

Chapter 6: California

Introduction

The previous five chapters have shown that the Business Roundtable's Educational Task Force has created consensus within the corporate community on the goals, strategy, and tactics of the modern educational reform movement. The broad framework of this reform effort is embodied in the 1995 BRT document *Nine Essential Components of a Successful Education System*.

The goals of the BRT's systemic reform efforts embrace both the structure and the outcomes of the nation's public school system. The structure of the system is to be transformed to resemble the structures of the "New Economy": policy decisions are to be made by an elite at the top and implemented locally. Systemic educational reformers referred to this as Total Quality Management in the 1980s and now refer to it (ironically) as "local control." The outcomes sought by the BRT's reform efforts include the transformation of scholarship into successful test-taking, and the production of high school graduates who are adept at completing assigned tasks but who are not accustomed to identifying and dealing with personal or social problems.

For legal and practical reasons, the education task force of the BRT has provided leadership and support to each state's Business Roundtable organization. The national organization has charged each state organization with implementing the *Nine Essential Components*. The national and the state Business Roundtable organizations have managed to create interlocking networks of both private and public organizations that have seized control of the terms of the debate over the schools. This has been crucial to the elimination of public debate over the goals of education. What public debate exists is focused solely on the means to achieve ends defined by each state's academic standards commissions.

State control of educational policy has seriously undermined the influence of local communities over the last twenty years. Local influence on educational policy is confined to whatever pressure local community groups can put on district school boards. The emerging new structures and outcomes of the public school system have permitted the re-emergence of racism in education. Racism has been used to "divide and conquer" those who might question the reform movement. Prevailing euphemisms such as "equity and excellence" and "high standards for all" simultaneously drive a political wedge between white teachers and minority parents (preventing their effective opposition to systemic reform) and justify the resegregation of U.S. schools (perpetuating the privilege and the ignorance upon which racism thrives).

In this and in the final two chapters, I offer an example of how the Business Roundtable has effectively eliminated community influence in the formulation of educational policy. To do this I examine the history of high-stakes testing, both in California state legislation and in the history of school reconstitution in San Francisco. In this chapter, I demonstrate how the California Business Roundtable influenced the development of state educational policy in California. In the next chapter

I show how these reforms dictated the direction of district policy in San Francisco, and how this led to the reduction of community influence on district policy. In the final chapter, I present a case study that reveals how state and district policy combined to prevent the community from having an influence on teaching and learning at Mission High School in San Francisco.

State Control of Educational Policy

In 1976, the California Business Roundtable (CBR) was established in San Francisco. At the time, the state Chamber of Commerce, according to CBR president Bill Hauck, was not “relevant in the lobbying process” in the state capital. A handful of CEOs wished to have an organization that was made up only of CEOs and would pressure the state chamber to become more influential.¹ The purpose of the CBR has consistently been to lobby state legislators, departmental administrators, and the governor in the interest of its members on a wide array of topics. Only after 1978, however, did it make sense to lobby at the state level for educational reform. State statutes in 1965 had established some state regulation over textbooks and school personnel but local school boards had “broad authority over most aspects of education and most funding was derived through local property taxes” (Warren, 1999; p. 7).

The California Supreme Court began the process of shifting funding authority to the state with *Serrano v. Priest* (1971), which prohibited differences in school funding based on differences in school districts’ abilities to levy local property taxes. This led to the passage of SB 90 in 1972. Already looking for a way to reduce property taxes on farmers and businesses, the legislature chose a method that would also “put the state in compliance with Serrano. This was done by shifting some of the burden of school finance from local to state revenue sources” so that “low-wealth districts” ended up receiving the largest increase in state aid (Sonstelie, 2000, p. 40). The Los Angeles Superior Court decided that SB 90 would not equalize funding quickly enough to comply with *Serrano v. Priest* but the decision was confirmed by the state’s Supreme Court in 1976. The State Assembly passed AB 65 in 1977 to comply with the second Serrano decision. But less than a month before AB 65 was to go into effect, the voters passed Proposition 13 which essentially “turned the local property tax into a statewide tax” (Sonstelie, 2000; p. 50). Several bills were passed following the adoption of Prop 13 that developed formulas for the distribution of state aid to schools. The Serrano plaintiffs were motivated by the desire to equalize funding among districts, yet the legislation that was passed in compliance with their victory in the court did not equalize funding as much as it provided property tax relief to businesses and farmers and moved de facto school policy making to the state level.²

The shift in funding from the local to the state level was accompanied by an increase in state regulation over education. In 1976, the state mandated that starting in 1981 high school graduates would have to be able to pass a “competency test” in order to graduate. Anticipating implementation of the new law, various constituencies began expressing concerns. Both the state’s testing director and

representatives of the Southeast Legal Aid Center argued that student test scores should not be used as a condition of graduation because it penalized those students whose parents were not involved in their education. The Legal Aid lawyers further argued that since the tests would not be the same from district to district, students who moved from one district to another would be discriminated against. The lawyers from the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund expressed concern about using test scores to penalize students, suggesting instead that the district or individual school should face sanctions if a student did poorly on a competency test (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 2/2/81).³

After the first year of the testss implementation, the state reported that the test prevented only 1 percent of high school seniors from graduating. Wilson Riles, California's State Superintendent of Public Instruction, argued that this proved the school system was successfully teaching students the basic skills. U.S. Secretary of Education, Terrence Bell, however, pointed out that such a result indicated "lax standards" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 2/24/82). In 1982, Superintendent Riles faced re-election. While Riles expressed concern over the increasing centralization of educational authority in the state capitol (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 9/17/82), his challenger, Bill Honig, was calling for more state action. Honig campaigned on a platform that called for an overhaul of the curriculum that featured a "back to basics" emphasis, a required course of study and tougher textbooks; the soliciting of money from business and universities; the retraining of teachers in history and science; a change in teacher tenure and seniority rules; the importance of merit pay; and a statewide exam that would hold schools accountable for results (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 10/30/82). Honig, who spent twice as much money campaigning as Riles, won the state school superintendency in the fall fo 1982. An editorial noted with satisfaction that Honig's ability to win was based on his ability "to convince voters, among them a large number of business leaders, that he would be able to upgrade the schools, restoring a program of 'high standards, tough academic requirements, and discipline'" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 3/20/83).

SB 813

After the election of Honig, the debate over the direction of educational reform continued in the state legislature, culminating in the passage of SB 813 in 1983. This legislation was one of the most comprehensive education bills in the state's history. Its more than eighty provisions attempted to address all aspects of schooling from financial incentives/support to curricular design. During the lobbying and negotiation period, the CBR attempted to influence what the final provisions would prescribe. To do this, the California Business Roundtable had formed "working committees [in 1982] . . . to make CBR's views on educational reform known to the public, the legislature, the governor, and education interest groups" (Berman, 1983; p. 1).⁴ In this way, in 1983 CBR quietly "played a critical role in the shaping and passage of SB 813 . . . the first step toward bringing California students up to adequate levels of performance" (Berman , 1983; p. 11). From 1983 to 1998, the CBR developed and refined its educational agenda so that it would be consistent with the

national BRT's *Nine Essential Components*⁵ while at the same time be responsive to the more specific concerns of the state's economic needs as defined by prominent business leaders in California.

In spite of CBR's "critical role" in the formation of SB 813, not all of their recommendations were written into the law. In evaluating the degree of CBR's lobbying success, Berman (1983) noted that 16 out of the 25 agenda items had been incorporated into the new education statute, 4 had been adopted in modified form, and 5 had been rejected. In fact, there was a significant disconnect between the stated purpose of the legislation and the "key reforms" that were being driven by the CBR. The statute identified eight purposes which the 80+ provisions of SB 813 were intended to promote. These purposes reflected a concern not only for academic and career goals but also for social and moral goals for individuals and for the larger society. The legislation identified "positive attitudes" and "high morale," "sense of respect for self and others, personal and social responsibility" as well as career preparation and "academic proficiency" as the purpose of K–12 education (California, 1983; chapter 498, p. 2034). In contrast to the legislation's multiple purposes, the CBR seemed concerned only with "student performance". In writing for the CBR, Berman concluded:

The greatest strength of SB 813 is its *tightening of student standards*. These measures are fundamental to any reform effort, and are carefully written in the legislation. The new law has also taken important first steps to attract more high-quality teachers into the profession, and has made useful changes in personnel management. While the latter reforms are less likely to have a direct impact on student performance, they may make teachers and administrators *more accountable for their performance*. . . . All of the *key reforms* in SB 813 — tougher student standards, measures to attract quality teachers, the master teacher provision, improvements in personnel administration — are necessary components of any package of measures designed *to improve student performance* (Berman, 1983; p16) [my emphasis].

Berman's report categorized the statutes in SB 813 according to the CBR agenda and analyzed each category according to the criterion of whether the statute directly or indirectly had an impact upon "student performance" (those parts of SB 813 not relating to the CBR agenda are ignored in the Berman report). The report assessed those provisions relating to student discipline and attendance as "not necessarily central to improving student performance" (p. 11); provisions regarding personnel "cannot be expected to have direct, major impact on student performance" (p. 12); issues of school administration and governance "are unlikely to have a direct bearing on student performance" (p. 13); "provisions listed as improvements to existing programs are aimed at improving program efficiency, and are not directed toward improving student performance per se" (p. 15). What will have a "high impact on student performance," the report assured the CBR, were "new graduation requirements, mandatory local curricula reassessments, and a longer school day and year." Interestingly, the CBR proposals that indicated a desire to establish standards, assessment, and accountability — the triumvirate of the current high-stakes testing agenda — while adopted in

the legislation, would not have a “high impact” on student performance, according to the Berman analysis. The CBR desire to “upgrade textbooks” would not raise test scores since “quality review [is] left to [the state superintendent], and is limited to courses required for graduation” (p. 4). Although the testing program was expanded by SB 813, Berman was afraid that new tests would prevent credible longitudinal comparisons (p. 4).⁶

In 1983, however, the CBR’s goal for testing was to strengthen and expand the existing program. SB 813 fulfilled that goal by adding science and social studies to the list of disciplines in which each district was to test its students (in addition to math, reading, and writing). Furthermore, the new law mandated that grades 3, 8, and 10 be tested in addition to the already required grades 6 and 12 (Berman, Appendix A, p. 2). As a foreshadowing of the future to be taken by state testing, SB 813 established the Education Improvement Incentive Program in order

to encourage improvement in the performance of all public schools by providing fiscal incentives to motivate teachers and school site administrators to work to increase school performance. . . . The legislature recognizes that recent indicators of education achievement, including the results of the California Assessment Program, show high schools to be in the greatest need of educational improvement. . . .

