

TO SERVE AND EDUCATE: A HANDBOOK FOR SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

EDITED BY LANCE T. IZUMI AND XIAOCHIN YAN

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To Serve and To Educate: A Handbook for School Board Members

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
I. Local School Finance	3
II. State Education Finance	7
III. School Accountability	11
IV. Dealing with the Unions	15
V. Mastering the Bureaucracy	19
Conclusion	21
PRI Publications	22
Other Resources	22
Links to National Organizations	23
Links to California Organizations	23
About the Editors	24
About the Contributing Authors	25
About the Pacific Research Institute	27

Introduction

Given the importance of education to the success of California's children and economy, there are few more noble undertakings than service on a local school board. The decisions made by school board members on issues ranging from budget and personnel matters to curriculum and discipline policies will often determine the success or failure of students. These issues and policies, however, are often complicated and board members face difficult decisions.

Newly elected school board members bring freshness and enthusiasm to their roles, but often arrive unfamiliar with many of the issues they will have to confront. From understanding how best to negotiate with unions, to realizing the intricacies of state and local finance, to maneuvering the district bureaucracy, the average layperson often arrives ill prepared. Yet, by following a few simple guidelines, it is possible for new school board members to hit the ground running and not be tripped up by a lack of knowledge and experience.

The Pacific Research Institute (PRI) is conducting training seminars in California that acquaint new members with a variety of critical issues and responsibilities. These seminars feature education experts as well as experienced school board members who offer their wisdom and guidance. This handbook contains some of the most important points outlined at these seminars and also includes key information from recent PRI education studies.

It is PRI's hope that this handbook will help guide new board members, in California and other states, in their deliberations and result in better education policymaking.

I. Local School Finance

Summary

One of the main responsibilities of a school board member is to oversee the district's budget. Board members need to know how a budget works, how to make sure that dollars are spent honestly, and how to connect spending with good results.

The Basics

- **Spend public money as efficiently as possible within the restrictions of state and federal law, and ensure honesty in financial management.**

The state Legislative Analyst's Office has said that *how* tax dollars are spent is just as important as *how much* is spent. Failure to get maximum bang for the taxpayer's buck reduces public confidence in the school system and hurts the achievement of children in the classroom.

- **Local school boards do not have full discretion in how to spend their public funds.**

Restrictions include funded, partially funded, and unfunded mandates imposed by the state and federal governments. In other words, state or federal officials tell local boards how to spend certain education dollars.

- **Failure to administer public funds efficiently and honestly has repercussions.**

Currently, three districts are operating under a state administrator, two are operating under a state trusteeship, and 64 districts are on a "watch list" for insolvency and other financial problems.

- **What components should a budget contain?**

A budget is a detailed financial plan. The budget should be the first year of a multi-year financial plan (the "out-years" are typically less detailed than the upcoming year). The multi-year financial plan should extend at least a little longer than the budgeting entity's major financial commitments, such as union and construction contracts.

- **There are three key ingredients in a budget.**

There are accounts – salary, benefits, books and supplies, and operating expenditures. There are responsibility units – schools, departments, and programs. And there are funds – general and other funds.

- **Districts can easily get into budget trouble.**

Districts misjudge the impact of multi-year commitments, eat up their reserve funds, and then are forced to take money away from areas such as books and supplies to pay off the commitments.

- **Know how to budget.**

Set economic assumptions for the multi-year plan. Set economic assumptions for next year's budget. Set and communicate spending targets in light of these assumptions. Determine which areas of the budget should receive incremental increases or decreases and which areas should incorporate zero-based or performance-based budgeting.

Have district staff gather and compile proposed budgets. Review the budget for its consistency with financial targets and the prior year's long-term spending plans. Adjust the proposed budget in light of spending targets.

- **Why monitor finances against the budget regularly?**

It conveys a message to all staff that the board takes the finances seriously. It forces staff to know the impact of finances on the budget. It shortens the reaction time if something goes wrong.

- **What should be the frequency, scope, and focus of monitoring?**

There should be high-level monthly reviews and detailed quarterly reviews of finances. All funds should be included, not just General Fund dollars.

- **Honesty in spending is critical.**

Board members must realize where fraud is most likely to occur: construction and repairs of schools and offices; maintenance and warehouse management; purchasing books, supplies, and equipment; featherbedding, nepotism, and cronyism; and personal expense claims.

- **Know your district.**

Visit all facilities and physically inspect operations, especially major construction activities. Meet the staff and find out what they do.

