

## **MAYOR VILLARAIGOSA'S EDUCATION REFORM STRATEGY**

### ***Tackling The Root Causes of Education Inequity and Inefficiency***

#### **REFORM HOW WE FUND OUR SCHOOLS**

California's unsound, unstable, and insufficient school finance system is neither aligned with national education standards nor with student needs. In addition to investing more in education, we must also make structural changes to our financing system.

**Echo Governor-elect Jerry Brown's call for a multi-year budget, draft a multi-year plan that puts us on a path toward funding transparency, flexibility, and equity**— Currently, it is almost impossible to know why a school in Watts receives less funding than a school in Brentwood, because allocation is not transparent. Forcing appropriators to look further ahead into the coming years will ensure better equity and coherence.

**Create a student-centered finance model**— Make the money follow the student. Create a list of student and school factors — including grade level, poverty, language, disability status and achievement level — and weight these factors in how funds are distributed.

**Recommend that funding arrive at schools as real dollars, rather than teaching position, ratios, or staffing norms**— Individual schools can better gauge their own needs, and distributing dollars than can be spent flexibly with oversight and accountability will ensure that those funds are put to use in a way that will best serve each school and its student population.

#### **REFORM HOW WE ASSIGN AND EVALUATE OUR EDUCATORS**

Study after study tells us that no factor is as determinative of student achievement as having a capable and effective teacher in every classroom. Unfortunately, the current tenure and seniority systems undermine teacher performance by excluding it as a factor in assignment, transfer, and layoffs decisions. Furthermore, the evaluation system is neither rigorous nor robust enough to effectively determine how well our teachers do their jobs.

**By June 2012, all California school districts should adopt multiple measure evaluation systems**—This new evaluation system would include measures of student growth over time, in-class observation by more than one evaluator, and feedback from students, parents, peers and supervisors. Teachers would be placed in one of four categories: highly effective, effective, developing or ineffective. The most successful teachers would be rewarded with leadership positions, developing teachers would be given the extra support and training they need to succeed, and teachers with multiple ineffective evaluations would be dismissed.

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**Reform seniority-based assignments, transfers and layoffs**— Do away with the practice of seniority as the single determining factor for where teachers are assigned and in what order they are laid off, because it disproportionately affects low-income, minority students and can result in the loss of excellent teachers. Instead, allow performance to be a factor and reward teachers who succeed with leadership positions to help create a career ladder for teachers and school leaders.

**Extend the probationary period for teacher tenure to four years**— The current two-year period is simply not long enough for teachers to achieve a baseline performance standard. Furthermore, tenure — which is currently awarded automatically to over 97% of teachers — ought to be a more meaningful distinction. Principals should affirm that a teacher deserves tenure after four years rather than the current system of only denying tenure in very few cases.

**Overhaul the panel system in favor of a more streamlined dismissal process**— An ideal dismissal process would balance every student's fundamental right to an equal education while preserving the educator's right to due process. It is imperative, however, that teachers who consistently rank ineffective over multiple evaluations be dismissed in a fair and timely manner.