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EDVOICE OPPOSES AB 1982

AB 1982 would lower the bar for teacher candidates to meet minimum basic skills proficiency.

SACRAMENTO – EdVoice strongly opposes Assemblymember Cunningham’s (R-San Luis Obispo) proposed legislation AB 1982, which would lower the bar that currently ensures all teachers meet the minimum basic reading, writing and mathematics skills to teach in California public schools (see letter attached). The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals already upheld California’s basic skills measure as a valid prerequisite to employment in a variety of positions in public schools. In fact, the district court examining the evidence noted that the “CTC would be justified in raising the cut scores.” The math component requires teachers to only demonstrate knowledge of 7th grade math.

“This legislation is a mistake. There is no need to lower the bar even further for new teachers. Families should be confident that their child is being taught by a teacher who has a basic understanding of reading, writing and math,” said Bill Lucia, president of EdVoice. “AB 1982 does not address the underlying reasons for reluctance of competent people to enter the teaching profession, including skyrocketing housing costs and low starting teacher salaries. Watering down the *basic skills* requirements we ask of our teachers is not the answer to the teacher shortage. Our kids deserve better.”

AB 1982 could actually disincentivize new teachers from entering the profession, especially in high-cost regions, if school boards flatten the salary schedule for new teachers who have demonstrated even lower minimal competence. “This is an insult to teachers to argue that it solves the teacher shortage. What about raising the base salary for new teachers instead of lowering the bar for our kids,” said Lucia. In response to this bill, EdVoice received a letter from a concerned teacher that said, “This needs to stop!! As a veteran teacher I find this bill insulting and as a parent I’m livid!”

Establishing a requirement for objective demonstration of minimum proficiency in basic skills is a state consumer protection policy to ensure the fundamental right in the California Constitution that every student has an equitable opportunity to a basic education, and provides a minimum guarantee to parents and stakeholders that the California educator workforce is competent in basic skills.

About EdVoice

EdVoice is a nonprofit grassroots network of over 50,000 parents, community leaders, educators, and the state’s leading education philanthropists, working together to dramatically increase measurable student achievement and eliminate educational inequality for all children.