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BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

Date: November 6, 2015

SUPERINTENDENT – JOSÉ L. BANDA

BC NO.	FROM	REGARDING
S-91	José Banda	School Services of California's Sacramento Weekly Update
S-92	José Banda	Trip to China – November 9 – 18, 2015
S-93	José Banda	Conferences Attended in October 2015



**SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD COMMUNICATION**

BC NO: S-91

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM - <i>(Check a Box)</i>	No:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Yes:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Date: 11/6/2015
Approved by: José L. Banda, Superintendent						
To the Members of the Board of Education						
Prepared by: José L. Banda, Superintendent					Contact Email: Superintendent@scusd.edu	
Subject: School Services of California's Sacramento Weekly Update						

Attached is the weekly update from School Services of California for your review.



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DATE: November 6, 2015
TO: Jose Banda
Superintendent
AT: Sacramento City Unified School District
FROM: Your SSC Legislative Team
RE: ***SSC's Sacramento Weekly Update***

It's the first week of November and all is quiet in the state's capital. Even though there is little activity in Sacramento, things continue to develop as we move into the final months of 2015.

As mentioned in a previous *Sacramento Weekly Update*, various stakeholders are pushing competing measures that would extend the income tax portions of Proposition 30. The chief proponents of the competing measures, the California Teachers Association (CTA) and the California Hospitals Association (CHA), have submitted their proposals to the Attorney General for a ballot title and summary, an early step required before signatures can be collected.

The two proposals, while both extend the income tax increases on high income earners, are slightly different. The CTA proposal simply extends the higher tax rates to 2030 and exempts the revenues generated by the proposal from the Proposition 2 reserve funds. The Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), in the just-released fiscal analysis of the proposal, estimates that the measure would generate between \$5 billion and \$11 billion in revenues annually. Much of the range depends on the stock market's performance and the overall health of the state's economy.

The CHA proposal replaces the income tax rates on high-income earners with a different set of tax rates and would make those rates permanent. The revenues would then fund three special funds dedicated to healthcare, childcare, and K-14 education. A fiscal analysis by the LAO is still pending.

Recognizing the potential for multiple Proposition 30 extension measures on the November 2016 ballot, along with proposed \$2 per pack cigarette tax that is being actively considered, the proponents of both initiatives have been working together to reconcile their competing measures.

Word came on Wednesday that both groups, along with the Service Employees International Union and the California Medical Association, had reached a deal on a proposal to extend Proposition 30.

No details have been announced on what the deal is or how a new proposal to extend Proposition 30 would be crafted. What is known is that it would need to move fairly quickly through the initiative process in order to qualify for the November 2016 statewide election. The deadline to qualify a measure for the next statewide general election is June 30, 2016.

Discussions of an agreement between the proponents on Proposition 30 extension harkens back memories of 2011, when multiple initiatives to increase revenues for public education were moving through the initiative process. In late 2011, there were three competing proposals—a sales and income tax increase proposal by Governor Jerry Brown (2012’s Proposition 30) and supported by the CTA, another income tax proposal championed by Molly Munger (2012’s Proposition 38), and an oil severance tax proposal pursued by the community colleges.

The oil severance tax proposal was eventually dropped, with the community colleges putting their support behind Proposition 30. However, an aggressive campaign between proponents of Propositions 30 and 38 made passage unlikely for both measures. During the final weeks of the campaign though, the tide turned and Proposition 30 passed with 55% support.

Nancy LaCasse
Robert Miyashiro

Note: Generally, lower risk means a reduced rate of return on investments.

California Teachers' Pension Plan Reduces Investment Risk

By Dale Kasler
The Sacramento Bee
November 5, 2015

CalSTRS has taken the first big step toward reducing risk in its portfolio by adopting a “risk mitigation strategy” that will devote a portion of its assets to safer investments.

The move by the teachers pension fund comes as California’s largest public pension fund, CalPERS, considers its own plan to lower its risk profile. Both pension funds are wrestling with long-term funding deficits and earned returns of less than 5 percent each in the most recent fiscal year. At the same time, they’re determined to minimize the fallout from a market meltdown like they experienced in 2008.

CalSTRS’ investment committee approved the new guidelines at its meeting Wednesday. Because the investment panel is a “committee of the whole,” including all of the members of the pension fund’s governing board, there’s no need for the full board to vote on it.

