today's children, we can solve this issue, educating future adults in California to be more financially stable and prepared for upcoming challenges.

SOLUTION

First, we propose that the Legislature direct the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing to incorporate financial literacy as a required component in teacher preparation and credentialing standards - specifically for single-subject accredited teachers

Secondly, we call on the Instructional Quality Commission to advise the California Department of Education to update the state curriculum to require integrated financial literacy instruction in middle school. This instruction would be embedded into an existing subject (e.g. mathematics) at each district's discretion and implemented within the next 10 years. Embedding this formally in middle school ensures that students can start building a foundation via practical skills learned in this course.

It will be each district's own decision on which specific lessons and curricula will integrate unit(s) on financial literacy. Namely, a 7th/8th-grade math class teaching percentages could have basic skills of finance like inflation and interest rates seamlessly integrated.

In order to improve how the subject is taught, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing will mandate that accreditation standards for teachers-in-training after the year 2035 include mandatory requirements specifically for financial literacy.

Supporting this solution, a national impact report from the Council for Economic Education found that when middle-school teachers use a structured personal-finance curriculum, student test scores rise by about 21% when measured via a pre/post assessment. Financial literacy is applicable everywhere, teaching valuable skills of interest to middle schoolers and high schoolers alike.

RATIONALE

We propose that the curriculum be fully developed by 2030, followed by teacher preparation updates statewide and classroom rollout by 2035. Further improvement and analysis would be carried out from implementation to 2040 to ensure consistent delivery across districts. Spreading this out over a ten year period prepares schools to implement this on a timely basis.

Success should be measured through assessments of student ability to apply practical skills. Progress should also be tracked through statewide adoption rates and reports on district performance, with longer-term outcomes evaluated by following student cohorts into high school.

The California Department of Education and State Board of Education should oversee implementation and progress reporting. The Instructional Quality Commission should manage curriculum guidance as well as updates. The Commission on Teacher Credentialing should ensure credential financial literacy programs are readily available. In doing so, this proposal can be realized.

PRECEDENT & MODELS

California AB 2927 itself mandates a new high school graduation requirement: a stand-alone, one-semester personal finance course for all students. Schools are required to offer this by the 2027–28 school year.

On a local level within California, some middle schools have piloted financial literacy programs. For instance, a few California middle schools have participated in JA Finance Park simulations or used Next Gen Personal Finance (NGPF) middle school curricula. NGPF in particular offers a free 9-week course for middle schoolers; lessons in this can guide the creation of this proposal's ideal curriculum.

Furthermore, another model comes from New Jersey. In 2019, New Jersey passed a state law that mandates financial literacy instruction in middle school as part of the state's required curriculum. Under this legislation, middle school students receive instruction in personal finance topics aligned with state learning standards.

In Delaware, HB 203 mandates a half-credit financial literacy course for graduation, starting with those entering 9th grade in the 2026-27 school year. In Colorado, HB25-1192 makes a semester of personal finance a requirement for graduation statewide. Finally, Nebraska has made a semester of personal finance a state graduation requirement with LB 452.

Federally, the Young Americans Financial Literacy Act (H.R. 486, 119th Congress) was introduced in Congress to advance education pertaining to financial literacy.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

This proposal would have a limited and largely one-time fiscal impact. Firstly, directing the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing to incorporate financial literacy into teacher preparation standards would be a one-time cost. Part of this would include revising education standards, consulting experts, and effectively developing the curriculum. However, these costs would be spread over time since we aim to have the rollout achieved by 2035.

Secondly, minor costs would be incurred when the Instructional Quality Commission updates curriculum guidance, conducts independent analysis, and coordinates with the California Board of Education. Because we propose embedding financial literacy topics in current classes, our proposal avoids significant costs associated with directly creating a standalone course or hiring new staff.

Most importantly, this proposal does not mandate new textbooks or standardized assessments. Local school districts would have discretion over most decisions, allowing them to use low-cost resources.

Overall, we foresee this low-cost proposal being a high investment with minimal long-term costs and significant long-term benefits.