- **Ensure that internal controls are in place.**

Design policies and procedures to minimize theft and potential conflicts of interest which give rise to fraud. In larger districts, an independent internal audit function is necessary to review financial controls regularly and systematically. Smaller districts should make alternative arrangements for independent regular and systematic reviews of internal controls.

- **Keep in mind the bottom line.**

Finance staff may seem unable or unwilling to work with board members, or give them false or misleading information. If so, board members have a strong alternative: change staff.

II. State Education Finance

Summary

School board members need to understand how state education finance works because most of the dollars they will oversee will come from the state. The fiscal health of a district will depend partly on good fiscal management but also depends on the complicated formulas of state funding.

The Basics

- **State education funding is a significant budget component.**

State General Fund spending on education is three times the amount of spending on education that comes from local property taxes. State General Fund dollars and local property tax revenues are often called Proposition 98 funds because the successful 1988 ballot initiative laid out minimum levels of state education funding based on state General Fund revenues.

- **There are other sources of revenue.**

In addition to state General Fund dollars and revenues from local property taxes, public education receives revenues from other state funds such as the state lottery, plus federal dollars. Adding Prop. 98 funds plus these other revenues gives the total amount spent annually on education. In order to get a better idea of the funds available, board members should always ask their superintendent for the total spending figure in their district, in addition to the Prop. 98 amount.

- **State funds are delivered in one of two major ways.**

The majority of state dollars come in the form of general revenue limits, dollars that districts can use in virtually any way they see fit. The second type comes in the form of categorical funding, money earmarked by the state for specific purposes such as special education, class-size reduction, or instructional materials.

- **Categorical funding reduces the flexibility of school board decision makers.**

Since categorical funds can only be spent on a specific purpose, school board members do not have the discretion to spend these state dollars on other needs that may be more pressing. The state has block-granted some categorical funds recently, but relatively few of the many categorical programs have been affected.

- **State mandates also impose constraints and costs.**

According to the state Legislative Analyst's Office, there are currently 36 state-mandated local programs for K-12 education. These mandates require districts and county offices of education to conduct a wide range of instructional, fiscal, and safety activities, and require districts to administer local processes designed to protect parent and student rights.

- **State mandates have been unfunded for years.**

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local districts for the cost of complying with mandated local programs. Since 2002, however, the state has not provided reimbursements to local districts. Since that time, the state has "deferred" payments, which means that the funds will be provided at some time in the future. Even though the payments have been deferred, local districts must still perform the mandated services.

- **Funding among districts is unequal.**

Because of significant quirks in the way revenue limits are calculated for various districts, the state's per-pupil funding rates for each district are not the same. Unfortunately, as the state Legislative Analyst's Office has noted, these different revenue-limit funding levels have no analytical basis. Further, categorical dollars often flow unequally into districts, creating greater differences in funding.

- **Declining enrollment is a major concern.**

Local districts are faced with a variety of cost pressures. More than four out of 10 districts are experiencing declining student enrollment. Since the district's revenues are based on its number of students, declining enrollment means less money for districts.

- **As a result, many districts face declining revenues.**

Falling enrollments mean that districts need fewer teachers. As districts stop hiring new teachers, the average teacher salary grows (since higher paid teachers with seniority are still on staff), which requires additional cost reductions. Since enrollment trends are often known in advance, districts should make cost adjustments before the decline actually occurs.

- **Know the AB 1200 process.**

The state maintains a fiscal oversight process called AB 1200 that makes county offices of education responsible for reviewing school district budgets and assisting districts experiencing financial difficulties. A negative certification by the county office means that the district will not be able to meet its obligations in the current or subsequent fiscal year. The state has established the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team to provide fiscal and management assistance to school districts and county offices of education.

III. School Accountability

Summary

The performance of schools and students is the ultimate responsibility of school board members. Board members must understand both the need to improve student achievement and how to get it done. Further, board members must understand the broad outlines of both the state and federal accountability systems.

The Basics

- **Student achievement is the goal.**

The goal of school accountability is improving student achievement. All the facets of accountability, such as standards, testing, rewards, and punishments, have as their objective the raising of student learning and performance. School boards are responsible for ensuring that their district's schools meet the requirements of both state and federal accountability systems.

- **Know what works.**

Board members should familiarize themselves with sound research that shows what works when it comes to improving student achievement. There is extensive research on how children best learn to read and do math, on the most effective teaching methods, and how best to improve the performance of hard-to-educate children. Make sure that the research is based on objective, quantitative data and not the subjective observations of the researcher.

