

League of Women Voters of California
CONSENSUS REPORT FORM
EDUCATION UPDATE STUDY 2003-2005

League _____

Person completing form _____ Phone: Day _____

Email _____ Phone: Evening _____

Number of members in League _____ Number of members participating in consensus _____

Our League did not participate in this study for the following reason(s): _____

Mail, Fax or Email the completed form to

Joanne Leavitt, chair
LWVCEF Education Update Study Committee
2920 Kansas Avenue, Santa Monica, CA 90404
Fax: 310-399-1224; ac997@lafn.org

POSTMARK DEADLINE: JANUARY 15, 2005

Leagues with multiple discussion units can use this form for each unit's report to their local study committee. Reminder: Submit one form per League to the state study committee at the address/fax/email above.

League of Women Voters of California

CONSENSUS REPORT FORM
EDUCATION UPDATE STUDY 2003-2005

League _____ Name _____

Directions: Space is provided at the end for additional responses to these consensus questions and for input and comments arising from your consensus discussions.

- You may attach extra sheets of paper. If you do, please use the same numbering as used on this form.
- If you prefer to download a copy of this form and fill it in electronically, go to the members-only section of the League Web site.
- Please remember to write the name of your League at the top of each page of the report form.
- If you are filling in by hand, use pen (pencil is too light to duplicate or fax)

1. EQUITABLE ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION

Is it the obligation of the state to provide equitable opportunities for teaching and learning systemwide such that every student will be able to meet mandated state standards and to graduate with the skills and knowledge necessary to choose either postsecondary education or immediate entry into gainful employment or both?

Yes _____ No _____ Don't know _____

A. If it is the obligation of the state to provide equitable opportunities as stated above, is the state currently meeting this constitutional obligation?

Yes _____ No _____

If the answer to 1A is "Yes," proceed to C; if the answer is "No," proceed to B.

B. If the answer to 1A is "No" (Remember to attach extra sheets of paper if needed)

(1) What obstacles prevent it from doing so? _____

LWV _____

(2) What steps can be taken to improve the equitable delivery of quality public education to all students in California? _____

(3) What are the elements that have to be provided if all students are to receive an equitable opportunity to learn? (Here is a list of possible elements; check all that apply)

- a. Fully qualified teachers _____
- b. Safe school environment _____
- c. Healthy facilities (vermin free, toilets repaired) _____
- d. Books/instructional supplies for all students _____
- e. Parent involvement _____
- f. Strong school-site management _____
- g. School facilities in good repair _____
- h. Seats for all students _____
- i. Basic educational necessities provided to some are provided to all _____
- j. Effective state system of monitoring and accountability to assure all students in California receive basic educational necessities _____
- k. Elimination of modified calendars that provide fewer instructional days _____

Other

- l. _____
- m. _____
- n. _____
- o. _____
- p. _____

LWV _____

C. Charter Schools have been introduced since our last study of education.

(1) Are charter schools helping students succeed? Yes___ No___ Don't know___

Explain your answer: _____

(2) What effect, if any, are they having on noncharter public schools?

(3) Should they be actively encouraged? Yes___ No___ Don't know___

Explain your answer: _____

D. How can the state assist individual school organizations (local districts and school sites) in providing what is needed to maximize the potential for every student to achieve? _____

LWV _____

E. A goal of the Master Plan for Education is to have every child enter school ready to learn.

(1) Is this a worthy goal? Yes ____ No ____ Don't know ____

(2) What proportion of students should be ready to learn to be successful in achieving this goal?
(Check one of the following)

70% ____ 75% ____ 80% ____ 85% ____ 90% ____ 95% ____ 100% ____
Less than 70% acceptable ____ Less than 70% unacceptable ____

Explain: _____

(3) What interventions would be needed to make this happen?

a. Universal access to voluntary preschool for all children?

Yes ____ No ____ Other ____

b. Universal access for those most at risk?

Yes ____ No ____ Other ____

c. What about high-risk families who do not choose to enroll?

If you checked other, what other interventions/options were discussed?

(4) Does the Master Plan adequately address the parent as the child's first teacher?