The committee voted to shift 9 percent of CalSTRS’ total fund toward lower-risk investments such as stable, long-term Treasury securities, and away from more volatile investments such as stocks. With the CalSTRS portfolio pegged at \$181.3 billion as of the end of September, that would represent about \$16.3 billion being moved.

In a down market, the move would reduce CalSTRS’ losses by an estimated \$2.5 billion, according to a staff report submitted to the investment committee. But the shift would cost CalSTRS money in good years because profits would be reduced.

“You’re sacrificing a little bit of performance in up markets for protection in down markets,” said Ricardo Duran, spokesman for the California State Teachers’ Retirement System.

CalSTRS and other public pensions are sensitive about lowering risk because it generally means lower returns, potentially putting more of a burden on taxpayers to fund employee retirements. As it is, the Legislature last year OK’d significant increases in pension contributions to CalSTRS from the state, school districts and teachers in order to gradually erase a \$70 billion long-term funding gap.

But after losing billions during the 2008 market crash and struggling ever since, CalSTRS decided it was time to reduce volatility.

CalSTRS won’t decide until February what sort of investments will go into the 9 percent risk mitigation segment of its portfolio, and it will probably take years to complete the shift.

“We try to make our shifts on an opportunistic basis, as opportunities pop up,” Duran said.

The California Public Employees’ Retirement System, or CalPERS, is contemplating a plan to reduce its discount rate whenever it has an exceptionally strong year, on the theory that good years are often followed

by bad years. Lowering the discount rate, which is currently 7.5 percent, would steer CalPERS toward a more conservative portfolio. The discount rate serves as a kind of official forecast of annual returns.

Gov. Jerry Brown's administration has urged CalPERS to reduce risk more quickly by cutting the fund's discount rate to 6.5 percent in five years. The CalPERS board is expected to vote on the strategy later this month or in December.

Note: Normally, lawsuits such as these take years to shake out.

Settlement Seeks to Keep High School Students Out of 'Fake' Classes

By Joy Resmovits
Los Angeles Times
November 5, 2015

Jason Magaña always wanted to go to college to become an engineer.

But as a senior at Jefferson High School in South Los Angeles last year, he was enrolled in graphics, a class he already had passed and would not help him graduate. What he needed to graduate was economics. He also had two "home periods" that allowed him to leave the building and placed no demands on him.

Magaña was frustrated and worried about his future. He was one of several hundred students who spent days in the auditorium waiting for their schedules to be assigned following technical glitches.

Jefferson made headlines for problems with scheduling tied to L.A. Unified's flawed student data system, though many of those issues have since been fixed.

But a lawsuit settlement announced Thursday confirms what attorneys have said for over a year: Jefferson's problems were more widespread, and many students across California have missed days, weeks or months of learning time because they were sitting in courses without academic content or merely let out early.

Students in six schools in Oakland, Compton and Los Angeles that are predominantly low-income and minority were taking these types of classes. The schools are Castlemont High School and Fremont High School in the Oakland Unified School District; John C. Fremont High, Thomas B. Jefferson High School and Susan Miller Dorsey High School in the Los Angeles Unified School District; and Compton High School in the Compton Unified School District.

"Generally, students started school at the same time, and the bell to end rang at approximately the same time," said Mark Rosenbaum, the lead counsel for the plaintiffs and director of Public Counsel Opportunity Under Law. "What was happening behind closed doors was very different depending on ZIP code."

On Thursday, the state Board of Education voted to approve a settlement in the case of Cruz v. California filed in Alameda County Superior Court. According to the settlement, the state Department of Education will update the online reporting system to include codes for "course periods without educational content" and notify districts of the change.

After schools send their course enrollment data to the state for the next two school years, the education department will have 45 days to give the plaintiffs a summary of the number of students in the six named high schools who have enrolled in or completed courses with no academic content.

The settlement also requires that the state provide technical help to the districts as they work to get rid of these courses. It creates a process for the state to investigate a school where a student is assigned to a troublesome course this spring. The settlement, which becomes final when approved by a superior court judge, also states that the education department will pay \$400,000 in legal fees to the plaintiffs.

State Supt. of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson said in a statement that the settlement “reaffirms my commitment and the California Department of Education’s commitment to help identify and coordinate local resources for districts with significant problems scheduling students.”