- **Connect what works with classroom practices in the district.**

Make sure that the classroom-related policies adopted by the district are based on good research as to what works.

- **Know the key points of the state and federal accountability systems.**

The state and federal governments have adopted complicated school accountability systems. School board members must have a general understanding of each system in order to help district schools meet the various requirements.

- **Understand the state accountability system.**

In 1999, California adopted the Academic Performance Index (API), a ranking system that is based on student scores on the state's standardized tests. Schools are ranked on a one-to-10 scale, with 10 being the highest. Each school is given an annual test-score growth target.

- **Assistance is available for some schools that fail to meet the annual growth target.**

Schools that rank five or below on the API and fail to meet their growth targets are eligible for state interventionary assistance. Application is voluntary and not all schools that apply receive assistance.

Schools that apply for assistance and are selected enter the Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP). Under II/USP, schools in the first year receive \$50,000 in planning grants to develop a comprehensive school reform plan. The plan must be approved by the state Board of Education.

After approval, the school receives annual implementation grants of up to \$200 per enrolled student. Schools receive the implementation grant for two years and may be granted a third year of funding if they continue to struggle to meet their Academic Performance Index growth targets.

- **The state may intervene in schools that continue to fail to meet growth targets.**

Sanctions available to the state include state takeover of schools, reassigning the principal, turning the school into a charter school, reassigning teachers, renegotiating a new labor contract, and reorganizing or closing the school.

- **Schools must report annually on their results.**

Every year the local school board must issue a School Accountability Report Card for each school within the district. Each report card must contain the most recent three years of testing data for student achievement by grade level in reading, writing, math, and other academic areas.

- **The federal No Child Left Behind Act sets additional accountability requirements.**

Parallel to the state's accountability system, the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) sets up other accountability devices and requirements. NCLB requires schools to meet targets for percentages of students who score at the proficient level on the state's standardized tests. Schools must have all of their students at the proficient level by 2013-14.

States must also set annual objectives for the percentage of students achieving proficiency. These objectives are called Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

In order to meet AYP, schools must meet targets for all students in general and also for the following subgroups: major racial and ethnic groups, economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, and English language learners.

- **There are sanctions for failing to meet AYP.**

Only schools that receive federal Title I dollars are subject to federal intervention and sanctions. Title I schools that do not make their AYP for two consecutive years may be subject to student transfers to other districts, requirements that Title I funds go to tutoring programs, corrective action such as replacement of staff or implementation of a new curriculum, and restructuring, which could include state takeover.

- **Improved results enable schools to exit the intervention process.**

Sanctioned schools can exit both the state and federal intervention programs by exhibiting test score growth for two consecutive years.

IV. Dealing with the Unions

Summary

The collective bargaining contracts that school boards negotiate with their employee unions, especially teacher unions, have a huge impact not only on budget issues but on the ability of the board to make decisions on issues affecting the learning of students in the classroom. It is, therefore, imperative that board members understand what should and what should not be included in collective bargaining agreements.

The Basics

- **Look at the long-term fiscal effects of wages and benefits.**

Many school boards have landed in deep trouble by negotiating union contracts that give large salary and benefit increases to union members that cannot be sustained based on limited future revenues. For example, some school districts have liability for retiree health benefits that are double the district's annual operating budget.

- **Collective bargaining involves more than just salary decisions.**

Collective bargaining with teacher unions often involves more than issues of wages and benefits. There is a wide range of bargaining topics involving the school board's ability to manage personnel and control what goes on in the classroom. This is as, or more, important as employee compensation.

- **The board must retain maximum authority.**

To the extent that an issue is included in the contract, it restricts the flexibility, discretion, and power of school boards and administrators to make key decisions. Boards must always ask: Does this union proposal limit the district's ability to make the decisions necessary to implement policies that enhance student learning? Boards are accountable to the public, unions are not.

- **Beware binding arbitration.**

If a contract contains a provision for binding arbitration, where an outside arbitrator makes a final and binding decision on any contract dispute, then the public's ability to hold the board accountable is greatly diminished.

- **Beware vague wording about management rights.**

Vague wording about the management authority of the school board allows unions and arbitrators to define the board's management rights and limit the scope of authority for the day-to-day operation of schools.

- **Keep the grievance procedure out of the union contract.**

Most contracts between districts and teacher unions contain an article describing the process to resolve teacher complaints. Removing this process from the policies of the school district, controlled by the elected school board, to the collective bargaining contract seriously undermines board authority. When the grievance procedure is covered by the contract, the union becomes a party to the resolution.