School Discipline: Restorative Justice

Speakers: Raylen Chacko (Danville AD-16, SD-9), Riya Manoj (Chino Hills AD 59, SD-32), & Kapil Shastry (Mountain View SD-13, AD-23)

Writer: Maggie Chou (Claremont AD-41, SD-25)

Group Members: Bella Cho (Irvine AD-73, SD-37), Jesse Chung (Cerritos AD-67, SD-37), Rosalyn Flores (Simi Valley AD-42, SD-27), Sohum Shah (Sage Hill AD-73, SD-37), Sana Patel (Anaheim AD-59, SD-37), & Katie Pleitez (Mountain View AD-23, SD-13)

Facilitator: Daniel Chung-Lee (Irvine AD-73, SD-37)

Research: William Samiri (Simi Valley AD-42, SD-27)

SUMMARY

Delegates from the Student Advisory Board of Legislation in Education propose the creation of a task force to produce a training framework with the purpose of instructing Pupil Personnel Service credentialed employees within school sites on the California Department of Education's Best Practices for Restorative Practices Implementation. Upon the creation of this training framework, this bill would authorize Local Education Agencies to hold training sessions for PPS credentialed employees. This bill would authorize the discretionary allowance of trained PPS credentialed employees to make restorative justice recommendations that would be considered in closed session expulsion hearings. The bill would require, if a trained PPS-credentialed employee authorized those PPS recommendations, limited case information that pertains to those closed session items to be disclosed to each pupil member, subject to pupil and parental consent, as specified. a training framework based on a foundation of the "Best Practices," they will learn concepts such as prioritizing relationship-building and how to foster a supportive and accountable community. After they are taught the training framework, they will be qualified to implement restorative justice practices when situations arise when dealing with students' and disciplinary action.

BACKGROUND

Restorative justice is a necessary implementation as it is more effective than harsh discipline and punishment. Misconduct is a pressing issue across high school students in California. As it stands now, many districts push consequences such as suspensions or expulsions. The purpose of restorative

justice aims to fix the deeper issue behind the students' actions. Suspensions, expulsions, or other harsh disciplinary actions that are enforced have been proven to be ineffective. According to the California Department of Education, "suspensions can do more harm than good." On the other hand, the Best Practices for restorative justice that have already been created, have been proven effective. In the same survey taken between the 2013/14 and 2018/19 school years, an analysis found that, "across racial groups, students who had larger exposure to restorative practices saw less exposure to exclusionary discipline and better academic outcomes. Models also suggested that expanding restorative practices could bridge Black-White discipline disparities." Since the restorative practices have already been proven effective, it is important to work towards implementing it in every school in California. With this proposal we hope to get one step done in the process of ensuring fair and important restorative justice practices. Additionally, in the California Kids Health Survey, restorative justice is linked with decreased suspension rates. In a school with very low restorative practice usage, the expected discipline disparity is large: 8 Black vs. 3 White students suspended per 100 students. In a school with very high usage of restorative practices, the disparity mitigates drastically: 1 Black vs. 0 White students suspended per 100 students. Finally, according to the California Healthy Kids Survey, the GPA increase is also linked with restorative practices. Black and White students with little to no exposure to restorative practices are predicted to be C+ students and B- students, respectively. On the other hand, Black and White students with higher exposure to restorative practices are expected to be B students and B+ students, respectively. As a result, it is necessary to implement restorative practices statewide in California high schools.

PROBLEM

As it stands now, our education system lacks standardization in the repercussions of bad behavior. As a result, there is a repetition or even escalation of misbehavior in high schools in California. Due to the misregulation on how schools deal with punishments, students are left feeling anxious, isolated, stressed, depressed, unsupported, student performance decreases, and the chances of continual misbehavior increase. When students repetitively perform misbehavior there are typically underlying personal

reasons for why they misbehave, such as bullying, family issues, health issues, etc... It is important to address these underlying issues in the student's life. Alone, without restorative justice implementation, students will continue to struggle to change their behaviors.

SOLUTION

Our solution is to mandate the California Department of Education to convene a task force that will develop a PPS training framework, which will then authorize the task force to teach the Best Practices of restorative justice to all the PPS credential holders. These employees have already been trained to aid students in psychological matters, academic counseling, and social work. The task force would be convened by the California Department of Education and would be fully made up of individuals volunteering their time for the cause.

