

Dear Sir or Ms.,

As a retired high school physics teacher, former department coordinator at Hillsboro H.S., and recipient of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Secondary Science Teaching (1990) I know the importance of maintaining high standards for education.

One of the unfortunate side effects of the increased testing and expansion of instruction time in the core subjects, however, has been the reduction of other activities which can be the major motivation for students to come to school.

We can raise standards all we want, but if students are not motivated to come to school and stay in school we will fail to reach our higher standards with the students themselves.

It is a simple fact that with the increased emphasis on core subjects there frequently is not enough time during the regular school day for the other activities and electives which can be the main motivation for students to come to school and feel successful.

Given the shortage of time during the day, it follows from common sense that if we can offer attractive activities before and after school this may well be our most effective improvement for keeping students motivated and achieving higher standards, not just for the top students, but for other students who might otherwise drop out.

As you know, low graduation rates have plagued us. The addition of significant additional after and before school activities will certainly help keep students in school and increase our graduation rates.

Because providing additional before and after school activities is so important, I strongly favor SB 543 to set up an option for the adoption of Children's Service Districts. The creation of the district and levies will only occur if voters approve.

I have seen the arguments against SB 543 to the effect that adoption of the bill might cause a collision with the Measure 5 compression limitation even though the bill allows for alternate funding in that case. Even so, I think it would bring reality to our education dialog for the defenders of that limitation to defend why the arbitrary and damaging limitation is more important than keeping kids in school. Let's have that discussion!

Please support SB 543.

Dr. Walt Hellman

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