- **Understand the grievance process.**

If a grievance procedure is included in a contract, the agreement should clearly define the conditions under which a teacher may file a grievance. School boards cannot maintain management discretion and flexibility if the grievance procedure is open-ended. Grievance filings should be permitted only in cases of specific violations of the contract and not over policies, practices, or regulations that are within the board's authority.

- **Keep in mind the key rule for placing teachers.**

The school board must be able to place the right teacher with the right training in the right classroom at the right time.

- **Beware seniority clauses.**

Seniority is the length of time a teacher has been employed and is often used as a placement guide in collective bargaining contracts. When placement decisions are based on seniority, there are consequences for student learning. The teachers with the most seniority are not

necessarily those with abilities best suited for a particular group of children. Contracts that place conditions on the transfer and assignment decisions of the administration pre-empt district authority and surrender significant influence to the union.

- **Push for evaluation.**

Teachers should have their performance evaluated based on a combination of objective indicators, such as student improvement measured on state tests, and subjective indicators, such as evaluations by principals and, perhaps, other teachers. Boards should resist contracts that place constraints on principals to set objectives, observe instruction, or use objective measures when evaluating teachers.

- **Do not cede management of the classroom to the unions.**

School boards and districts must retain control over curriculum decisions and other classroom instructional policies.

- **Power is not only what you have, but what your opponents think you have.**

In a public confrontation with a union, board members must remember that nice is not always right. As veteran school board member Mike Spence says: “You have to be willing to go to war. They are. They have to think that you just might do it.”

- **Always call their bluff.**

According to Mike Spence, if the unions say they are going to recall you, your response should be “Where’s the petition?” If the unions say that every teacher opposes your plan, you respond “Where are they?” Make sure to recruit your own allies among teachers and community members.

- **Ridicule bad ideas and promote good ones.**

Mock any union idea that goes counter to student learning. Make sure the public understands that you as a board member are promoting student learning and achievement. Always have a constructive alternative idea that will increase student performance.

V. Mastering the Bureaucracy

Summary

Who is in charge, the school board or the district bureaucracy? The answer to that question is, unfortunately, too often the latter. Board members must make sure that they are the district's education leaders rather than mere puppets of their administrators.

The Basics

- **The board represents the public.**

A board member's job is to make decisions in the best interest of students and the public, not to rubber-stamp the preferences of the superintendent.

- **Understand the role and authority of bureaucrats.**

The bureaucracy is there to carry out the policies of the board, not the other way around. The superintendent and other bureaucrats may make recommendations, but that's all that they are. Board members are the policymakers.

- **Personnel is policy.**

Board members need to choose a superintendent who agrees with and is willing to carry out the wishes of the board. A superintendent may have gold-plated credentials, but if he or she is unwilling to implement the board's policies, is hesitant about doing so, or undermines those policies, then he or she should be terminated. Boldness in this area will send a clear message to the rest of the bureaucracy.

- **Do not be a captive to the bureaucracy's information flow.**

By monopolizing the flow of information, superintendents and the district bureaucracy can manipulate board members into deciding matters according to the wishes of the administration. Board members must seek outside sources of information. Only by being armed with independent objective data can board members make decisions in the interest of the public rather than the bureaucracy.

- **Never give a bureaucrat a chance to say “no.”**

Always push for more information, more alternatives, and more opinions. Although bureaucrats will usually resist, board members must force them to explain their actions, their choices, and the bases for their decisions.

- **Know the Brown Act.**

The Brown Act governs what is permissible in public meetings. Superintendents bent on controlling policymaking will try to use the Brown Act to set the agenda. Board members should not allow superintendents to manipulate the Brown Act to restrict the board’s policymaking abilities.

- **Communicate with the public.**

Board members should not rely on the bureaucracy to convey important information to the public. Board members should establish their own means of communication, such as websites, that ensure that their constituents receive the board’s message rather than that of the bureaucracy.

Conclusion

Serving as a school board member carries no guarantee of success, even for those who enter service fully motivated and charged with enthusiasm. Entrenched interests will resist many common-sense policies and reforms. School board members must, therefore, arm themselves with the right information and understand the best strategies and tactics for achieving their goals.

This handbook can be a valuable tool for board members in navigating tough budget and personnel matters, management policies, state and federal accountability requirements, and classroom issues that affect student achievement. In conjunction with attending PRI's school board training seminars and networking with other like-minded and successful board members, this handbook will provide members with the foundation for effective leadership. It also provides a guide to the resources that are available from other policy organizations.