This framework should prioritize scalability, meaning it can be used and applied by majority of LEA's. The plans would be based on the Best Practices of restorative justice which were blueprinted in AB 2598 which was passed but not mandated for every school.

Additionally, the PPS being trained for the Best Practices will replicate the position the Student Board Members have when dealing with expulsions. According to SB 1445, the Student Board Members may not attend disciplinary hearings, but they can receive all the necessary information at the expulsion hearings (besides students' personal information). The PPS certified for the Best Practices will do the same; however, based on the information that the PPS attains from the hearing, they can provide recommendations of whether or not the student will need further assistance or counseling.

RATIONALE

Implementation would begin at the discretion of the legislature and would meet for an amount of time also determined at a later date. Because there is no mandating of the task force's framework, implementation at a local level will occur on timelines created by LEA's. The lack of official timeline or requirements will allow LEA's flexibility in order to account for LEA discrepancies and budget restrictions that may prevent adequate PPS training.

PRECEDENT & MODELS

California already has clear precedent and evidence-based models for restorative justice and its own education system. In 2022, AB 2598 directed the CDE to develop standardized best practices for implementing restorative justice in schools. As a

result, the CDE released its Best Practices for Implementing restorative justice in 2024. This report provides a statewide framework outlining effective restorative strategies and guidance for schools that choose to adopt them. However, the report is voluntary and does not require districts to implement or fund restorative justice practices, leading to inconsistent use across the state.

Legislative history also shows increasing support for restorative justice as an alternative to exclusionary discipline. AB 1919 (Senator Weber, 2024) would have required districts to adopt CDE-approved practices and document restorative efforts before suspending students. While it passed in both the California Senate and Assembly, it was vetoed by Governor Newsom solely due to the current budget deficit and its mandate for the state to fund its implementation. Its legislative approval indicates strong policy support. Furthermore, SB 1445 (Cortezzi, 2024) broadened student involvement in expulsion proceedings, reinforcing a shift towards more inclusive and rehabilitative discipline.

Statewide data backs these approaches. Analysis from the California Healthy Kids Survey reveals that schools with extensive use of restorative practices have significantly lower suspension rates and Black-White discipline disparities that are five times smaller than in schools with little use. Restorative practices also improved outcomes for all racial groups studied.

California has the research, policy framework, and data-supported models needed for restorative justice. The main challenge lies in achieving constant implementation and standardized training, not in a lack of proven examples.

In addition to all this, the current SB 1445 bill requires all Student Board Members not to be included in disciplinary hearings, but they receive all the necessary details for the expulsion hearing, besides enclosed information.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

No funds will be needed to pay for the task force salaries because they will all be volunteers. However, funding is needed to be able to create an online course, as well as any additional resources used that the PPS holder may need for the student.

Mental Health Resources

Speakers: Trystan Purugganan, Santa Susana High School (AD-42, SD-27); Josie Song, Cate High School (AD-37, SD-21), Angelina Santos, Lincoln High School (AD-13, SD-5)

Writer: Jaehee Kim, University Preparatory School (SD-1, AD-1)

Members: Felix Nguyen, John F. Kennedy Middle College High School (AD-63, SD-32); Viviana Mancha, Pacific High School (AD-34, SD-29); Genesis Rojano, Pacific High School (AD-34, SD-29); Jolin Zeng, Covina High School (AD-56, SD-30); Howard Huang, Yorba Linda High School (AD-59, SD-32); Ella Sian, Clovis North High School (AD-8, SD-12); Bill Ngo, Mountain View High School (AD-23, SD-13)

Facilitator: Shreya Shetty, University of California, Irvine (AD-26, SD-13)

Research: Euri Kim, Arnold O. Beckman High School (AD-73, SD-37)

SUMMARY

California is in a youth mental health crisis, and schools are impacted through student burnout, chronic stress, disengagement, absenteeism, and crisis referrals. Students consistently report that a major driver of distress is not being taught how to manage work, handle social and life commitments, and know their limits.