Yes ____ No ____ Don't Know ____

Comment: _____

LWV _____

2. SCHOOL FINANCE

A. Given the high standards that are now required of all students in California schools, in what ways can the state exercise its constitutional responsibility to provide sustainable, transparent, adequate, and timely funding to equitably meet the needs of all students?

(1) Should the state set aside funds for specific purposes (i.e., categorical, textbooks, needs of English Language Learners, special education, low socio-economic, etc.)?

Yes _____ No _____

Rationale: _____

(2) If the state does set aside funding for specific purposes, should the current categorical funding sources remain or should the state move to a block grant concept or weighted student formula for type of students served?

- a. Keep current categorical funding system _____
- b. Move to a block grant concept _____
- c. Move to a weighted student formula _____
- d. Other _____

If you answered other, please describe: _____

LWV _____

(3) To which level should state funds be given for local decision-making?

	ALL FUNDS	RESTRICTED FUNDS
County Board/County Office of Education		
School District Board/Superintendent		
School Site Council/School Governance Committee		
Principal		

Comment: _____

(4) Should the state take action to make it possible for schools to seek new revenue locally? Current options for operational funds are parcel tax and Maintenance Assessment District (recreation tax).

Yes ____ No ____ Don't Know ____

Explain _____

LWV _____

3. GOVERNANCE

A. At the state level, how can authority best be aligned with accountability?

B. How can funding responsibilities be aligned with other governance responsibilities?

C. Should governance be more centralized, or should there be an improved system of checks and balances among educational policy makers?

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D. Which functions of governance should be locally controlled and which ones are best reserved for the state?

E. At the state level, which of the following entities should bear the greatest responsibility/power/accountability for the governance of education, or should they be shared?

ENTITY		Should bear the greatest responsibility	Responsibility, etc. should be shared (with whom?)
1)	Legislature		
2)	Governor		
3)	Secretary for Education		
4)	State Board of Education		
5)	Superintendent of Public Instruction		

Comments: _____

LWV _____

4. ACCOUNTABILITY AND ASSESSMENT

A. Is student assessment helping improve the quality of education and student learning?

Yes ____ No ____

A. If yes, how? _____

B. If no, why not? _____

C. In what ways does student assessment have a positive effect? _____

D. In what ways does student assessment have a negative effect? _____

LWV _____

B. By focusing attention on all students, has California's accountability system resulted in improved student achievement, particularly in low-performing schools?

Yes ____ No ____ Don't Know ____

Explain: _____

C. What effect is the emphasis on testing for basic skills acquisition having on high-level learning/thinking, and the development of noncognitive skills (i.e. reliability, integrity, working well with others, etc.)?

D. Are rewards and sanctions currently tied to student test scores effectively motivating educators to improve academic outcomes?

Yes ____ No ____ Don't Know ____

Explain: _____

E. Are schools that serve the urban and rural poor receiving sufficient additional resources and assistance needed to improve student outcomes?

Yes ____ No ____ Don't Know ____

Explain: _____

LWV _____

F. Are lower-performing schools receiving sufficient additional resources, assistance, and time to work with low-achieving students as much as needed to improve student outcomes?

Yes ____ No ____ Don't Know ____

Explain: _____

G. Is performance data presented to teachers, schools, and districts in a way that is understandable and usable?

Yes ____ No ____ Don't Know ____

Explain: _____

H. Are teachers, schools, districts, and parents able to use the performance data to effectively support student success?

Yes ____ No ____ Don't Know ____

Comments: _____

LWV _____

- I. What roles and responsibilities should be designated to the local districts and sites to improve student achievement in their schools?

District: _____

School Site: _____

- J. Have policy-makers taken the necessary steps to ensure the successful implementation of the High School Exit Exam, targeted for 2006?

Yes ____ No ____ Don't Know ____

Explain: _____

LWV _____

5. THE PUBLIC’S ROLE IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

How can all the institutions and nongovernmental organizations that are concerned about public education in California work together more effectively to improve the quality of education offered to California’s students? What role can the LWVC play?

Comments: _____

What role can the LWVC / LWVCEF play? _____

Please use this space to share any other comments/issues that were raised during your consensus session.