By becoming effective leaders, school board members will be able to ensure that we meet the bottom line of education – our children's achievement.

PRI Publications

Putting Education to the Test: A Value-Added Model for California by Lance T. Izumi and Harold C. Doran (2004)

California Education Report Card: Index of Leading Education Indicators by Lance T. Izumi with Matt Cox (2003)

They Have Overcome: High-Poverty, High-Performing Schools in California by Lance T. Izumi with K. Gwynne Coburn and Matt Cox (2002)

Contract for Failure: The Impact of Teacher Union Contracts on the Quality of California's Schools by Pamela A. Riley with Rosemarie Fusano, La Rae Munk, and Ruben Petterson (2002)

Facing the Classroom Challenge: Teacher Quality and Teacher Training in California's Schools of Education by Lance T. Izumi (2001)

Other Resources

Within Our Reach: How America Can Educate Every Child edited by John E. Chubb, Hoover Institution-Koret Task Force, April 2005

Understanding School District Budgets: A Guide for Local Leaders, EdSource, January 2005

“Classroom Research and Cargo Cults” by E.D. Hirsch Jr., *Policy Review*, October/November 2002

Education Next, Hoover Institution

Education Matters, Association of American Educators

The Gadfly, Thomas B. Fordham Foundation

School Reform News, Heartland Institute

Links to National Organizations

Center for Education Reform – www.edreform.com

Core Knowledge Foundation – www.coreknowledge.org

Education Consumers Clearinghouse – www.education-consumers.com

Education Leaders Council – www.educationleaders.org

Education Policy Institute – www.educationpolicy.org

Thomas B. Fordham Foundation – www.edexcellence.net

Heartland Institute – www.heartland.org

Heritage Foundation – www.heritage.org

Just for the Kids – www.just4kids.org

Manhattan Institute – www.manhattan-institute.org

Links to California Organizations

Association of American Educators – www.aateachers.org

California Business for Educational Excellence – www.cbee.org

California Charter School Association – www.charterassociation.org

Capitol Resource Institute – www.capitolresource.org

EdSource – www.edsource.org

Hoover Institution-Koret Task Force – www.korettaskforce.org

Pacific Research Institute – www.pacificresearch.org

Reason Public Policy Institute – www.reason.org

About the Editors

Lance T. Izumi

Director, Education Studies; Senior Fellow in California Studies

Lance T. Izumi is Senior Fellow in California Studies and Director of Education Studies at the Pacific Research Institute. He is the author of several major PRI studies, including the *California Education Report Card: Index of Leading Education Indicators* (1997, 2000, and 2003 editions), *Developing and Implementing Academic Standards* (1999), *Facing the Classroom Challenge: Teacher Quality and Teacher Training in California's Schools of Education* (2001), and *They Have Overcome: High-Poverty, High-Performing Schools in California* (2002).

In 2004, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger appointed Mr. Izumi as a member of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges. In 2003, United States Secretary of Education Rod Paige appointed Mr. Izumi to the Teacher Assistance Corps, a task force of experts assigned to review state teacher quality plans as they relate to the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Until recently Mr. Izumi served as a member of the California Postsecondary Education Commission where he was chair of the commission's fiscal policy and analysis committee and vice chair of the governmental relations committee. He also served as a member of the Professional Development Working Group of the California Legislature's Joint Committee to Develop a Master Plan for Education.

Mr. Izumi is the co-editor of two books: *School Reform: The Critical Issues* (Hoover Institution Press and Pacific Research Institute, 2001) and *Teacher Quality* (Hoover Institution Press and Pacific Research Institute, 2002). He is the chapter co-author of "State Accountability Systems" in *School Accountability* (Hoover Institution Press, 2002).

Mr. Izumi is a former contributor to the "Perspectives" opinion series on KQED-FM, the National Public Radio affiliate in San Francisco. His articles have been published in the *Notre Dame Journal of Law*, *Harvard Asian American Policy Review*, *National Review*, *Wall Street Journal Europe*, *Sunday Times* (of London), *Los Angeles Times*, *Investor's Business Daily*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Sacramento Bee*, and many other publications.

Prior to going into the think-tank world, Mr. Izumi served as chief speechwriter and director of writing and research for California Governor George Deukmejian. He also served in the Reagan administration as speechwriter to United States Attorney General Edwin Meese III.