For this reason, the Program would be first implemented in the high schools (California, 1983; Chapter 498, p. 2132).

Those high schools that wished to participate in the program would be eligible to receive up to \$400 per pupil if their test scores improved from the previous year. The program required the State Board of Education to “develop a statewide composite rating of performance for all schools in the state” (California, 1983; Chapter 498, p. 2132). SB 813 also required the state superintendent to create an “honors exam” — the Golden State Examination Program — by 1985. By choosing to take these subject tests and achieving above a designated score, students could have a special insignia affixed to their high school diplomas. The statute “encouraged local representatives of business and industry to recognize pupils who receive an honors designation based on the Golden State Exam” (California, 1983; Chapter 498; p. 2140).

Testing and Textbooks

In the years following the passage of SB 813, several issues emerged in the public arena. One issue surrounded the role and nature of textbooks. Districts were required to spend 80 percent of their state-supplied textbook money on books approved by the state board (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 9/10/83). The CBR had wanted a new review process to make sure that “textbooks meet the state’s curriculum standards” (Berman, p. 2). Honig, perhaps stung by the lack of confidence Berman expressed in his ability to choose “tough” textbooks, began a public campaign to upgrade the quality of the textbooks that the state board allowed for district purchase. In September 1983, Honig announced that during the next six years, California school children would become good readers and lifelong book lovers as the state began to choose new textbooks for K – 8 (*San Francisco Chronicle*,

9/10/83). In early 1984, Honig spoke at a “two-day interstate consortium on instructional materials” at Florida State University. He blamed schools for not demanding that publishers market “tougher texts” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 3/20/84). As the state board of education began considering new textbook guidelines, Honig advised that such guidelines lead to the adoption of texts that are “interesting and difficult rather than easy and dull” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 6/7/84).

Honig continued to be a source of sound bites regarding state policy initiatives. Like a good politician, he stayed “on message.” Textbooks represented what was taught in the classroom; consequently, they had to meet the highest standards. When the state board of education refused to adopt any of the published textbooks made for junior high school science, Honig applauded the move arguing that it represented a “critical test of our efforts to upgrade textbook standards” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 9/13/85). Honig argued that the debate over these science textbooks was not one of creationism versus evolution but was related to the “need [for] a thorough and systematic discussion of topics” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 9/4/85). A *Chronicle* editorial applauded Honig’s position.

Honig has chosen a splendid platform – the unassailable need for “quality education.” He says, and we are pleased to hear it, that this is just the first in a series of steps needed to set higher standards for the textbook market (9/22/85).

In the summer of 1987, the state board of education adopted a 263-page history and social science framework which called for more religion and more “specific facts” in history books at all levels. Honig agreed that these new guidelines would lead to the adoption of textbooks that would “stress ethics, honest and moral values” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 7/11/87). A year later, the board was still fine-tuning its textbook list by announcing that 23 books would be replaced on the state list (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 9/13/88).

The search for the perfect set of textbooks, however, seemed to be never ending. By the end of 1988, the very year Honig had promised that the selection process would have been completed and a new, challenging curriculum in the form of tough textbooks would be in the classrooms, controversy continued to roil around the decision process. Honig, no longer the lead spokesperson for board policy decisions, called for an investigation of the state board to discover if the textbook selection process was unduly influenced by lobbyists hired by the publishers. The only African American on the board, Jim Robinson, argued that the new textbooks were too much like the old textbooks and had done nothing to improve the academic achievement of minorities (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 10/15/88). Berman’s evaluation in 1983, that increased state control over textbook selection would have little impact, seemed prophetic.

The push for tougher textbooks was intended to raise student achievement. But in the spring of 1984, the *Chronicle* reported that a 5-point drop in the average California Assessment of Progress (CAP) score had put state officials “on the defensive” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 4/29/84). When the 1984 state SAT verbal scores were reported as below the national average, Honig said he was “extremely concerned” but explained that the scores were a result “of the cumulative effect [during

the 1960s and 1970s] of lower standards and an insufficiently demanding curriculum” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 9/18/84). That fall, the California exam was correlated with the commercially produced, nationally norm-referenced Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) in order to create national comparisons. Some of the California scores were above and some were below the national median. Honig concluded that California was, nonetheless, “moving in the right direction” (*San Francisco Chronicle* 11/17/84).

The “right direction,” apparently, was increased testing. In 1985, the eighth grade CAP history/social science test was expanded to test “12 critical thinking skills.” Honig explained that the increasingly sophisticated information and service industries needed employees who were capable of abstract thought and logical reasoning. The new test questions would prod teachers who had “succumbed to academic self-indulgence” during the “laid back 70s” to once again teach students to be “critical thinkers” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 4/1/85). A year later Honig complained that, in spite of test-score gains from the previous year, California students still ranked below the national average (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 4/16/86). Honig visited the superintendents of “poor performing districts” and was assured that they were making the necessary “personnel and curriculum changes” that would lead to increased test scores (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 6/20/86). Honig was convinced that rising test scores were evidence that “teachers were no longer concentrating on basic skills but on more sophisticated literature and reading programs,” programs that emphasized “comprehension and setting high standards” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 9/3/86).

But in March of 1987, test score interpretation began to be influenced by the impending budget battle. Honig argued that the 1983 reforms had been working because test scores were going up and that, therefore, the schools deserved more money to keep the reforms going. Governor Deukmejian, however, interpreted the test scores differently. He argued that test scores were not enough to gauge progress. The governor pointed to the high dropout rates and the number of students not going to college as evidence that pouring money into schools didn’t make them better (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 3/17/87). But the editorial staff of the *Chronicle*, supported Honig’s interpretation:

CAP scores prove that the return of public schools to academic basics is working. As Honig says, the scores reflect the impact of SB 813 which directed the schools back to educational basics and away from the free-swinging and often undisciplined bad habits of the 1960s. Teaching test-taking skills is not an “end run” around knowledge; rather it is an important preparation for the real world (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 4/23/87).

Later that fall, Honig echoed such concerns about “real world” preparation. While expressing pleasure with the increasing test scores, an article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* cautioned that “only 40 percent of the state’s students reach ‘adept’ or twelfth grade reading levels. This means that [only 40 percent] can read the technical material required for many jobs and training programs. California must double the number of students achieving this higher level of literacy if the state hopes to remain competitive in the national world economies” (11/17/87).⁷

New Direction of Reform

In spite of criticisms and concessions that test scores alone could not measure the success of SB 813 and that textbook selection was no silver bullet of reform, state education officials argued from 1983 to 1987 as if test scores did and textbooks were. But in 1988 (the year before the national BRT devoted its entire annual meeting to developing its educational agenda), public debate over the means of educational reform was redirected in a series of published and widely reported studies. The theory of reform implicit in the 1983 legislation was challenged by these new studies. Furthermore, a new urgency or sense of crisis of legitimacy in the system was suggested by a focus on increasing dropouts and a growing “achievement gap” between whites and students of color. The Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE), a nonprofit think tank, issued a press release in February announcing its study, *Conditions of Education in California 1988*. James Guthrie (at UC Berkeley) and Michael Kirst (at Stanford) noted that schools had improved because test scores were higher and more students were taking academic courses. But more money was needed to retain these accomplishments and to address the high dropout rate (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 2/24/88). In May 1988, the Oakland-based Achievement Council issued a second report (reiterating much of its 1984 report) that condemned the growing “achievement gap” and expressed concern over increasingly higher dropout rates (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 5/27/88).

The week before the Achievement Council’s report was released, the California Business Roundtable issued a 295-page blueprint for reform in 1988, entitled *Restructuring California Education: A Design for Public Education in the Twenty-first Century* (Berman and Weiler had once again been contracted to produce the report). This report, which would be the basis for educational reform for the next fifteen years, incorporated the concerns over dropouts and test score disparities into a new theory of educational reform (one that, conveniently, would *not* need the extra funding that the PACE report called for). The Legislative Analyst’s Office noted this shift in its briefing to state legislators in 1994.

School Restructuring has become a popular theme of school reform legislation in the 1990s. . . . The reform bills of the 1980s . . . imposed “top-down” changes upon schools to centralize and standardize specific areas of their operations. The reforms of the 1980s, for instance, included requirements governing state education curricula, textbooks, graduation requirements, class sizes, length of school day and year, teacher credentialing, and funding formulas.

School restructuring is an attempt to change the very nature of schools from the “bottom up.” Restructuring of schools, as in business, focuses on assessing organization and mission with the goal of improving performance. In other words, the focus is on the student, the teacher, and the classroom.

This approach to school reform looks at decentralizing authority, decision-making and resources, and collaborating among affected groups to achieve goals. It also focuses on increasing accountability, through means such as student testing and school choice, to ensure goals are met (Conner and Melendez, 1994; p. 13).

This passage is remarkable for its confusion over the terms “bottom-up” and “top-down.” The reform bills of *both* the 1980s and the 1990s are imposing “top-down” changes in schools. The difference is only in the kinds and degree of changes being imposed. By the 1990s, as the LAO notes, state legislation is demanding structural reform as well as changes in instruction and content. The “focus” in both the 1980s and 1990s has been “on the student, the teacher and the classroom.” In the 1980s, state legislation attempted to micro-manage the students and teacher in the classroom. In the 1990s, state legislation shifted to macromanagement of the student and teacher in the classroom.

The CBR/Berman report shows that by 1988, the CBR agenda had adopted the principles of Total Quality Management (as described in Chapter 2). This would characterize both the state and national agenda for the ensuing years.⁸ “Restructuring” or “bottom-up” reform meant that the state legislature would control the goals of education while school sites would be held accountable for designing and implementing strategies by which the goals would be met. The “vision” of the CBR was explicitly articulated in its report:

The State (that is, the legislature, the State Board of Education, and the State Department of Education) would be concerned with performance, not with the education process. It would set the goals for education; develop means for measuring how well schools meet these goals; disseminate information about their performance; take a proactive role in stimulating research, development, and training; and provide an adequate level of financing. The state would work with teachers to set standards for the teaching profession and assure quality control. The state would also intervene in failing schools, and help schools to develop and become outstanding or not permit them to continue (Berman, 1988; pp. 14–15).