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education proposes that the California Senate Committee on Education strengthen existing school-based mental health education by adding interactive, structured stress and workload management skill-building sessions for grades 7-12, delivered twice per semester (four sessions annually). These sessions would function as guided practice opportunities embedded into existing instruction structures (health education, where offered, advisory/homeroom, or other locally chosen settings) and could manifest in a variety of ways, such as presentations, activities, and demonstrations.

BACKGROUND

Mental health has become a serious and growing concern for students in California schools, with rising levels of depression, anxiety, and other psychological challenges negatively affecting students' well-being, relationships, and academic performance. With absenteeism and dropout rates, studies indicate that at

least a third of students experience at least one severe mental health issue.

Students attribute these struggles largely to overwhelming workloads and intense pressure from societal expectations, which led to mental exhaustion and even physical problems. According to Dr. Christine M. Crawford of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), "If you are mentally unwell, that's going to make you physically unwell and unable to fully engage in the entire school day."

California has already begun building a school-based mental health framework. For example, schools must provide resource visibility and communication. On the curriculum side, SB 224 (2021) added Education Code requirements so that any middle or high school health course offered must include mental health impacted by it because they lack practical coping mechanisms—especially around time, workload, and boundaries—at the age when everything starts feeling overwhelming. Moreover, both the California Department of Education and the Department of Public Health are also funding around four billion dollars into mental health.

PROBLEM

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education has identified that the key issue of this phenomenon is students' lack of knowledge on how to manage their tasks and relationships efficiently. Students are expected to juggle their social life, extracurricular demands, and family responsibilities—yet many never receive proper instruction in planning and prioritization, time estimation, pacing, healthy limit-setting, and strategies for attention and focus.

Although, as mentioned, different actions have been taken by the system, many students report that the developed support systems, including school counselors and brief presentations, are unreliable, insufficient, and difficult to access. In this way, the lack of prevention and mental health skills continues to impact student life.

SOLUTION

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education advises incorporating engaging instruction into building on SB 224's mental health education precedent by ensuring students have structured practice time for mental health curriculum. Rather than short presentations that are not memorable to

students, a dedicated time of interactive engagement will be presented through hands-on activities, providing appropriate materials like academic planners and questionnaires.

This would apply to grades 7 through 12, which is the optimum time for students to start using mental health management tools. The content will be presented to the students twice every semester, highlighting main points without repetition, and gradually maturing the curriculum by introducing heavier and more critical topics by grade.

Surveys given to students after each session and at the end of every school year will determine the appropriate procedures, whether it is to continue, wind up, or increase funding. Statistics for reported students with mental health issues can also be compared to measure success.

- This curriculum would be made by the California Department of Education, which will make recommendations on what lesson plans and materials will be needed.
- This bill will be passed as a recommendation to school districts, providing them with the flexibility and autonomy in execution.
- Allows LEAs to implement through existing structures (health class where offered, advisory/homeroom, wellness periods, or other locally selected settings), with flexibility for schedule and staffing.
- The first phase of the program would be implemented through only grades 7-9 for students across the state (advance to twelfth grade based on the survey). The second phase expands this to grades 7-12.
- Recommend that counselors instruct on the content (not required).
- Information sent out to parents about session plans, including space for questions.

RATIONALE

By recommending engaging lessons on mental health in SB 224 (2021), students will learn to carefully consider their decisions, utilize their resources, and prevent mental overload. Furthermore, because the proposal amends an existing bill, this solution is significantly more feasible than introducing entirely new legislation or an unfamiliar approach.

Due to the fact that our proposal focuses on grades 7-12, which is the period when students first face critical psychological difficulties, students will be able to avoid situations encountering the feeling of powerlessness and defeat due to their lack of knowledge of countermeasures. Teaching mental health and management skills early and effectively builds preparedness, reduces stigma, and promotes

help-seeking behaviors before the age of 14, when the majority of people start experiencing mental disorders. Additionally, assigning two sessions per semester gives flexibility and independence to schools and districts to choose the appropriate date and class, having schools simply add the program to their original schedules. Other benefits include maturing the content by grade to provide additional engagement and learning opportunities, and preventing the loss of school funds since it is added to instructional minutes.