These schools have greater responsibilities than others in the state, but a bill signed by Gov. Jerry Brown last month, AB 1012, seeks to ameliorate the problem in all California schools.

Under the law, high schools will be barred from assigning students to “any course period without educational content” for more than a week each semester; they can’t reenroll students in classes they’ve already passed; and any noncompliance will be subject to a complaint process.

The case was litigated by Public Counsel, the ACLU of Southern California and others; it was filed in May 2014. The attorneys investigated the schools in question and found that students were routinely spending periods in classes with no academic content.

In schools that had low proficiency rates on state tests and served disadvantaged students, they found students had less learning time. Students were enrolled in classes referred to as “service courses,” but students weren’t learning anything.

Rosenbaum called them “sham periods,” and the students reported spending those periods watering plants, taking out the garbage, sorting faculty mail and making coffee. Some students assigned to “home courses” left school as early as 11:20 a.m.

Last October, the plaintiffs received a temporary restraining order that required immediate intervention at Jefferson and reaffirmed that the state is responsible for ensuring that California students are actually being taught in class.

The lawyers proceeded with the goal of taking the case to trial. Experts consulted for the case told them that they had never heard of these classes.

“I’ve seen study halls that are meaningless before, kids who should be getting something academically,” said Pedro Noguera, a professor at UCLA’s education school. “But I hadn’t seen such an egregious case where kids are used as help in the classroom.”

ACLU Southern California’s advocacy director David Sapp said as the case was unfolding, state Assemblyman Reggie Jones-Sawyer (D-South Los Angeles) approached the plaintiffs to ask about how he could help his constituents. He drafted the bill that passed.

While Magaña ultimately graduated, the effects of the problem continue: He's a student at Sacramento State and in his engineering class, he said, "Most of the students in there already have the skills and knew what the class was going to be like," he said. "I don't."

Thursday's settlement, he said, "will help my school."

Note: Speaker-elect Rendon could be the longest-serving speaker since the early 1990s.

As Next Assembly Speaker, Academic Late-Bloomer Anthony Rendon Aims To Focus on Education

By George Skelton
Capitol Journal
November 2, 2015

Your kid's doing cruddy in school? Don't fret. He could rise to the top of his field and land one of the state's most powerful jobs.

Like Assemblyman Anthony Rendon of Lakewood, who has been chosen by fellow Democrats to be the next house speaker.

But you could have fooled his teachers.

"I was a terrible high school student," Rendon, 47, told me. "My grade-point at one time was 0.83."

How, I asked, could it be so low — essentially failing?

"I don't know that I had tremendous intellectual curiosity back then," he answers. "I didn't know a lot of people who went to college. I never thought about it. I wasn't sure what it was all about."

Rendon attended California High School in Whittier. His dad labored for a mobile home outfit while also holding part-time jobs. His mom was a teacher's aide at a Catholic school.

After high school, Rendon worked the graveyard shift loading trucks at a warehouse "for lousy pay," he says. "People didn't get treated real well."

Every morning, he'd ride a bus home that stopped at Cerritos Community College. "Kids were getting off excited while I was tired and falling asleep," he says.

Why not get off himself, he decided. And the rest is history. After Cerritos, he earned bachelor's and master's degrees at Cal State Fullerton, then a doctorate in political science at UC Riverside.

I love that story.

First, here's a politician who's not afraid to admit he got crappy grades.

Second, there's a lesson here: It's possible to point your life in a better direction with self-motivation and effort.

Third, legislators are supposed to be representative of the people who elect them. Many people barely make it in school. Not everyone is college bound. Democracy works best when lawmakers can relate to all types.

"I was a product of California's low-cost higher education," Rendon reminds. At least it used to be low-cost. In recent years, tuition has soared. "I don't know that I would have thought of college as an option today."

His solution: more state money for universities, but tie it to lower tuition.

Rendon's No. 1 policy priority, naturally, is education. Specifically, it's early childhood education. Before he was a politician, Rendon headed a nonprofit child-services organization. He ran for the Assembly, he says, because Sacramento kept chopping childhood development funding.

"We've restored less than 20% of what was cut from early childhood education," he estimates.

Rendon also has an environmental agenda. He once headed the California League of Conservation Voters. He's especially into "environmental justice" — reducing the impact of unhealthy air and water pollution on working-class communities. It's a problem his district — including Bell, Maywood and South Gate — shares with the San Joaquin Valley.