Perhaps the major incentive to shift from a “top-down” to a “bottom-up” approach is revealed by the report’s observation that the “financial implications of relying [on the 1983 approach] are staggering” (Berman, 1988; p. 7). Echoing the concerns of the reports by the Achievement Council and PACE, the CBR report identified the increasing high school dropout rate as potentially devastating, primarily because it was threatening to prove very expensive as well as challenging the legitimacy of the public school system. Citing a severe teacher shortage and the expectation of intensifying immigration, the report predicted “the number of dropouts and functional illiterates, as well as students lacking higher order skills, may well increase over the next decade” (p. 5). Dropouts are expensive because they “contribute to costly social problems” and “reduce the productivity of the workforce” (p. 3). The cost of “functional illiteracy” alone is “conservatively estimated” to be “over \$6 billion annually due to lost productivity” (p. 5). Part of the equation in calculating “lost productivity” costs was the amount of money businesses spent on training their workers. The CBR report noted that business spends at least \$1.2 billion annually on “basic skills” training (p. 5).

Another possible incentive driving the CBR is indicated in the report’s concession that the “achievement gap” needed to be addressed. Citing figures from the Achievement Council’s 1988 report, the CBR report warned that if the public system is not fundamentally reorganized, the

achievement gap between “white and black or Hispanic students” would only grow larger (p. 6). They believed that such a gap would be extremely expensive to close. Yet in citing the Achievement Council, the authors of the CBR report also must have been cognizant of the powerful threat to the legitimacy of the public school system that such a disparity posed.⁹ In 1984, the Achievement Council had issued a report that challenged the educational reform movement to acknowledge the disproportionate failure of poor and minority students. But it wasn’t until the 1988 reports that Honig (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 6/1/88) and the CBR publicly conceded that the achievement gap was an important issue to address.

In developing a vision of educational reform in California, the CBR report identified tracking, remedial courses, and social promotion as the causes for the achievement gap.

In comprehensive secondary schools, pupils are generally separated into academic and nonacademic tracks, with most students from poor, non-English speaking, and minority backgrounds placed in lower tracks with watered-down curricula and lower standards. Research shows that both high- and low-achievers learn less under tracking and that most dropouts occur from the lower track in the last two years of high school. Dropouts are unlikely to be substantially reduced unless tracking is eliminated. . . . Schooling typically follows a remediation pattern for “lower-achieving” students that has not been effective; instead it stigmatizes students. . . . Students are promoted on the basis of seat time, rather than on objective measures of achievement. They are not challenged to develop reasoning skills, lack adequate career counseling, and are not free to develop their special talents (p. 9).

Few would disagree with the last sentence, yet it does not necessarily follow that high-stakes testing and Total Quality Management have succeeded in creating schools in which all students are “free to develop their special talents” or reducing the “achievement gap” without increasing the number of students who have been dropped or pushed out. Yet the 1988 CBR report promised that “if implemented, the recommendations made in this report would . . . stimulate excellence in all schools for all students” (p. 13).

In the next section, I summarize the contents of the 1988 CBR report. This report represents a watershed in the thinking of California CEOs. In 1988, the state’s business leaders finally arrived at a clear understanding of how they wanted to transform the public education system. Furthermore, this 1988 report apparently functioned as a rough draft of national systemic reform. The national BRT adopted the basic principles of the CBR report when the top CEOs met in the summer of 1989. The BRT’s 1989 agenda was then disseminated in the fall of 1989 to the nation’s governors in the form of *Goals 2000*. The national blueprint was consequently used by the CBR to pursue systemic reform in California.

The Six Recommendations in the 1988 CBR Report

“Expand and Focus Schooling”

The CBR report, written by Berman and Weiler, divided their first recommendation into three parts.¹⁰ First, the report called for “developmentally appropriate” schooling for all students from the ages of four to six. “Formal academic course work” would begin at age seven. Second, from ages 7 to 16 (up to grade 10), all students would learn the same “core competencies.” No longer would there be a separate junior and senior high school program. In citing a 1983 report by the Economic Commission of the States, Berman (1988) argued that, “success in both academia and the marketplace will lie in developing the skills and attitudes associated with learning-to-learn and manipulating information, rather than absorbing specialized facts” (p. 40). In other words, whether going to work or to college when leaving high school, a student needed the same “knowledge, concepts, and skills.” These competencies would be developed by state committees and “would specify only what students should learn, not how they should learn it” (p. 52). Theoretically, this would allow “school-level authorities [to] choose the courses they require” even though 65 percent of elementary coursework and 50 percent of secondary coursework would have to be devoted to addressing the core competencies. Secondary students would be allowed “one free elective per semester” under this plan (p. 54).

High school would essentially end by tenth grade. At that point, students would begin taking “statewide exit tests” to qualify for a post-10 option.” After passing the tests, students could then “choose specialized educational programs such as college preparation, vocational or technical education, fine or performing arts, and other areas that would [be developed] to meet the needs of the twenty-first century” (p. 59). Students would be able to choose whether to take programs offered by their high school, or could attend local community colleges or Regional Occupational Centers (p. 63).

Freed from having to be comprehensive, [grade 7–10 schools would be able to] reorganize and focus on providing the curriculum, programs, and instructional services they do best. Some high schools might decide not to offer courses for the eleventh and twelfth grade so that they could direct their energies to excellence in the earlier grades in the common high school. The advantages of the post-10 option [are that students] would no longer be tracked but instead would be able to choose specialized schooling that fits their needs. . . . This practice would allow the highest achieving students to advance more rapidly [thereby saving the schools money since they] could be relieved of the pressure of offering advance material that might distort the curriculum for others (p. 63).¹¹

The authors of the 1988 CBR report expressed confidence that “expanding and focusing” would work in California because they had seen it work so well in Minnesota in 1984 and 1985. The authors did not explain what led them to conclude that such reforms were successful in Minnesota nor did they define success. Equally important, they did not indicate whether they thought the huge

differences in the history, politics, demographics, and geography between the two states might affect the transferability of Minnesota's programs to California.

“Establish Accountability Based on Performance and Choice”

One of the trademark policy goals of the Reagan revolution of the 1980s was deregulation. The CBR report believed that the school system should be deregulated in the same manner as corporations. What they meant by this was a process by which “state laws and regulations setting state graduation, course, and seat-time requirements would be phased out when the new tests and other measures are implemented.” The “new tests and other measures [would] assure that quality education is provided for all students without destroying the local autonomy essential to effective education.” There was a need for *new* tests because the testing program up until 1988 “ha[d] not been done well” (p. 71).

In 1988, there were three testing programs in existence: (1) the statewide California Assessment Program (CAP) taken by nearly all students in grades 3, 6, 8, and 12; (2) the Golden State Examinations which students could elect to take at any point; and (3) the district-administered Pupil Proficiency exams. According to the CBR report, one problem with CAP was that it did not “provide information on individual students.” Another problem with CAP was its “reliance on the multiple-choice format [which] limits the ability [of the test] to measure skills such as writing and open-ended problem solving skills that would be considered core competencies.” Both these problems “reduce the motivation to take the test seriously.” Since the Golden State exam was not taken by most students it could not be used when “assessing schools’ performance with all students.” The district tests chosen in order to comply with the Pupil Proficiency Law “set low expectations for students and teachers” and, since they were all different, they were “of little value for comparing school or student performance” (p. 74). The report dismissed the use of

commercial standardized tests for student assessment and program evaluation purposes. [These tests] differed too much across districts and are often too poorly matched to district curriculum objectives to provide useful information for the purposes of school accountability or recording student achievement. Scores on standardized tests are also subject to manipulation by teaching specific test items in advance, inflating percentile rankings so that nearly all districts are “above average” when compared to earlier national norms (p. 75).

There is terrible irony in this criticism of off-the-shelf, commercial standardized tests. When Bill Hauck said “it took ten years to implement these reforms,” he was undoubtedly referring to the passage of the 1999 Public School Accountability Act which used the Stanford 9, an off-the-shelf, commercialized standardized test, to determine which individual schools were successful and which needed to be taken over by the state because they were failing. Needless to say, critics of the PSAA have been using the very same criticisms made by the CBR in 1988 to question CBR President Hauck’s satisfaction with the implementation of the PSAA. This suggests that the CBR’s strategy is fundamentally negative. It is more interested in eliminating community influence in educational

policy rather than in providing serious leadership in the creation of quality education.

Instead of any of the existing options, the CBR report recommended the development of “exit tests and end-of-course tests as challenging subject-matter examinations, emphasizing higher-order skills in core subject areas.” The report recommended that these tests rely less on multiple choice and more on written and oral presentations or demonstrations and “be graded largely by teachers rather than computers” (p. 75). The report recommended that districts would do well to adopt portfolio assessments as well but that the state should not require it. The required tests would be administered twice, once at the end of sixth grade and once at the end of tenth grade. The report also recommended that the University of California and the California State University system use the high school exit tests as substitutes for the SAT. Students in special education would be exempt from end-of-year and exit tests. They would be assessed according to their Individual Education Plans (pp. 76–77).

The authors of the CBR report argued that performance-based assessment was the key to giving teachers the freedom they needed to be successful but still be able to hold them accountable.¹² Teachers would be “free” to choose instructional strategies but the tests would allow the state government to assess whether such strategies were successful in getting the students to meet the state’s goals. If teachers, parents and administrators did not use their freedom judiciously, the state would intervene. Intervention would ultimately be determined by a State Review Committee appointed by the State Department of Education. The Review Committee would be responsible for classifying every school in California as either “Class I (high or adequately performing), Class II (inadequately performing), or Class III (chronically low-performing or failing)” (p. 91). A state task force would be appointed by the State Department of Education to develop the criteria by which schools would be classified.¹³

Districts would be responsible for developing (with technical assistance from the state) school improvement plans for all schools in their district designated as Class II or III.

They would have to develop and implement improvement plans for failing schools. These plans might involve reallocating district resources to increase the inputs for failing schools, replacing school principals or teachers, or contracting out for educational services in those schools (p. 97).¹⁴

Parents would have the right to transfer their students out of Class III schools. The district would have to ensure there were “alternative sites” available for any transfer request. If no alternative site existed, parents (representing a minimum of 30 students) would be able to start their own school (pp. 91–93). The report envisioned private schools (both for-profit and nonprofit) playing a key role in helping the district provide “alternative sites.” The report insisted that only a “carrot and stick approach assures action” (p. 97). The carrots were technical assistance, possible extra funding, and the suspension “of certain due process and collective bargaining constraints in order to facilitate improvement plans.” The stick was parental choice. The authors believed that their accountability procedures would ensure parental and community involvement in school reform and coax the

districts' central staff to work collaboratively with individual schools' staffs.

“Establish School Autonomy, and Empower Parents, Teachers, and Principals”

The purpose of the first two recommendations was to effect what the CBR called “deregulation,” otherwise known as lean management, Total Quality Control, Total Quality Management, or site-based decision making. One of the purposes of such a reorganization was, theoretically, to eliminate the number of bureaucrats needed to insure adherence to the CBR-defined educational goals. Instead of a large bureaucracy, the CBR envisioned the objects of regulation — parents, teachers, and students — learning to regulate themselves. The third recommendation in the 1988 CBR report explained in more detail how this would work. In Orwellian language, the CBR report argued that teachers would more closely adhere to state standards if they were given more “autonomy.”