PRECEDENT & MODELS

- SB 224 (2021) established that mental health instruction would be embedded in secondary health education where offered, including coping and maintenance of mental wellness.
- At Cate High School in Carpinteria (SD 21), the school gives planners to students and dedicates time to model how to organize time management and how to use the planner to gauge activities, classes, etc.
- At John F. Kennedy Middle College High School in Norco (SD 32), peer counselors from its EVOLVE Peer Advising Program teach an interactive mental health lesson once a semester.
- At Yorba Linda High School in Yorba Linda (SD 32), students have a mandatory health & career class in which students learn stress management and factors that affect mental health.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

This proposal is expected to have a minor fiscal impact at both the state and local levels. At the state level, the California Department of Education would incur limited administrative costs to develop and share optional model guidance and resources for stress and task management sessions. These costs can be absorbed within existing mental health education and school climate initiatives and would not require new staff or ongoing appropriations.

At the local level, the fiscal impact would be negligible. The proposal does not require new hiring, additional instructional minutes, or changes to school schedules. Districts may integrate the sessions into existing structures such as health classes or advisory periods using current staff and materials. By limiting implementation to two sessions per semester under instructional minutes, the proposal minimizes costs, avoids schools losing money, and even potentially reduces higher-cost crisis interventions over time.

AI Implementation in Classrooms

Speakers: Ariadne Tatsis (Piedmont High School, Oakland), Brynne Jones (Piedmont High School, Oakland), and Arjun Prabhuram (Santa Susana High School)

Writer: Joey Wang (Francis Parker School, San Diego)

Facilitator: Rudri Soni (Centennial High School, Corona)

Research: Claire Chin (Monte Vista High School, Danville)

SUMMARY

With generative artificial intelligence (AI) becoming increasingly present in schools, AI has become a growing challenge for teachers to navigate in classrooms. Students in middle and high school are using AI tools at increasing rates, often because teachers do not consistently provide clear guidelines defining what AI use is acceptable and what is not. This proposal establishes a standardized Responsible Use Rubric for middle and high schools in California public schools. The rubric would provide a clear, standardized definition of acceptable AI use, allowing students to understand teacher expectations for courses and individual assignments, while also offering educators guidelines on how to implement AI use and AI literacy into the classroom in ways that prepare students for the future.

BACKGROUND

Generative artificial intelligence has become increasingly present in middle and high school classrooms. In October 2025, College Board published research findings that “the percentage of high school students who report using GenAI tools for schoolwork is growing, increasing from 79% to 84% between January and May 2025.” AI use is not limited to students; a Gallup poll surveying 2,232 U.S. teachers working in public K-12 schools reports that six in 10 teachers use AI tools for their work. As large technology companies continue to come out with newer, quicker models that are easily accessible to all, it’s increasingly clear that AI is here to stay, not only in American classrooms but also in everyday life. As a result, the central issue is no longer whether AI should be used in schools, but how it should be used responsibly and effectively. While AI use is widespread, there are no standardized, clear guidelines for AI use. California has begun

addressing AI in education through statewide working groups and proposed guidelines through SB1288, but no consistent framework has been implemented across the state. Expectations surrounding AI use vary widely by classroom, school, and district, creating confusion for students and educators.

PROBLEM

Students lack access to clear and consistent guidelines regarding acceptable generative artificial intelligence use. Without clear guidance on acceptable AI use, students often rely on personal judgment, resulting in confusion and even unintentional academic dishonesty. Although some teachers and districts have begun offering professional development or informal guidance on AI use, these resources are inconsistent, vary widely by district, and are often unclear or inaccessible to students. Research done by the Digital Promise finds that “while most districts (75%) are currently offering professional development for teachers on the safe and effective use of AI, far fewer (25%) have set specific policies or guidance on the technology. As a result, students frequently rely on AI tools without understanding whether their use is permitted, leading to excessive AI use and even academic integrity violations. Teachers similarly face uncertainty about how to integrate AI into the classroom environment, being overwhelmed by the rapid development of AI, which can lead many to avoid or prohibit the use of AI altogether, leaving students unprepared for the future. Because expectations are largely left to the individual teacher’s discretion, AI policies differ even within the same school, creating uneven enforcement and an inequitable learning environment.

