SCHOOLS CHIEF JACK O’CONNELL TO CONVENE P-16 COUNCILS TO IMPROVE PRESCHOOL THROUGH COLLEGE EDUCATION

Workgroups to Examine Ways to Raise Student Achievement

SACRAMENTO – State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O’Connell today announced that he is establishing a new statewide council to better coordinate and integrate education in California, from preschool through college.

The Superintendent’s California P-16 Council will be charged with examining ways to improve student achievement at all levels and link pre-school, elementary, middle, high school, and higher education to create a comprehensive, integrated system of student learning. Similar councils and the work they do have successfully improved achievement in nineteen other states.

“Providing all of California’s children with the academic foundation they need to navigate tomorrow’s world is the basis for the work of this council. California students should have an enriching educational experience from the time they enter preschool through their college or vocational education careers,” O’Connell said. “Preschool through college education should be viewed as a continuum. By improving the linkages between preschool, elementary, junior high, high school, and college we can improve our schools at every level and better meet our students’ needs. I will appoint education experts, teachers, administrators, parents, business leaders and students to serve on the statewide council as well as several supporting regional councils and ask them to develop a strategic framework for aligning policies, resources, and strategies across all sectors of California’s educational system.”

The goals of the Superintendent’s California P-16 Council are to:

1.) Improve student achievement at all levels and eliminate the achievement gap.
2.) Link all education levels, pre-school, elementary, middle, high school, and higher
education, to create a comprehensive, seamless system of student learning.

3.) Ensure that all students have access to caring, and qualified teachers.

4.) Increase public awareness of the link between an educated citizenry and a healthy economy.

O'Connell will ask the Council to provide recommendations in areas that include: teaching and learning, leadership and governance; early learning and school readiness; the achievement gap; college and work force success; dropout prevention; higher education and continued learning; communication; teacher and administrator quality/professional learning; and outreach and counseling.

O'Connell will also work to ensure that regional P–16 Councils are established.

"Having councils at the statewide and regional level will create a strong two-way communication pipeline and ensure that recommendations that come forth are applicable and relevant in the real world," he said.

Catherine Atkin, president of Preschool California, said, "Preschool provides our best opportunity to ensure that all California children have the chance to do their best in school and in life. The P-16 Councils will be a welcome forum to examine how preschool and all other levels of education can work together to increase student success. We applaud Superintendent O'Connell's recognition of preschool's critical early role and it's effect on all the education that follows."

"Partnerships are key to educational success at all levels," said California State University Chancellor Charles B. Reed. "The earlier we all can help students succeed, the better for student achievement in the long run, and the better chance of students obtaining their college degrees. This new P-16 Council is a worthy undertaking, and the CSU is a strong and willing partner with Superintendent O'Connell."

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