The preceding recommendations focused on reversing the increasing tendency of schooling to be overregulated and overcontrolled by the state. However, centralization is not simply a matter of state control. In many districts, the central staff exercises considerable authority that both creates excessive paperwork and limits discretion at the school level. . . . Therefore, this section proposes changes in governance that would enable schools to have more autonomy in designing and carrying out their own educational program (Berman, 1988; p. 113).¹⁵

The report recommended that to increase school autonomy, each school should have a “discretionary budget” from the state that it could spend as it wished as long as all spending was “related to the development and delivery of the instructional program” (p. 117). Each school would have a Parent-Community Governing Body and a School Coordinating Council made up of teachers. The former would have budgetary authority. The latter would be an “extension of the School Site Council operating under the [already existing] School Improvement Program” (p. 129). The Coordinating Council would serve as an advisory board to the principal, thereby providing teachers with an “opportunity to become actively involved in long-range planning, hiring prospective colleagues, development of school philosophy, setting staff development priorities, and managing school resources” (p. 129). Given that the state would remain firmly in control of setting the goals of public education, one can only presume that what the CBR authors meant by “school philosophy” was confined to textbook selection, methods, and school organization.

The authors of the report noted one source of inspiration for recommending this kind of “autonomy”:

Similar policies have been found to have significant payoff in private corporations that actively delegate authority and provide employees with the discretion and support they need to utilize their professional judgment and expertise. Firms that develop flexible, decentralized approaches to management and decision-making show higher long-term profitability and financial growth in comparison to their more hierarchically controlled counterparts (p. 130).

The report cited alternative schools as another model that illustrated the impact on student academic

success had by increased teacher participation in the decision-making process. The report acknowledged that this same research pointed out that small, personal environments were also crucial to student success and recommended that teachers be encouraged to work in teams and create “mini-schools” within schools to reproduce the alternative schools that proliferated in the 1960s and 1970s (p. 135–36).¹⁶

“Modernize Instruction”

The first three recommendations (my p. 167) were intended to “create a situation where educators can be ‘free’ to teach to a new and higher standard of excellence.” The provisions of this fourth recommendation were intended to “propose steps to enable proven effective modes of instruction to become the norm in California” (p. 139).¹⁷ Berman and Weiler argued that teachers had not chosen effective instructional strategies previously because “teachers, administrators, and even parents assume that fifteen or twenty percent of the students are A students” (p. 139). Instead, “teaching should be geared toward expecting 85 percent of students to master material sufficient to receive As” (p. 140). If teachers begin by expecting all children to learn what A students can learn, then the teachers will want to adopt “mastery”¹⁸ and “cooperative learning” techniques that will successfully teach “more” to “all students.”

Before teachers can adopt such “proven methods,” they must be freed from over-work and rigid class scheduling. This can be accomplished by training the teachers to work in a hierarchically organized team as “part of a mini-school within larger school settings.”

The team would have a Lead Teacher as supervisor, . . . regular Teachers, and Assistant Teachers. Working cooperatively with the principal and School Coordinating Council, the team could design flexible schedules. . . more efficient scheduling that would allow greater utilization of teacher expertise and produce more effective instruction. . . . The introduction of Assistant Teachers promotes flexibility by providing more adults available to oversee student learning” (p. 144).

The success of this strategy, the report writers insisted, also depended on the introduction of computer technology. Teachers needed to be trained to use computers to create efficient and flexible schedules but also to use computers directly in the instructional process.

“Strengthen the Teaching Profession”

The first four recommendations called for the “transformation” of the teaching profession. The CBR believed that further reforms were needed in order to attract and retain high-quality teachers (p. 180). This could be done, they believed, by creating a “multi-tiered teaching system with higher salary rates.” By creating “career paths” for teachers that represent significant increases in pay for each level attained, the best teachers would stay in teaching and the worst would either leave or be subject to supervision by their betters. As part of this “professionalization,” the credentialing process would be changed so it resembled the process of becoming a lawyer or doctor.

Teacher candidates would have to obtain a bachelor’s degree in a substantive major and pass

a rigorous Professional Teacher Examination that tested them in subject matter, pedagogy, and effective instructional strategies (e.g., mastery and cooperative learning, techniques for flexible scheduling, and the use of educational technologies). Candidates who pass the Professional Teacher Examination would become Intern Teachers and serve a four-year internship under the guidance of Lead Teachers. They would become Teachers and obtain tenure if they were successfully evaluated by a Teacher Assessment Panel composed of their Lead Teacher, a Teacher peer trained in evaluation, and their school principal. . . . A California Teaching Standards Board, a majority of whose members would be teachers, would be established to set professional standards for teachers, approve the Professional Teacher Exam, issue credentials and certificates, and oversee the teacher evaluation process (p. 189).

“Capitalize on Diversity”

The authors of the 1988 CBR report argued that the 1983 reforms of SB 813 were inadequate since the growth of an “educationally disadvantaged economic underclass” remained unabated. The growth of this underclass would continue to increase in the future since a major teacher shortage was expected and the majority of the student population was expected to be made up of minorities by 1990. According to the report’s authors, there were two solutions to these problems. One was to increase funding for the 1983 reforms while the other was to “restructure” the system. The report adopted the second solution citing the former as too expensive. The first five recommendations outlined what the new structure of the educational system should look like.

The last recommendation directly addressed the “challenge” of getting the 25 percent of California’s limited English proficiency students “to learn English as quickly as possible so that they can succeed as students and working adults” (p. 207). To do this, the authors of the report suggested that all students begin “bilingual education” beginning in early childhood. All students would learn another language, even those whose first language was English. The report’s authors believed this to be important since the

shift to a global economy means that more people will benefit from learning the Pacific languages including Spanish. Moreover, national reports have stressed the need for citizens to learn foreign languages early as an important step in understanding the emerging twenty-first century environment (p. 207).

In order to increase foreign and ESL language courses, a “more diverse” teaching force would have to be recruited.

Developing Consensus

The 1988 report delineated a comprehensive education reform plan. After some modifications and additions, the CBR report was adopted by the national Business Roundtable. In the summer of 1989, the BRT CEOs devoted their entire annual meeting to education (Maier, 1989). At the end of the meeting, a ten-year commitment was made to initiating educational reform, state-by-state, according

to nine principles. The chart below compares the “Six Recommendations” of the 1988 CBR report with the 1989 BRT principles of reform. The comparison reveals a high level of congruence between the two plans, suggesting that the California Business Roundtable was at the forefront of the development of the BRT’s high-stakes testing agenda.¹⁹

Table 6.1 Comparison of CBR and BRT Reform Agenda

CBR 1988 “Six Recommendations”	BRT 1989 principles of reform (summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Accountability Based on Performance and Choice (rewards and penalties for schools based on exit and end-of-course tests of “higher-order skills in core subject matter”) • Establish School Autonomy, and Empower Parents, Teachers, and Principals • Strengthen the Teaching Profession • Expand and Focus Schooling (add Pre-K and 85% of students should achieve at “A” level work on the same core curricula) • Modernize Instruction (technology, cooperative and mastery learning) • Capitalize on Diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome-based education, • Strong and complex assessments of student progress • Rewards and penalties for individual schools • Greater school-based decision-making • Emphasis on staff development • Establishment of pre-kindergarten programs • High expectations for all children • Greater use of technology in schools • Provision of social and health services

(Gelberg: 1997, p. 133)

After the fine-tuning of the 1988 report in the summer of 1989, the next step took place in the fall of 1989. At that time, President Bush and the nation’s governors participated in a national education summit. The participants wrote a report called *Goals 2000*.²⁰ These “goals” (see Table 6.2 on p. 184) represented the *means* by which the summit participants hoped to pursue their real *goal* — keeping the U.S. economy’s preeminent position in the world. The political and economic leaders of the nation believed that educational policy had an important role to play maintaining the disproportionate use of the world’s resources.²¹ One of the results of the summit was to call upon the policy makers of each state to start “the process of developing a consensus – a game plan for the 1990s – on the steps [each state] should take . . . to upgrade the schools; and to reflect on [the state’s] experience and identify those elements which would increase the success in any *forthcoming national efforts*” (Conner, 1994b; p. 130 [my emphasis]). In Chapter 4 I described how the state

BRTs in Texas, North Carolina, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Missouri adapted the national principles to their state's educational reform efforts and how those adaptations affected the educational policies of major urban districts. California had taken the lead in developing "elements which would increase the success in any *forthcoming national efforts*," but lost its leadership of educational reform to Texas and North Carolina in the beginning of the 1990s. The loss of leadership to Texas and North Carolina was not due, however, to a failure to achieve state policy consensus around the CBR agenda. That consensus was articulated in the California Education Summits of both 1989 and 1994.

Following the 1989 national education summit, California political and business leaders began to organize consensus over the goals of education so as to make future debates only over the means to achieving those goals. On December 12–13, 1989, the California Department of Education convened over 300 educators and business leaders in Sacramento. The two-day conference ended with the writing of a report, published by the California Department of Education, entitled *California Education Summit: Meeting the Challenge, The Schools Respond*. The report, perhaps hoping to avoid further controversy over the discussion of goals, fails to identify them. Instead, the authors immediately launch into defining the means — higher levels of achievement (at learning what exactly?) — by which a crisis in the legitimacy of the system might be avoided.

We started the education summit with fundamental agreement on our goals as a state and a nation. These goals, once controversial and widely debated, are now generally accepted as the foundation of our reform efforts. We began with the premise that more of our students must be educated to higher levels than before. For example, at least 25 percent of those students who initially enter high school should earn a bachelor's degree; another 24 percent should earn an associate degree from a community college; and at least 40 percent should make a successful transition from school to work, thus reducing the dropout rate to under 10 percent. (From the Executive Summary of the Summit Report, as quoted in Connor 1994a; p. 130).

Those attending the two-day conference were assigned to one of seven groups the topics of which were perceived to be "those highlighted at the national education summit." The "National Education Goals" reflected the CBR's concern over dropouts and the threats an increasingly diverse society posed to the status quo. Furthermore, *Goals 2000* offered a template, an example of the kinds of strategies that states could adopt in order to provide the economy with more and higher skilled workers as well as "responsible citizens" (a term, interestingly, never defined). This understanding is revealed in the translation of specific outcomes of the national education summit's agenda into more generic topics by the California Summit organizers (see Table 6.2 on page 133 - opposite page).