SOLUTION

All California public school districts are required to implement the Responsible Use Rubric for students in middle and high school. The rubric establishes clear, standardized levels defining acceptable AI usage in academic work and will be enforced at the district level to ensure consistent implementation across schools.

The Responsible Use Rubric consists of five levels:

1. Level 1: No AI Assistance
 1. Level 1: Students must complete all work independently without the use of AI tools.

2. Level 2: AI Idea Organization
Students may use AI to brainstorm, organize, or clarify early thinking. Final work must be completed independently without the use of AI. AI use must be cited.
3. Level 3: AI-Supported Drafting
Students may use AI to generate initial drafts, provided they significantly revise the work and clearly distinguish AI-contributed initial drafts from the student's final draft.
4. Level 4: AI Infused Creation
Students may incorporate AI-generated elements, with required critical review, editing, and transparent citations.
5. Level 5: AI as Co-Creator
Students may work collaboratively with AI, provided they submit a written justification explaining how AI was used and still demonstrate original thinking.

School districts shall be responsible for the enforcement and implementation of the rubric by requiring teachers to indicate the assigned AI use level on major assignments, projects, and assessments. The Responsible Use Rubric provides students with clear guidance on what forms of AI use are permitted and prohibited. The rubric also serves as a step-by-step framework for teachers to gradually implement AI into the classroom. The districts are also in charge of making sure all teachers under their jurisdiction follow their posted AI rating. Teachers who need clarification or additional support in understanding the AI use scale may reference the California Department of Education's AI webinar recordings. Whether through a steering committee or focus groups, districts will be responsible for ensuring that, at the beginning of each school year, there is dialogue among students, teachers, and district leaders about how assignments are categorized under the Responsible Use Rubric. To ensure accountability over multiple years, districts will submit an annual AI Use Certification at the end of the school year detailing their use of the Responsible Use Rubric, their outcomes, and next year's goals. In addition, the rubric will need to be publicly accessible, ensuring students are informed of expectations. The proposal should be implemented before June 2029.

RATIONALE

As AI grows increasingly prevalent in society, it is essential to integrate a reasonable set of guidelines on how to use AI in a school setting. These guidelines will encourage students to use AI as a support system to deepen their understanding of academic subjects rather than a crutch to depend on. Schools will inevitably need to train educators on responsible AI use, regardless of whether a standardized framework is

established. Compared to bans, optional guidance, new curriculum mandates, or technology-based enforcement, this approach is uniquely effective because it directly addresses the root problem of inconsistent, confusing expectations while remaining scalable and enforceable.

Below are three justifications for this solution:

1) SB1288 Precedent

This solution is the most feasible and rational among other possible solutions to the implementation of AI in classrooms, as it builds upon the recommended working framework, completed recently by the California Department of Education's AI Working Group, as per SB1288. Our proposal codifies the Responsible Use Rubric on AI integration into assignments, mandating districts to implement it within their schools.

While adoption of the rubric is mandatory, the method by which educators are introduced to and discuss the rubric is left to district discretion and is expected to occur through existing district-wide committee meetings and instructional planning structures. No new state-mandated training programs are required.

2) Structured but Flexible

Given that public response to AI's presence in education is highly polarized, a non-binary solution is necessary. For instance, a blanket policy banning AI would satisfy teachers who are anti-AI, but would alienate those who support its use. Conversely, implementing no policy creates an unstandardized system that leaves students confused. This five-level rubric allows teachers flexibility and autonomy over how they incorporate AI into their assignments, but still mandates that they begin to look at their assignments through the lens and in the context of AI in education. This clear, structured rubric ensures that there is no longer confusion amongst students as to what counts as AI, and teachers are encouraged to begin thinking about innovative ways schools can teach with AI rather than despite it. Districts may reference optional state-provided guidance or recordings at their discretion; however, no video or webinar participation is mandated under this proposal.

