

**NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**Waiting for Jerry Brown

On December 6, Governor Schwarzenegger called a Special Session of the Legislature to address the state budget crisis. He recommended \$10 billion in budget “solutions, none of which included mid-year cuts to K-12 education. Although this might be considered “good news”, the reality is that the Legislature is not going to respond to these recommendations. Instead, all eyes are on Governor-elect Jerry Brown.

On January 10, the new Governor will release his proposed budget for 2011-12. Until then, school leaders will remain in limbo—not having any specific proposals upon which to plan, but knowing that the state is facing a severe budget crisis. The Governor-elect is holding a series of budget summits in an attempt to build a common understanding of the budget problems. Out of those discussions are few hints are beginning to emerge:

1. Schools should expect the proposed budget will include cuts to K-12 education. In fact, Brown has been quoted repeatedly as saying that he will not support budget gimmicks and that the “day of reckoning” has come. With regard to his budget proposal, Brown advised people to “sit down when you read it”.
2. The Governor-elect is talking about placing a measure on the ballot in June or July that would include revenues—potentially continuing the temporary tax increases that were previously approved by the voters.
3. The Governor-elect thinks a budget should be approved by early March, so voters know the options before them.
4. Placing a measure on the ballot will require Republican votes in the Legislature, because a two-thirds vote is required. Obtaining some Republican support appears to be a high priority for Governor-elect Brown.

On education policy, the Governor-elect has made it clear he does intend to eliminate the position of Secretary for Education. His principal education policy advisor so far appears to be Professor Mike Kirst from Stanford. In a recent press report, Kirst was quoted as saying that California needs to take another look at the two consortia that are building assessment systems around the common core standards. Kirst was quoted as saying: “This certainly ought to be examined again with a new cast of players. It ought to be done quickly too, because the work of both assessment groups is ramping up—whatever we do should be fairly soon.”

School Accountability Report Card

Substantial confusion regarding the School Accountability Report Card (SARC) has resulted from the state budget cuts and the inability of the Department of Education to provide the same level of support for SARC preparation as in the past. The Department of Education has indicated it will be open to expedited waivers to extend the February 1 deadline to post the report cards. The Department has posted additional information on its website under “Hot Topics” at:

[www.cde.ca.gov/re/lr/wr/hottopics.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/lr/wr/hottopics.asp)

### First “Parent Trigger” Petition

Last year’s legislation that created the controversial “Open Enrollment” Act also included provisions to allow parents to petition to have their schools dramatically restructured. That section of the bill (SB 4 of the 5<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Session) received less publicity, but that is rapidly changing as the first such petition is being submitted in Compton. According to reports in the Los Angeles Times, a petition signed by 61% of the parents at McKinley Elementary School would require Compton Unified to bring in a charter company to run the school. That same article indicated the parent recruitment effort “included an unannounced recent visit and pep talk for McKinley parents from Michelle Rhee, the former Washington, D.C., schools chancellor.”