Table 6.2 Comparison of Goals 2000 with CA Education Summit Goals

1989 National Education Summit Goals 2000 (Fall)

- All students will leave grades 4, 8, 12 having demonstrated academic competency, be prepared for responsible citizenship and productive employment in our nation’s modern economy. This includes increased performance on tests in every quartile.
 - The United States will be first in the world in math and science.

 - The high school graduation rate will be 90 percent (to reduce drastically dropouts and eliminate the ethnic/racial gap in dropouts).

 - Professional development that provides teachers with the ability to teach an increasingly diverse student body a more challenging subject matter with new methods. Partnerships will be established to provide preparation programs.

 - Every school will create partnerships to increase parental involvement in order to support the academic work of children at home and shared educational decision making at school. Parents will hold schools and teachers to high standards of accountability.

 - All adults will be literate. Every major American business will be involved in strengthening the connection between education and work.

 - Schools will be free of drugs, violence, and weapons.
 - All children will start school ready to learn.
- (www.negp.gov/NEGPLegislation)

1989 California State Department of Education Summit (Winter)

Increasing Accountability and Improving Assessment Enhancing the Curriculum

Improving High School Transitions

Improving Teacher Preparation and Recruitment

Restructuring to Improve Student Performance

Improving Adult Literacy

More Effective Services for At Risk Children and Families
(Connor, 1994b; pp. 130–33)

Among the specific strategies that emerged from the California Summit’s seven working groups were calls to develop performance-based standards and tests; develop powerful end of course examinations; provide all students with a rigorous and sophisticated core curriculum; involve teachers in restructuring schools; recruit minorities as teachers; relax rules and regulations that impede schools’ efforts to organize to improve student performance; create a tiered teaching profession accompanied by a restructured salary scale; provide programmatic flexibility; and expand the use of information technology (from the report’s “Executive Summary,” reproduced in Connor, 1994b; pp. 130–33). While the Working Groups were organized around the *Goals 2000* agenda, they were also in complete agreement with the 1988 CBR report. The only area in which both the national and California Summits departed from the 1988 CBR report was in the area of health and social services. The CBR report argued for parental or community participation in school budget

decisions. The 1989 California Summit devoted one working group to detailing a greater role for parents as well as outreach to parents and the community by city and state public health and social services. The summit workshop participants envisioned the school's becoming "the hub of services [e.g., prenatal care, parenting classes, child care] and using mandates, rewards, or penalties to motivate participation" (Connor, 1994b; p. 132).

The California Education Summit seemed to spawn a series of reports, each developing or spinning off of the CBR and Education Summit proposals. Each report signaled an implicit acceptance of the shape and purpose of educational reform indicating that a consensus had been achieved. No report questioned that the system needed to be restructured so that individual schools and districts had responsibility for devising the means to achieve state-defined standards, nor did any report question the nature of the assessment that would be applied equally to all students. In November 1990, the California Workforce Literacy Task Force issued a report calling for a master plan of education and training programs for noncollege-bound youth and adults in order to improve the "productivity" of the workforce. The "Task Force on Selected [limited English proficiency] Issues" offered strategies to redress the shortage of bilingual and ESL teachers. To maintain its relevancy or importance, PACE (Policy Analysis for California Education) came out with its *Plan for California's Schools* in 1991. Echoing both the CBR report and the California Summit, PACE called for parental choice; school site control over budget decisions; state control over outcomes; expansion of professional development; establishment of a state technology center that can lead planning and funding of technology in the classroom and school operations; pre-school provided for all children; and making the school site the hub of social service delivery to the community (Connor, 1994b; pp. 77k–84).

Another Berman and Weiler report in February 1992 argued that it would be cost effective to integrate ESL students into regular classes and that there was a need to develop a valid test to hold schools accountable for what happened to ESL students in those classes. California Tomorrow, an organization dedicated to advocating for minorities and immigrants, signaled their acceptance of the nature of future educational reform in the title of their 1992 report, *The Unfinished Journey: Restructuring Schools in a Diverse Society*. The report emphasized that an accountability system were needed to address the achievement gap. Two other reports were released in 1992 that advocated the CBR's "expand and focus schooling" agenda. One was the Governor's Council on California Competitiveness, *California's Job Future*; and the other by Superintendent Honig's office, *Second to None: A Vision of the New California High School*.

Perhaps feeling the need to make sure state legislators and educators didn't lose the forest for the trees when reading through thousands of pages of reports in preparation for the next Education Summit in 1994, the CBR hired Berman and Weiler Associates to prepare another report. This report, *Mobilizing for Competitiveness: Linking Education and Training to Jobs*, identified three "goals" to guide restructuring efforts. Goal one was to transform the state's K–16 school system into "a coherent education and training system" which would provide "clear pathways and transitions to

high-skill careers for all Californians.” The second goal was to “upgrade education and training to world class standards.” The strategies and policy options under the second goal reiterated the 1988 report’s recommendations regarding deregulation, standards, assessment, accountability and technology (capitalizing on diversity was abandoned). The third goal describes the process by which post-secondary education was to be turned into high-tech training centers and how those businesses that had developed in-house training programs could be relieved of paying taxes.

The Legislative Analyst’s Office, in its summary of educational reform as of July 1994, argued that such studies as well as the recent state educational summit in February support the following themes for educational reform:

- A rich core curriculum that moves students from a skills-based curriculum to a thinking curriculum linked to success in the real world;
- Better schools for ALL students through the reduction of ability grouping, expansion of support services for students, and creation of intensive early intervention strategies;
- Teacher professionalism through improved training and involvement in school improvement;
- Learning communities that reflect the diversity of their students;
- Student assessments that are linked to the new curricula and use a variety of approaches to measuring student performance (Connor, 1994a; p. 33).

Those at the CBR responsible for steering educational reform had to be pleased at the consensus achieved supporting their agenda.

Implementation

In the previous section I showed the development and growing consensus around the business-led education policy. While consensus over policy had been achieved at the state level, however, implementation of the new policy proceeded slowly. At the district or school level not everyone agreed with the CBR that the only educational goal was to train workers who would fuel the prosperity of the New Economy (a prosperity in which not all were participating). The California Teachers Association was particularly successful in slowing down the CBR-driven juggernaut of reform. Six years after laying it out, the CBR had yet to implement its educational agenda. In 1994, the Legislative Analyst’s Office put together an *Education Reform Briefing Book* summarizing past educational legislation and predicting key themes of the future in order to “assist the legislature in analyzing . . . ideas for reform, and . . . defining for itself an effective role, direction, and focus . . .” (Conner, 1994a, p. 35). In categorizing educational legislation in terms of reform areas since 1983, the report reflected the “direction and focus” of the CBR agenda. Among its categories were school restructuring, parental choice, performance-based assessment, reform of categorical spending (local budgetary decision-making), bilingual education, career pathways in high school, and technology in the classroom. The summary pointed to success in creating consensus over the direction of reform but not much success in implementing that consensus. The next section shows how the

implementation proceeded through a series of education bills. These bills supplanted SB813, culminating in the centerpiece of systemic reform, the firm linkage of high stakes and accountability to standardized tests.

High-Stakes Testing Moves Center Stage

During the legislative process, the BRT and its allies worked diligently to ensure implementation of their education agenda. Bill Hauck, the current president of the CBR, was Governor Wilson's deputy chief of staff from 1992 to 1993 and had also been chief of staff to both Assembly Speakers Bob Moretti and Willie Brown (1967 to 1975). In an interview with *Cal-Tax Digest* editor Ron Roach, Hauck reminisced as to why it had become more difficult for the CBR to translate its agenda into legislation during the 1980s and early 1990s, in spite of the organization's "impressive business climate surveys and proposals for reforms in education." Since 1978, Hauck explained,

everything has gotten more complex, more difficult. It all started with Proposition 13 and that was followed by a series of other major initiative enactments, and we had a very bad recession. Shrinking governmental resources is like shrinking the resources of a family. Everybody rallies around in a family, and it works. But if the budget problem stays for an extended period of time, people turn on each other. When you have continuing shrinking resources, legislators become concerned about their own careers; they are more partisan. Add term limits to that and you've got the ingredients of a much more partisan environment. It is not totally the politicians, but the nature of the problems and issues they have to deal with, and the lack of solutions that appeal to all voters (Roach, 1997).²²

The extended recession in California during the early 90s partly explains the reluctance to pass costly legislation. Yet the "partisan environment" was also a key factor. In a phone interview with me, Hauck bemoaned the power of the California Teachers Association and other public employee unions for slowing down CBR education reform. Hauck explained that the CBR educational agenda would have been implemented sooner had California been a "nonunion state." For example, Hauck said, the state legislatures of both Texas and North Carolina had efficiently implemented the BRT goals earlier than California did because there had been no union opposition in those states. The CTA was effective in slowing down systemic reform in California, Hauck argued, because "they have lots of money" since the unions are able to collect dues on a regular basis from paychecks. Hauck complained that the CBR was unable to raise money on such a regular basis so had to rely on coalitions with other business lobbying groups such as Cal-Tax, the California Chamber of Commerce, and the California Manufacturers and Retailers Association. These business organizations employ full-time lobbyists whose effectiveness is due to their previous state government employment experience (interview, 3/18/02).

Hauck's complaint about the "power" of the CTA reveals his belief that they have no place at the table during discussions of educational policy. Unions historically have only been allowed to survive by business and political leaders if they agreed to wait at the door, to confine their organizational efforts to promoting wages and working conditions.²³ Normally outspent by 11 to one

by business during elections, unions have been constantly on the defensive and most have felt compelled to agree to their assigned position in the decision-making process. That the CTA has fought the CBR reforms is an indication that teachers felt very strongly about their different views about educational reform. Educational researchers hired by the state department or the CBR may poll parents and teachers, a teacher may sit on a panel with 15 other businessmen, or a parent advisory committee may be consulted by district administrators. But businessmen or their lobbyists sit down with state legislators and write educational policy. This inequality of input has only increased in recent years.

The Legislative Timetable

In the short time span of eight years (from 1991 to 1999) a series of education bills slowly but decidedly transformed the education agenda of the BRT and its allies into legislation. The following table is a summary of these bills. Their inception and consequences are described in the rest of this section.