Rendon, however, earned his stripes in the Legislature — and support for speaker — by helping to broker last year's \$7.5-billion water bond that passed the Legislature and the electorate overwhelmingly.

As chairman of the Assembly water committee, he held 16 public hearings all over the state, including several in the parched San Joaquin Valley, listening to everyone and upsetting virtually no one.

The compromise provided \$2.7 billion for potential dam construction demanded by valley farmers. And it satisfied environmentalists by not helping Gov. Jerry Brown build his proposed costly, colossal twin tunnels under the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta.

"These large conveyance projects — tunnels included — are exceptionally expensive," Rendon says. "We get a bigger bang for the buck from local projects."

Rendon leans left. "We need to be focused on poverty and income inequality," he asserts.

He supports Brown's \$68-billion bullet train obsession. He also advocates extending the governor's soak-the-rich temporary tax hike when it expires in 2018.

But he earned the trust of influential moderate Democrats — and many of their votes for speaker — with his evenhandedness on the water bond.

How much his views on issues will matter once he becomes speaker — in February or March — is an open question. It depends on whether he chooses to lead, or can. Legendary Speaker Willie Brown famously said the job was like trying to herd cats.

Rendon is very likable — gregarious but not a showboat.

First elected in 2012, he ran for speaker last year and lost to Assemblywoman Toni Atkins (D-San Diego). But she's termed out next year and has been preparing to run against Democratic Sen. Marty Block of San Diego. That raised eyebrows. Legislators want leaders who can help them get reelected, not be focused on their own race.

If not herded, cats can eat a lame duck alive. Just before the legislative session ended, Democrats began tossing Atkins aside and anointed Rendon.

Because a new term-limits law will allow him to be an assemblyman for 12 years, there has been speculation that Rendon could hold the top job through 2024. Don't bet on it. Only four speakers in history have lasted more than five years.

Lawmakers get antsy to move up the ladder and throw leaders off their perch. Retaining power requires skillful compromising combined with meaningful rewards and punishment — dexterity honed only on the job.

Meanwhile, symptomatic of California's changing demography, both legislative houses for the first time will be led by Latinos.

Senate leader Kevin de León (D-Los Angeles) was raised in poverty by an immigrant house cleaner with a third-grade education. Rendon's grandparents were Mexican immigrants. Their grandson nearly flunked school.

It's a nice America Dream story in California's Capitol.



**SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD COMMUNICATION**

BC NO: S-92

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM - <i>(Check a Box)</i>	No:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Yes:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Date: 11/6/2015
Approved by: José L. Banda, Superintendent						
To the Members of the Board of Education						
Prepared by: José L. Banda, Superintendent					Contact Email: superintendent@scusd.edu	
Subject: TRIP TO CHINA – NOVEMBER 9 – 18, 2015						

I leave for my College Board China trip on Monday, November 9 and return on Wednesday, November 18. In this communication I have included additional information on my trip so the Board members know what I will be doing during the time I am over there. I will be traveling with a fairly large number of delegates from several states. The attached rosters will give you a flavor for the delegates who will be attending on this trip. I was invited and accepted to serve as the group leader for our team. It is a custom in China to have a delegate represent our group as “group leader” during formal events when visiting schools in China. The responsibilities are primarily introductions, and accepting and offering College Board-arranged group gifts on behalf of the group during formal events when visiting schools in China.

Group Rosters - Our group includes delegates from Arizona, California, Oregon and Washington, and we will have a wonderful opportunity to share ideas and experiences with one another during the trip.

Nga-Chi Lai, Coordinator of Chinese Language and Culture Initiatives for the College Board will be our host and will be traveling around Beijing and to Fujian with us during the upcoming 2015 Chinese Bridge Delegation. She will be serving as the College Board coordinator for our group, and will be joined by two other *College Board colleagues, Frank Ashley and Dorothy Sexton*. Nga-Chi has been with the College Board since 2012 working to promote the study of Chinese language and culture. Her work mainly focuses on providing support to the Guest Teacher and Trainee Program and the AP® International Leadership Program. Before joining the College Board, Nga-Chi taught ESL to elementary and secondary students in Beijing, China and served as a resident director for American high school students studying in China.