3) Student-Teacher Relationship

The AI implementation group identified that the confusion around AI standards has contributed to a growing hostility between students and teachers. For instance, at both Piedmont and Los Altos High School, teachers flagged students' essays with AI usage due to Grammarly, despite students' confusion on whether or not Grammarly counted as AI under the assignment guidelines. This lack of clarity further widens the disparity between students and teacher trust. Providing clear expectations regarding acceptable AI use would allow students to better understand assignment requirements and enable teachers to more accurately interpret students' work and thought processes, decreasing the likelihood of misunderstandings and conflicts. This transparency, in turn, would

significantly increase trust between teachers and students.

PRECEDENT & MODELS

- California Senate Bill 1288 (2023) – AI Working Group

The bill would establish a statewide working group within the California Department of Education to study the impacts of AI in public schools and develop guidance for responsible classroom implementation

- North Carolina Department of Public Instruction 2024 – AI Acceptance-Use Scale

NCDPI would provide statewide guidance through an AI acceptance-use scale for K–12 classrooms to clearly define how much generative artificial intelligence may be used on individual assignments. The scale is adopted as non-mandatory guidance rather than a mandate, allowing districts and educators flexibility in implementation.

- AB 2876 (2022)

This recognizes the importance of media and artificial intelligence literacy and encourages schools to integrate these topics into instruction; however, it does not establish implementation guidance or classroom standards, making AI use policies largely inconsistent across districts.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

The main cost that this proposal will incur arises from teacher stipends for meetings, discussions, and informal training around the implementation of the Responsible Use Rubric. Whether through a steering committee or focus groups, districts will be responsible for ensuring that, at the beginning of each school year, there is dialogue among students, teachers, and district leaders about how assignments, exams, and curricula are categorized under the Responsible Use Rubric. The state will support these district leaders in facilitating these meetings.

There are also pre-existing recordings and training resources from the California Department of Education’s AI Webinars that can be used to support districts in their individual efforts. Once implemented, the maintenance costs are significantly lower. The costs to consider are school district-based decisions on whether or how much to pay teachers for the virtual overtime training. The rubric is adaptable, requiring only periodic updates to training materials as AI technology evolves.

Supporting Students with Disabilities

Educational Data Transparency for Students with Disabilities Bill

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Writer: Aniuas Sanchez, Foothill High School (SD-16, AD-35)

Facilitator: Angela Lee, Temple City High (AD-49, SD-25)

Research: Tyler Green, Centennial High (AD-58, SD-31)

Members: Aarav Desai, Chino High (AD-59, SD-32); Camila Armeida, Mountain View High (AD-23, SD-13); Izzy Wang, Walnut High School (AD- 56, SD-30); Micah Chan, Lincoln High (AD-13, SD-5); Melissa Meng, Gretchen, Whitney High (AD-67, SD-36); Carlos Corres Velasco, Monterrey High School (AD-30, SD-17); Zoey Hernandez, Foothill High School (SD-16, AD-35)

SUMMARY

The Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education proposes recommending that school districts publicly report disaggregated metrics for students with disabilities, broken down by specific disability categories, while maintaining student privacy protections. By requiring transparency and standardized reporting at the county district level, this proposal would allow schools to better evaluate the efficacy of their support systems, allocate resources more strategically, and ensure that students with different disabilities receive appropriate and equitable services. Currently, data on students with disabilities are overgeneralized and inaccessible to the public. This hides gaps in support and makes it harder to see which students need support. Without transparent data, schools and policymakers cannot accurately identify inequities or address them. By making this data public and aggregated, schools, families, and policymakers can identify disparities, design targeted interventions, and hold systems accountable.

BACKGROUND

In California, more than 850,000 students have some form of disability. Yet, their educational experiences and outcomes vary widely depending on the type of disability, the services provided, and the structure of school support systems. While California collects data on graduation rates, test scores, and postsecondary outcomes, disability data is often reported as a single, undifferentiated category. Furthermore, the California Department of Education has only published data on the total number of students with exact disabilities (i.e., Autism, Deaf Blindness, Orthopedic Impairment). Our proposal deepens existing data to better inform decision-making for targeted interventions.

The lack of disaggregated data creates a false impression of uniformity, suggesting that all students with disabilities experience school in the same way. In reality, students may struggle with timed exams, sensory overload, or communication barriers. Without accurate data reflecting these differences, districts cannot intentionally evaluate whether accommodations are working or whether certain groups of students are systematically underserved. Without transparency for students with disabilities, families are often forced to navigate services without access to clear information on outcomes for students with similar needs, limiting their ability to advocate effectively.