Table 6.3 History of California High-Stakes Legislation

Year	Bill	Acronym	Content
1983	SB 813		More than 80 separate provisions
1991	SB 662	CLAS	Established performance-based assessment Authorized 100 partnership academies
1993	SB 44		Authorized 100 Partnership Academies
1995	SB 265	CAAAA	Authorized temporary funds for state approved tests, mandated development of state tests aligned with state standards (CAAAS)
1996	SB 1570		Creation of advisory committee to develop plan to improve student achievement
1997	SB 376	STAR	Established yearly testing with SAT9 test
1999	SB X1	PSAA	Linked high stakes to standardized tests by establishing the Immediate Intervention/Underperforming School Program (II/USP)
1999	SB X2		Established a high school exit exam

Until 1994, school restructuring had been limited to 141 demonstration schools (SB 1274, 1990) and 100 charter schools (SB 1448, 1992). Parental choice, in the form of a voucher initiative, was defeated in 1993 while gaining some ground in the growth of magnet schools and optional enrollment policies. Performance-based assessment was established in 1991 with the passage of SB 662 authorizing the development of the California Learning Assessment System. CLAS was first implemented in 1993 but Governor Wilson vetoed the reauthorization of the legislation the next year.²⁴ Little had been achieved in passing legislation that related to attracting, retaining, and

training teachers (especially minorities) as of 1994. The 1992 to 1993 state budget managed to “bundle” categorical aid money into “mega-items,” thus succeeding in giving “school districts some flexibility in using their categorical dollars.” Bilingual education and services has failed to be reinstated into state law. In 1992, SB 2026, the last bilingual education reauthorization bill, was vetoed. Developing career pathways in high school had progressed but only through continued funding for a small number of Partnership Academies. By 1994, there were “50 career training academies statewide that provided ‘schools-within-schools’ for eligible high school students.” In 1993, SB 44 authorized up to 100 partnerships academies and expanded student accessibility to them. The California Planning Commission for Educational Technology, created in 1989 (AB 1470), was authorized to create a master plan for the teaching and use of technology in the schools. But little of that plan had been implemented by 1994 (Conner, 1994a, pp. 12–28).

The creation of increasingly larger business networks and the convening of yet another state education summit created the momentum that led to the passage of the California Assessment of Academic Achievement Act (AB 265) in 1995. AB 265 required that funds be distributed to schools that administer state-approved tests. This was to be temporary as AB 265 authorized the development of a new state test, the California Assessment of Applied Academic Skills (CAAAS). This test was to be aligned with state standards. The law also called for a commission that would oversee the development of content and performance standards in all major subjects for 1–12 schools.²⁵ By November 1997, the first subject-based committees had been appointed to begin writing content standards (WestEd, 1999; p. 7). The science standards were the last of the content standards unanimously approved by the Academic Standards Commission in July 1998. An article in the *Sacramento Business Journal* indicated that business interests were well served by the commission, while the scientific community deplored the contents of the science standards.

Rigorous new science standards for the California students will probably be adopted [by the California Board of Education on October 9]. That’s either good news or terrible news, depending on whom you talk to. Representatives of business groups that have followed the issue say they welcome higher standards for California students and think these standards will make California graduates competitive in a global economy. “We’re very pleased with the standards, and we’d like to see them adopted,” said Teresa Casazza, executive director of the state public policy for the American Electronics Association.²⁶ “The industry needs a qualified work force, and we’d like to see the qualified work force coming from California.”

But more than two dozen members of the national scientific community have spoken out against the standards [wrote official letters of protest to the state board of education], saying they are so overstuffed with specific facts that students must learn that they leave no room for hands-on investigation. They predict that only a small fraction of students will be able to meet these standards, and that teachers and students will have to resort to rote memorization to try rather than achieve true understanding of scientific concepts.

The business community largely supports higher educational standards, but most business leaders have stayed out of “the science wars” debate, said Daniel Condron, a standards commission member. He is Hewlett-Packard Co.’s public affairs manager and the public policy director for the Sonoma County Business Education Roundtable. One weakness of the

procedure the state used, he said, was that most business leaders didn't have time to address the nitty-gritty details of standards and therefore the educational establishment tended to drive the debate. [But] "we are happy with the result and feel our objectives can be met," Condron said of the standards (Marquand, 1998).

The next piece of the business-led educational agenda was to be put in place through SB 1570 (1996). This bill authorized the creation of an advisory committee to develop a plan for a system of "incentives for the improvement of pupil academic achievement" (from SB 1570 quoted in the Rewards and Interventions Advisory Committee's report, *Steering by Results*, RIAC, 1998; p. 1). The committee was convened in the spring of 1997.²⁷ The report published by the committee propose[d] a plan for an integrated program of incentives — called rewards and interventions — to encourage all California schools to reach state performance goals. The rewards and interventions program would become an integral part of a statewide accountability system that would include the state academic standards and assessments currently in development (*Steering by Results*, RIAC, 1998; p. 1).

Attaching "rewards and interventions" to test score performance

would lead to improved instruction because teachers would focus on what was important; . . . would motivate students and parents to put more effort in school work; . . . would encourage greater parental involvement in children's education; . . . [and] would enable the state and districts to target resources more effectively to give special assistance to those schools in trouble (*Steering by Results*, RIAC, 1998; p. 4).

The Advisory Committee's report acknowledged that several unintended consequences could result from such a plan, "in particular, the danger that the public might come to equate student learning with test scores." Yet such shortcomings were dismissed since "this approach is the best hope for reestablishing the position of preeminence that California public education enjoyed in the past" (*Steering by Results*, RIAC, 1998, pp. 4–5). The report did not explain why its recommendations were "the best hope." Nevertheless, its recommendations were adopted by the state in SB X1.

The report made seven recommendations. First, develop a school performance index "based exclusively on the results of the new statewide student assessment." Second, establish a rewards program to recognize successful schools. The rewards should be in cash to individual staff members at schools that meet their short-term goals. Third, establish an interventions program to assist low-performing schools. These schools would be required to develop "action plans" focusing on student achievement. The schools would receive funds and a coach to help them. If the schools did not meet their "short-term growth targets" in two years, then the state superintendent would recommend to the state board one of the following options: continued coaching; state takeover; closing the school; or "other action deemed appropriate." Fourth, develop a student incentives program to support the school rewards and interventions program. One of the primary reasons for the decline in standards and expectations in California has been a lack of motivation on the part of students and parents. This recommendation would highlight to both parents and students that "they bear the ultimate responsibility for student performance." Fifth, provide adequate funding to implement the

rewards and interventions program. The committee estimated that the cost of the program would peak at \$985 million during year 5 of its implementation but that number would decline as the program produced results. They pointed out that while the program was expensive, it was minimal in the context of the \$40 billion that the state was expected to spend on K–12 public education during the next few years. Sixth, establish an advisory group to deal with policy and technical issues. Seven, conduct comprehensive, ongoing, external evaluations of the rewards and interventions program.

In 1997, SB 376 was passed, which abandoned the development of state tests as authorized by SB 265. Instead, it established yearly testing with the SAT-9 test. In June 1998, the State Department of Education commissioned WestEd to perform an external evaluation of AB 265.²⁸ The evaluation was complicated by the delay in the development of performance standards and seemed to be moot in the face of the “sudden” abandonment of the development of a performance-based test as authorized by AB 265.

A complicating factor in the development of this standards-based test was the somewhat sudden enactment of a new testing program (SB 376) in 1997, the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program. Concerned by the lack of a statewide comparable measure of academic performance for schools and districts that could report individual scores for all students, former Governor Pete Wilson and legislators jumped ahead with [Standardized Testing and Reporting program] STAR to address these issues (WestEd, 1999; p. 8).

Interestingly, the “sudden” abandonment of the goal of the state developing its own standards-based test coincided with the appointment of Bill Hauck as president of the CBR and the move of its headquarters from San Francisco to Sacramento “one block north of the Capitol.” Hauck explained the purpose of the move in May 1997.

It is going to make a difference, because it is difficult to be part of the public policy-making process with some concentration on implementation and action if you are not here. This is where the decisions eventually are made, unless they are made on the ballot. It is important for us to work closely with the Chamber of Commerce, as well as Cal-Tax, who are more day-to-day lobbying oriented. We are not. That is a good balance (Roach, 1997).²⁹

The increased coordination of lobbying by business might have been a factor in the decision by Wilson and the legislators to “jump ahead” with imposing a statewide test.³⁰ AB 265 had intended a statewide test to be given to grades 4, 5, 8, and 10. The 1989 governor’s education summit had set the goal for 2000 at 4, 8, and 12. SB 376, however, mandated that every student would be tested every spring in grades 2 to 11. The test chosen by the state board of education, in spite of the superintendent’s recommendation against adoption, was the Stanford-9 (SAT-9), a commercial, off-the-shelf, norm-referenced multiple-choice test.

Testing needed to be implemented because the “rewards and interventions” piece of “accountability” could not be put into place unless there were test results upon which “a performance index” could be calculated. In spring 1998, the SAT-9 was administered to all California Schools. In 1999, the legislature passed SB X1, the Public School Accountability Act,

which linked high stakes to standardized testing.

PSAA called for the creation of three basic components: 1) an index to rank the performance of schools, 2) an assistance and intervention program for schools that fall below expectations, and 3) a rewards program for schools that exceed them. The law also mandated the creation of a broad-based advisory group to guide implementation decisions and an ongoing evaluation of the law's impact. . . . For the first time in the state's history, public schools are operating under a high-stakes testing and accountability system that defines a sequence of events and consequences for schools that continue to fall below expectations. The hope is that such a system will force schools to focus on improving academic results — thereby raising the performance of all students (WestEd, 1999; p. 11).

The first component ranks schools from 1 to 10 according to a complicated formula. The number-ranking is called the Academic Performance Index.

The API currently consists of the norm-referenced STAR test as the sole criterion for performance. . . . Another key part of the new system is a program designed to assist and intervene when schools fail to show improvement, called the Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools Program (II/USP). This program, which allows schools to volunteer (or in some cases, to be randomly selected) to participate, provides school improvement funds and the assistance of an external evaluator who works in concert with a community-school team. If growth targets are not met in twelve months following the implementation of a school improvement plan, local interventions, possibly including reassignment of school staff, will take place. If no substantial progress is made by the second year, state interventions including the takeover of the governance of the school by the state Superintendent of Instruction or some other entity may occur" (WestEd, 1999; p. 12).

WestEd also noted the implications that PSAA and the SAT-9 test would have on education and everyday life in the classroom.

The norm-referenced SAT-9 portion of STAR is now the linchpin of the state's new accountability law, PSAA. Until other indicators of academic performance are deemed valid and reliable, the SAT-9 is the sole indicator currently being used in an index that will help to rank schools' performance and determine their eligibility for an intervention and rewards program.