Frank Ashley, Senior Vice President of Membership and Higher Education Engagement - *By mobilizing the College Board’s 6,000-plus member institutions, Frank plays an integral role in advancing the College Board’s mission to deliver rigorous courses, expand access to rigor, measure rigor through assessments and attain rigor through efforts in the higher education sector. Frank’s 30-plus years in education span across both K–12 and higher education. He began his career as a general science teacher and coach, and then served in a range of positions at Texas A&M University, including director of admissions and dean of the College of Education and Human Services. Within the Texas A&M University System, Frank served as vice chancellor of academic affairs and vice chancellor of recruitment and diversity.*

Dorothy Sexton, Vice President, Governance, and Secretary of the Corporation - As vice president for governance and secretary of the College Board, Dorothy is responsible for all matters related to the Board of Trustees and governance of the College Board, including the organization's three national assemblies. Prior to her current role, Dorothy served in several capacities, including director of financial aid services for the Western Region and director of the College Scholarship Service.

I will be using this opportunity to research how we might be able to recruit Chinese-speaking teachers for our Mandarin Immersion programs directly from China. I will explore possibilities for building a "pipeline" that may provide us the necessary teachers in the years to come as our Chinese language-immersion programs grow and expand.

Lastly I worked closely with Lisa Allen all week to review items for the following week to assure all district matters of great importance will be addressed and move forward to completion in my absence. While I will have limited ability to communicate while in China, I will arrange for a direct line with Lisa and President Darrel Woo should an emergency arise that requires my participation or input.

I thank the board for the opportunity to visit China on this educational trip and learn more about their school systems and practices. I will be sure to glean anything of significance, in either instruction, practices or systems that would benefit or enhance our school district.

Fujian A

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JFK	Fujian A	Mrs.	Nga-Chi	Lai	Coordinator, Chinese Lang. & Culture	College Board, NYO		

Fujian B

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Own T	Fujian B	Mr.	Frank	Ashley	Senior Vice President, Membership	College Board, WRO		
JFK	Fujian B	Mrs.	Nga-Chi	Lai	Coordinator, Chinese Lang. & Culture	College Board, NYO		



**SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD COMMUNICATION**

BC NO: S-93

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM - <i>(Check a Box)</i>	No:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Yes:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Date: 11/6/2015
Approved by: José L. Banda, Superintendent						
To the Members of the Board of Education						
Prepared by: José L. Banda, Superintendent					Contact Email: superintendent@scusd.edu	
Subject: CONFERENCES ATTENDED IN OCTOBER 2015						

I recently attended two national conferences as both an active member and participant. The conferences attended were The Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS) and the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS).

CGCS – I currently serve on the executive committee for the Council of the Great City Schools. CGCS is comprised of 67 of the largest urban school districts across the country. Member districts must be of a certain size (35,000+ students) and demographics to become a member. Becoming a member district is by invite only with the final selection and approval made by the executive board members.

Council of the Great City Schools believes that it is the special mission of America’s urban public schools to educate the nation’s most diverse student body to the highest academic standards and prepare them to contribute to our democracy and the global community.

The Council’s vision is that urban public schools exist to teach students to the highest standards of educational excellence. As the primary American institution responsible for weaving the strands of our society into a cohesive fabric, we — the leaders of America’s Great City Schools — see a future where the nation cares for all children, expects their best, appreciates their diversity, invests in their futures, and welcomes their participation in the American dream. If you would like more information about this organization, the website is www.cgcs.org.

ALAS – I also serve on the Board of Directors and recently elected as Treasurer for the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS). ALAS’s mission and focus is to provide leadership at the national level that assures every school in America effectively serves the educational needs of all students with an emphasis on Latino Youth by building capacity, promoting best practices, and transforming educational institutions.

By the year 2025, Latino children will make up 25 percent of the school-age population. In the nation’s largest states - California, Texas, Florida and New York – Latinos already have reached that level. Addressing the needs of the fastest growing community in the United States - the Latino community - is vital to our national interest.

My participation on these organization boards provides great opportunities for my leadership development and valuable national exposure for Sacramento City Unified School District. At the annual CGCS conference in Long Beach we had three presentations put on by SCUSD staff that were superb and received a number of positive reviews and compliments from those in attendance.

At the ALAS conference in Albuquerque I presented one of the workshops on governance and emceed one of the conference programs. Both of these organizations provide opportunities to network with educators from across the country and to share best practices for educating our nation’s urban youth. If you would like more information about this organization, the website is www.alasedu.org.