

Part 1 of 2



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Proposed Initiatives Would Harm Schools

CABE members are strongly encouraged NOT to sign or contribute money to these misleading initiatives which would harm public education.

The official titles of the two voucher initiatives now in circulation are the same:

Requires State Funding of Religious and Other Private School Education.

These deceptive initiatives are predicated upon siphoning educational dollars from public education to shift them to private institutions and selected students. One would shift local property tax revenue that currently funds local public schools to private and religious institutions. The other would siphon educational dollars from public education to fund private and religious schools. Both would harm the funding structure of public education by taking funding currently allocated to students attending public schools and using those dollars to provide funding for students currently attending private and religious schools.



The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) recently completed their analysis of these initiatives and concluded they would significantly increase annual state costs between \$4 to \$7 billion. The LAO also noted that the costs for these initiatives could be covered through reductions to existing public school funds or other programs in the state budget, and further speculated that additional state costs in the range of several billion dollars would be seen through reductions in students attending public schools in favor of private schools.

An additional initiative cleared for circulation would eliminate collective bargaining for teachers and public employees which would make an already complex local environment at schools even more complex, as they grapple with enrollment declines mixed with increased costs. The impact this could

have on teacher recruitment and retention could lead to the existing teacher shortfall plummeting even further than its current level.

The State Teacher's Retirement System reported an increase in teacher retirements by 24 percent earlier this year, primarily due to

the pandemic. An additional consideration is the make-up of California's elected school trustees, which are not as diverse as the population they represent. There has been an uptick in individuals running for school boards that subscribe to critical race theory ideology, which could impact the professional development offered, as well as a willingness to continue moving forward to ensure English learners are receiving the support they need to succeed. The LAO estimates the costs could be in the hundreds of millions of dollars to potentially the low billions across state and local governments.

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Finally, an initiative not yet cleared for circulation, has been filed that tries to establish a Constitutional right to a high-quality education while leaving details of what that entails to everyone's imagination. Existing statutes, regulations and policies at every level could be challenged under the guise of this initiative, allowing the courts to throw away decades of policies if it deemed to negatively impact what a high-quality education should look like. Proponents of this initiative would have the opportunity to claim that bilingual education is infringing on the ability for monolingual English speakers to receive the financial support they need, potentially leading to

costly legal attacks on the very programs CAFE has fought for. The vagueness of this initiative makes the very future of public education, and the ideologies included in our system, subject to challenge at every step of the way.

It is still too early to tell which initiatives will likely qualify for the November 2022 ballot. Early next year, the Secretary of State will provide an update on which sponsors of initiatives have reached 25 percent of signatures. Those that have met this threshold will begin to paint a picture of what will likely have a chance to be on the ballot.



What is clear is that there is a purposeful attempt to eliminate public education as we know it.