Unclear is whether attaching high stakes to such a test may drive teachers to "drill and practice"³¹ techniques on a narrow subset of skills or eventually lead to a stronger focus on standards-based skill development. These fears were expressed by district and school personnel in surveys and interviews, as discussed in Chapter 7 [of the WestEd evaluation]. Another concern is the future and role of the previously mandated (AB 265) standards-based matrix test. In October 1999, the State Board of Education voted to delay, perhaps indefinitely, the issuance of the contract to develop the assessment (WestEd, 1999; p. 9)

Opposition to High-Stakes Standardized Testing

PSAA firmly established high-stakes testing but did not quell concern and opposition — nor was this the end of business-led practical support and defense of the centerpiece of systemic reform. In their commissioned evaluation of California's education system, the WestEd evaluators discovered a

number of problems relating to the implementation of California's standards, accountability, and assessment system. First, district and school personnel viewed the SAT-9 as "inherently flawed" (WestEd, 1999; p. 61). Second, there was an "overall concern that rankings and subsequent sanctions may exacerbate already-difficult conditions for the lowest performing schools"(p. 98). Third, "the information [teachers] receive about new policies appears contradictory to the purpose of existing reforms" (p. 164). Nevertheless, using the logic of *Steering by Results*, the evaluators concluded in fall 1999 that

for the most part, California should "stay the course"³² with developing the existing components of its accountability infrastructure; standards, assessment, and a system of interventions, rewards, and sanctions. However, no approach is perfect from the start. Modifications may be necessary to rectify unintended consequences and ensures the system is meeting its primary objective [improving student performance] (p. 165).

The criticism that WestEd noted in their report was a national phenomenon. By 2001, it became so widespread and obvious that the Business Roundtable started to talk about a "testing backlash." Eager to defend their education agenda, the Business Roundtable published in spring 2001 a report entitled *Assessing and Addressing the "Testing Backlash": Practical Advice and Current Public Opinion Research for Business Coalitions and Standards Advocates*. Using polls by Public Agenda (see Chapter 2), the BRT argued that public opinion still supported the standards movement. The growing opposition to the effects of the new reforms was merely "warning signs of discontent" that could be countered by "getting the policy right, and communicate more broadly about how to make the system work" (p. 25). They recommended several specific strategies to do this. These strategies are remarkably similar to the ones that WestEd recommended to the California State Board of Education in November 1999. WestEd's "overarching recommendation" for "political leaders and educators" was to "align what already exists" before implementing any further pieces of the high-stakes agenda (p. 172). In *Assessing and Addressing the "Testing Backlash"* (2001), the BRT also recommended that systemic reformers

make sure standards are clear, right, reasonable, and matched to the curriculum. . . . Make sure [parents and teachers] understand that this is so; if you sense a disconnect, adapt and clarify. Do the same with your state's tests: make sure they actually measure your state's standards (p. 14). . . . One business leader in Massachusetts — a state that recently has seen its teachers' association organize an aggressive anti-testing effort — observes, "Pacing is everything." Changes can be implemented only so quickly by teachers in the classroom, and rushing risks errors that can undermine the overall effort (BRT, 2001; p. 16).

WestEd argued that the only way "to inform policymakers about any modifications necessary to the existing accountability system" was to "adequately fund the evaluation currently mandated" (p. 166). The BRT suggested that taking a close look at how their goals were being implemented did not threaten the goals themselves since "making adjustments does not mean backing down." It was possible that "listening to reasonable requests and suggestions — for more resources, more flexibility, more time — can make the state's reform

effort more successful in the long run” (p. 16). WestEd argued that part of the “alignment” problem lay not only in the need to clarify the chain of command, but to make sure that each link in the chain fully understood what its responsibilities were. One way to do this was “to ramp up [the state government’s] use of the World Wide Web in communicating accountability policy to all stakeholders within the system” (p. 166) or in the words of the BRT, “communicate more broadly about how to make the system work” (2001, p. 25).

Parents and others must understand why this fundamental change in behavior and culture is worth the effort and how it is leading to positive changes for students and schools. . . . Most state or local education departments lack the communications capacity to mount a sustained, effective communications effort. The business community can provide much-needed help (BRT, 2001; p. 18). [See Appendix C for the example of Washington state’s “schedule of communication activities”.]

One of the major problems with the high-stakes testing agenda is its reliance on test scores from standardized tests as the single criterion upon which rewards and sanctions are determined. WestEd recommended that “standards-based assessments,” and other “comprehensive measures, such as attendance and graduation rates” needed to be added as part of such an accountability formula (p. 167). The BRT’s advice was similar.

The public opinion research suggests that, in addition to state tests, state policymakers should consider other measures of student performance, such as course grades and teacher evaluations. Perhaps [they should] create an alternative appeals process for students who do not pass the tests but can show they nevertheless have mastered the material (p. 15).

Another major problem recognized by both WestEd and the BRT is that “data-driven” reform will not work unless teachers and district personnel understand and support each aspect of its implementation. But teachers are part of the “backlash.” The WestEd evaluators recorded the following comments by teachers:

[In the newly adopted district standards] there’s an obvious philosophy behind it that it should be hands-on. . . . My biggest complaint with the hands-on is that [students are] not tested that way. It’s like they [the district] want us to use hands-on materials, but then they test us in a much more traditional way. . . . Regarding the district and the state, teachers are getting mixed messages about hands-on versus seatwork. I don’t get a consistent message. No one fully explains to you how you’re supposed to prepare kids for tests (p. 64).

I think the standardized test that we have to take gets in the way. Because it forces me to teach to the test, instead of teaching to what the standards are (p. 66).

The SAT-9 tests a lot of stuff that they haven’t even learned. . . . The problem is that we’re supposed to be aligned with the state test. And so, that means basically we need to advance all our students before they’re ready. . . . The seventh graders had to take this test, the STAR test. . . . While they were taking it, I could just see the frustration on their faces, and I was like, what’s going on? So I grabbed a copy of the test. I started looking at it; I was like, oh my gosh, they’re so frustrated because this is the stuff I’m teaching my eighth graders right now, but my seventh graders haven’t even seen this material yet (p. 68).

Some kids [e.g., English language learners, special education students] shouldn’t have to take

the standardized test, and if they still have to, and those scores are counted into my scores, into my teaching, and I'm held accountable for that, then I kind of have a problem with that. . . . And the other factor is transience. I mean, there's a lot of kids who bounce from school to school to school, and if I have not taught them all year long, it doesn't seem fair to me to be held accountable for them (p. 70).

The district has had . . . performance-based assessments that we had three times this year. . . . And I have no trouble doing performance-based assessments, but when it comes from the district, it doesn't necessarily fit with what you're doing at the time. I'd rather have an assessment that goes along with what they [students] are doing. . . . It was like, just take this chunk out of time, and do this thing that's not associated with what you're teaching (p. 74).

The kids I have . . . are good kids; they came in with good scores, they'll go out with decent scores; they probably could have done that no matter whether I did a good job or not. On the other hand, you can get kids that are ill-prepared, and you know, how much you can help them improve — I don't know that anybody knows, is that 5 percentage points? Is that 25 percentage points? I guess we're all wondering, what's going to be the measure of achievement? So that's all a little iffy when the test is the thing (p. 77).

Instead of concluding from comments such as those cited that there may be multiple, legitimate goals of education and that forcing a uniform curriculum upon diverse communities undermines the very democratic processes for which this country is supposed to stand, both WestEd and the BRT's *Advice* concluded that teacher resistance equals teacher ignorance.³³ Both argued that better teacher training, both pre-service and in-service, will help teachers better understand and thus effectively implement standards reforms. Specifically, WestEd recommended that districts “ensure that professional development programs are aimed at building teacher knowledge and skills related to content standards” and that the state university teacher preparation programs should “specifically address issues related to accountability” (p. 162). Furthermore, “the governor and the legislature should fund capacity-building opportunities for teachers and administrators to learn about analyzing data to improve student achievement and school performance” (p. 162). BRT's *Advice* encouraged “standards advocates” to “make more of a concerted effort to reach out to classroom teachers. Explain these changes [standards-based reforms], tell them that many teachers think there are benefits, and show them how other schools are using standards and tests to improve student learning” (p. 20).

For “standards advocates,” it is not about changing the goals of systemic reform but in massaging the message through focus group research.

Public opinion research contains valuable ideas about what messages on education and standards make the most sense to the public.

Stress that the effort is about better schools and higher levels of learning — not standards, tests, accountability or education reform.³⁴ Parents and educators want to know that better schools are needed because we have to be fair to all students, not because schools are failing. Your communications efforts should emphasize:

- the importance of raising expectations for all students;

- the fairness that comes from higher expectations (too many students are not getting the education they deserve);
- the ability of testing to diagnose strengths and weaknesses of students (helping them learn and teachers teach);
- the value of test scores for comparing schools and identifying necessary improvements — and as part of the decision to promote or graduate students. (BRT, 2001; p. 21)

The similarities between the WestEd recommendations and those of the BRT's *Advice* are not a coincidence. WestEd was contracted by the California Department of Education to evaluate the implementation of standards-based reforms, whether embodied in AB 265, SB X1 (PSAA) or SB X2 (high school exit exam). While the evaluators could not help note the limitations of such “top-down” reform,³⁵ all of the recommendations were created within such a paradigm, representing another example of how the BRT network has successfully co-opted educational researchers (see Chapter 3). The state government had charged the researchers with finding out what the state needed to do to implement systemic reform — reform driven by the Business Roundtable. Edward Rust, chair of the BRT's Education Task Force indicated in 1999 a firm belief in the effectiveness of top-down reform:

Large organizations such as schools don't change because they see the light; they change because they feel the heat. Business Roundtable CEOs have successfully applied the heat on state policy makers, while state coalitions are helping the public and educators see the light about the need for change.

WestEd's evaluation pointed to where the heat needed to be applied. In 1998, the CBR had decided to begin stoking the furnace in anticipation of a need to apply greater pressure on state legislators and increase the massaging of public opinion. Larry McCarthy, president of the California Taxpayers Association in Sacramento, wrote in December of that year:

Now, in an unprecedented way, thousands of California companies, through their associations — the California Business Roundtable, the California Chamber of Commerce, the California Manufacturers Association, the California Taxpayers' Association, Technology Network, and the American Electronics Association — are joining forces to speak with a united voice on education policy.

They have formed California Business for Education Excellence (CBEE). With key corporate support from Hewlett-Packard, IBM, Boeing and the business-labor California Council for Environmental and Economic Balance, it is bringing the voice of business to the education policy debate.

The intent is to influence the development of methods that encourage new education standards, assess how they work, and assure accountability to the standards. The new organization will work as a partner with the education community, the new Gray Davis administration,

Bill Hauck, president of the California Business Roundtable and chair of the CBEE, recently told reporters that “our whole focus is on achieving better results.” . . . As education continues to hold center stage, the business community will not be taking a sideline seat.