PROBLEM

Data on students with disabilities are aggregated as a singular, non-specific metric, preventing meaningful analysis of educational outcomes for students with different disabilities. As a result, administrators and school officials cannot identify the specific deficiencies in their students' education, unable to determine how to properly support students with disabilities.

SOLUTION

- Revise the California school dashboard to display cohort-based disability data (not individual students' data) on graduation rates, standardized testing, and postsecondary outcomes.
- The categories would be based on the 13 categories defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. This includes: autism, deaf-blindness, deafness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, and visual impairment. Data would be published through an expanded California School Dashboard.
- Recommend that county districts conduct standardized, aggregated reporting of academic outcomes for students with disabilities by clearly categorizing disability types that directly relate to educational outcomes. This precedent is set in EDC Penal Code 52064.5, which outlines the requirements for state-adopted evaluation rubrics, including multiple indicators and priorities.
- Ensure data is collected and disaggregated by category of disability and by county to maintain satisfactory sample size to protect student

privacy and prevent the pinpointing of individuals or schools with certain disabilities.

RATIONALE

There is currently no public data tracking the academic outcomes and success rates of students with disabilities by county. Releasing this data at the county level will allow us to appropriately allocate the necessary funds to support students with different disabilities. Gathering data at the district level also upholds each student and family's constitutional privacy rights.

Ultimately, presenting detailed data on the dashboard will provide districts with a standard resource for making informed decisions to support students with disabilities. Based on the data collected, county offices of education will be able to take the necessary steps to implement interventions for students with disabilities.

This would allow for personalized plans to support students who face hurdles to success in higher education, as shown by the newly improved California dashboard, which is the most widely used source of data among districts. Finally, we are only adding the Department of Education's existing collected data to the California Dashboard, making it more fiscally feasible.

PRECEDENT & MODELS

AB 784: Legislative staff pointed out that the lack of disaggregated academic outcome data for Deaf & Hard of Hearing students makes it difficult for policymakers to track how well students are performing academically compared to their peers.

New Accountability System (2017): The Academic Performance Index (API), which measured schools' growth in academic achievement based on California assessment results, was the previous system used to determine how effectively schools serve California students. After being suspended by the California State Board of Education in 2014, the California School Dashboard was created and implemented in March 2017. This new data recording system assesses school and district performance using local and state indicators. Information on the website includes performance indicators, such as test scores, growth rates on tests, and improvements in these scores over time. At the county level, the Board can protect family confidentiality while also providing sufficient data to allow administrators to identify academic lapses.

AB 607: Transparency in public postsecondary education course material costs, which improved affordability transparency for college students.

State Performance Plan/ACR Part B: Mandates states to publicly report detailed data on special education implementation and outcomes, making their performance visible to the public, parents, and the federal government, fostering accountability through specific indicators.

The 2018 reworking of the California School Dashboard provides a clear fiscal precedent, demonstrating that transparency improvements can be achieved with targeted investment. The state allocated approximately \$300,000 to modernize the Dashboard's interface, successfully transitioning from the rigid Academic Performance Index (API) to a more accessible, user-friendly platform. By mirroring this \$300,000 startup cost, our proposal utilizes a proven budgetary framework to reform existing Department of Education data into a disaggregated, sub-category model.

Current efforts for students with intellectual disabilities to pursue higher education through UC Davis Redwood SEED, West Valley College Partner with Us, Pennsylvania Inclusive Higher Education Consortium: offering a variety of programs for ID students, IN! Pathways to Inclusive Higher Education, and Think College National Coordinating Center provide searchable directory programs nationwide that meet CTP standards.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

The implementation of our proposal is estimated at an initial cost of less than \$300,000. This cost would cover hiring consultants and data analysts to recalibrate data-collection systems, disseminate data reform to districts, and refurbish department websites. An additional annual cost of \$200,000 would cover website maintenance and the gradual continuation of data collection. Over time, as the system is established and consistent, the annual cost will decrease.