Mr. Izumi received his master's degree in political science from the University of California at Davis and his juris doctorate from the University of Southern California Law Center. He received his bachelor's degree in economics and history from the University of California at Los Angeles.

Xiaochin Claire Yan
Education Studies; Public Policy Fellow

Xiaochin Claire Yan is a public policy fellow in education studies at the Pacific Research Institute. Before joining PRI, she was an editor at Regnery Publishing, a nonfiction, politics/current affairs publishing house in Washington, D.C.

Ms. Yan has also worked at the editorial page of *The Wall Street Journal in Asia*, based in Hong Kong. She has written editorials on education in Southeast Asia, free trade in ASEAN, and democracy and politics in China and Taiwan. In addition, Ms. Yan was a Collegiate Network journalism fellow and a contributing editor to *Choosing the Right College: A Guide to America's Colleges*, published by ISI Books.

Ms. Yan is a graduate of Princeton University, with a degree in politics and international relations.

About the Contributing Authors

Rae Belisle is general counsel for the Sacramento County Office of Education. She is formerly the executive director for the California State Board of Education. Recently, she was a lead negotiator for the State on the Williams' Settlement. Ms. Belisle is also the lead state contact with the U.S. Department of Education on the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), serving on the national rulemaking panel as well as on the state committee charged with implementing NCLB in California, along with the State Board of Education.

Carl Brodt is currently a vice president of finance and administration for a major commercial bank in California. He first delved into California education finances with the Proposition 174 school voucher campaign in 1993. Since then, Mr. Brodt has written on education finance, including a paper highlighting the disconnect between per student funding and academic performance, and presented e-testimony on the final report of the Finance and Facilities

Working Group on the State's Master Plan for education. He has also served as a treasurer for a charter school and is currently the treasurer for California Parents for Educational Choice.

Karen England has worked with the Capitol Resource Institute (CRI) since 1999 as Program Director. She is often heard on the radio defending family values and advocating policy matters that will strengthen the family. Ms. England directs and coordinates the student leadership program of CRI, which involves speaking at local high schools, conducting "Class at the Capitol," and organizing the weeklong "City on the Hill" summer leadership conference. Ms. England began her active involvement in public policy issues as a volunteer for Concerned Women for America and as a legislative liaison for the Eagle Forum as their legislative liaison.

Richard Fisher is currently a hearing officer with the Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board in Sacramento. He earned his B.A. in Political Science at UC Santa Barbara and his law degree from UC Davis. He has been a deputy district attorney for Sacramento County, a deputy attorney general for the State of California, staff counsel to two State Boards, and a litigator and administrative lawyer for two private law firms.

Roger Magyar has been an education consultant for the Assembly Republican Caucus since 1989. His professional experience includes: work with a public policy institute specializing in education and economic development, a faculty position at Sacramento City College teaching economics and accounting, and serving as an assistant to Governor Ronald Reagan. He shares Will Rogers's opinion that the schools are not what they used to be, and they never were.

Mike Spence is president of the West Covina Unified School District Board. He was first elected in 1991 and has been reelected three times. He is also a member of the East San Gabriel Valley Regional Occupational Program board and has served twice as chairman. In 1996, Mr. Spence was appointed by the speaker of the state assembly to a four-year term on the Library of California Board.

About the Pacific Research Institute

The Pacific Research Institute champions freedom, opportunity, and personal responsibility for all individuals by advancing free-market policy solutions that impact the daily lives of all Americans. It demonstrates why the free market is more effective than the government at providing the important results we all seek — good schools, quality health care, a clean environment, and economic growth.

Founded in 1979 and based in San Francisco, PRI is a non-profit, non-partisan organization supported by private contributions. Its activities include publications, public events, media commentary, community leadership, legislative testimony, and academic outreach.

Education Studies

PRI works to restore to all parents the basic right to choose the best educational opportunities for their children. Through research and grassroots outreach, PRI promotes parental choice in education, high academic standards, teacher quality, and school finance reform.

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PRI reveals the dramatic and long-term trend towards a cleaner, healthier environment. It also examines and promotes the essential ingredients for abundant resources and environmental quality property rights, markets, local action, and private initiative.

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Pacific Research Institute promotes the principles of individual freedom and personal responsibility. The Institute believes these principles are best encouraged through policies that emphasize a free economy, private initiative, and limited government. By focusing on public policy issues such as education, economics, health care, technology, and the environment, the Institute strives to foster a better understanding of the principles of a free society among leaders in government, academia, the media, and the business community.

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