Through this new coalition, there will be a stronger-than-ever voice for quality schools in California (McCarthy, 1998).

In its 1999 report to the BRT, the CBR announced the formation of the CBEE and defined more specifically what goals the coalition would pursue.

Over the past two years, CBR education committee members have led the push for the development and adoption in California of the most rigorous academic standards in the country. CBR also has been involved in the charter school movement and California's Digital High School Initiative, a four-year competitive grant program that provides computer technology resources to California high schools. In early 1999, CBR joined ten other business organizations and businesses to form California Business for Education Excellence (CBEE), a coalition focused on four basic public education issues: promoting high academic standards, measuring student achievement, establishing accountability for educators, and improving the competitiveness of the United States in the world economy (BRT, 1999; p. 10).

While WestEd (1999) advised the State Department of Education to "conduct a periodic alignment inventory" to make sure "key state policies, such as PSAA, STAR, and the High School Exit Exam" are aligned with the standards, pre-service and in-service teacher training (p. xxx), the CBR assigned the CBEE to "work with state policymakers to revamp the state tests and better align them with academic standards" (BRT, 1999; p. 10). Furthermore, CBR believed that the state legislature needed help from business so as to better implement top-down reform. The CBR explained to its national brethren that "California's fragmented education system and partisan political climate" was responsible for the state's failure so far "to foster accountability and innovation in schools at the local level" (p. 10). CBEE promised to end the debate by helping to design a K-12 master plan that will "clarify state and local responsibilities related to education" (p. 10).

In 1999, the Legislative Analyst's Office published a report written by Paul Warren that would guide the legislature's "planning process for kindergarten through high school." In the report, entitled *K-12 Master Plan: Starting the Process*, Warren recommended that a master plan should focus on defining the "separate responsibilities for most decisions as a way of creating clear lines of accountability" — in other words, "clarify state and local responsibilities." Citing a 1998 National Education Goals Panel report,³⁶ Warren argued that

state strategies adopted in Texas and North Carolina [see Chapter 4] reinforces our assessment of appropriate state roles. The [1998 NEGP] evaluation concludes that critical elements of the states' strategies have resulted in sustained long-term increases in student achievement. These elements include: state content standards accompanied by a student assessment system; a state accountability system that has consequences; deregulated state fiscal and program policies; state data systems to encourage continuous local improvement; [and] a long-term state commitment to these strategies (pp. 3-4).

The report emphasizes two factors that appeared to make the difference in North Carolina and Texas. Both states viewed the state role in school improvement as a *long-term endeavor requiring stability and continual refinement of state policies*. The other factor was the *sustained commitment to the reform strategy by political and business leaders* (p. 20) [my

emphasis].

In spring 2000, Bill Hauck confirmed CBEE's commitment to supporting a "long-term state commitment" to the BRT agenda. In an interview with the magazine of the California School Boards Association, Hauck explained that the "first priority" is to keep the SAT-9 in place so that "five years of data" can be collected. He conceded that it may not be "the best test in the world" but "if it is testing whether we are achieving the standards that the [state] board adopted, then we have what we need." When asked to comment about the recent joint legislative committee's development of a master plan for K-16 public education, Hauck explained that he told the committee members to "pick specific objectives rather than to try to cover every issue under the sun." If the master plan includes "thousands of other issues" apart from "those things that are critical to teaching young people more effectively" then the plan will be "doomed".³⁷ These comments can be interpreted as evasive, ignorant, or euphemistic. Given the history of CBR's role in California educational reform, and specifically Hauck's role, one can imagine with some certitude that Hauck was referring to state-mandated tests, content standards, rewards and sanctions as "those things" or "specific objectives."

With content standards, assessment (SAT-9 and High School Exit Exam), and accountability (API and II/USP) now in place, California's business and political leaders are turning their attention to transforming the state and district bureaucracies into more effective tools of control. As part of this process, Warren recommends that "the state should review the 'health' of local school boards" by asking the question "does at-large representation result in broader representation than 'regional' [district/ward] representation?" (p. 25). When such a question is placed in the context of the research on school board representation (TCFTF, 1992; Danzberger, 1994a and 1994b; Bediner, 1969; Gittel, 1979; Hatton, 1979, Grant, 1979; Kirp, 1979) and the historic battle between at large and district representation (Hays, 1983; Callahan, 1962; Callahan, 1975; Johnson, 1988; Hatton, 1979; Katz, 1973; Zerchykov, 1984; Ziegler and Jennings, 1974; McAdams, 2000), it suggests that "broader representation" means a larger state view rather than the more "narrow" views of the local community. In other words, the state should ensure that school board members are committed to implementing and enforcing the state educational policy over which parents and students have little to no influence.

Another area on which Warren recommends that state policy focus its energies is that of teacher training and the role of teacher unions. The recommended reforms are intended to subordinate teacher judgment and influence to those making state policy. If school boards and district administrations can be made "healthy," that is, if they can be relied upon to uphold the triumvirate of standards, assessment, and accountability, then they should be given more power over teachers (pp. 40-41). Simultaneously, teacher credential programs should be centralized into a single agency supervised by the State Department of Education (with the state Superintendent of Public Instruction no longer being an elective office but one appointed by the governor). Again, Warren justifies this consolidation by appealing to the "broader perspective of the state board of

education and the state department of education over educational issues.”³⁸ A more centralized state agency (with a “broader perspective”) would allow the new agency to assign clear and specific roles to each institution responsible for teacher training and would be able to hold each agency “accountable for desired results” (p. 44). Presumably, this would ensure that every teacher trained in a state credential program would resist the temptation to allow classroom experience to provide evidence with which to question whether the demanded “results” are “desired.”

The Business Roundtable acts as a clearinghouse for advice on how to address the “testing backlash,” and the CBR and CBEE work to completely eliminate teacher, parent, and student influence in educational policy making. It remains to be seen whether local community organizations will be able to mount an effective challenge to this onslaught. In the next two chapters, I explore what happened to a school staff that tried to respond to community concerns in the context of growing pressure from state systemic reform. In Chapter 7, I trace the history of educational policy in San Francisco. This provides the context that is needed in order to understand the story of Mission High School in Chapter 8. In that chapter, I describe the attempt and the failure of Mission High School to create a school program responsive to the needs and interests of its students, parents, teachers, and the members of the local community. I hope that the lessons learned from such a case study can help local community organizations develop strategies to create some “crawl space” in which to pursue educational goals of their own choosing.

¹ In attempting to find out why the CBR was formed in 1976, I spoke on 3/18/02 by phone with Bill Hauck, the president of the CBR. He provided the above explanation but cautioned that it was “speculation” on his part.

² The Serrano plaintiffs went back to court in 1983 to argue that equal funding had yet to be achieved, but this time they were rebuffed by the judges (Sonstelie, 2000; p. 55).

³ Ironically, the very arguments (parental involvement, one state-wide mandated test, sanctioning districts and schools) against using a single test score to make high-stakes decisions would be incorporated into a more standardized and punitive statewide “accountability” system in 1998.

⁴ Berman and Wieler Associates were a Berkeley-based nonprofit research group hired by the CBR to write a report evaluating the success of the CBR’s lobbying efforts.

⁵ The heart of BRT’s agenda for the last ten years has been to move state governments to establish “rigorous standards” for *all* (their emphasis) students in core academic subjects (math, science, English, and social studies) that are measurable, and then adopt statewide testing to determine whether the standards are being met. If the standards are not met, then students should not be allowed to graduate and the individual school in which those students are found should be “sanctioned.” The *Nine Essential Components* (1995) which crystallize the CEOs’ position on educational goals are (1) high standards; (2) performance assessment; (3) accountability; (4) site-based decision making (a.k.a., “autonomy”); (5) professional development; (6) learning readiness; (7) parent involvement; (8) technology; (9) safety and discipline. See Chapter Two for a fuller discussion of these “components.”

- ⁶ Berman and Weiler Associates would be hired again in 1988 to determine what would be effective ways to impose a standardized curriculum on California schools.
- ⁷ The 1988 CBR report called upon teachers to expect A-level work from 85 percent of their students (Berman, 1988; p. 140).
- ⁸ Hauck insists that the CBR is independent of the BRT, yet he did admit that the impetus to adopt educational reform as an issue came from Sam Ginn (Air Touch, Pacific Bell), who was a member of both the CBR and the BRT in 1988 (Interview, 3/18/02).
- ⁹ See Appendix E for an explanation as to how the BRT educational agenda is responding to weakened legitimacy of the system. Also, given the ensuing development of euphemisms such as “high standards for all” and “equity and excellence” which functioned to justify the resegregation of schools (see Chapter 5), it is conceivable that the CBR adopted the Achievement Council’s critiques and recommendations but only to the extent that they fit within the larger framework of their own agenda.
- ¹⁰ All page numbers in this section refer to the 1988 report written by Berman and Weiler Associates.
- ¹¹ This would be, then, a new form of “tracking,” which is another indication as to why such systemic reform rhetoric as “high standards for all,” “equity and excellence,” “excellence for all,” and “leave no child behind” are disingenuous at best.
- ¹² In 1988, business leaders were still attracted to performance assessment because of its promise to encourage the development of “problem-solving” skills. This was later abandoned in favor of off-the-shelf, commercialized standardized tests. One reason for this change might have been that since performance assessment could not “sort” as well as multiple-choice exams could, they could not distinguish between an 85 percentile and an 86 percentile. When Kentucky adopted performance and portfolio assessment as part of its state’s systemic reform, many criticized these forms of assessment as being “unreliable.” See Popham (2001), Chapters 3 and 4 for an explanation as to why “sorting” and “reliability” are important to test-givers.
- ¹³ Unlike performance assessment, the concept of classifying individual schools into three levels with the “lowest-performing” one being subjected to state intervention was adopted directly into California’s Public School Accountability Act of 1999. This legislation will be discussed later in this chapter.
- ¹⁴ Schools would also be required to develop “school development plans” whose approval would depend on the degree to which they conformed to the CBR’s Six Recommendations. The core of these recommendations did not become law until 1999, yet the intense debate surrounding the lobbying to implement these reforms influenced district policy even before their legal ratification. In the next and final chapters, I will show how developments at the state level influenced district and school-site decision. Specifically, in Chapter 7, I tell the story of how, in the process of defending itself against lawsuits by the SF NAACP, the SFUSD selected “replacing school principals or teachers” as its preferred process of school improvement. The plan was called reconstitution and was eventually adopted as state policy in 1999. Reconstitution at the state level is currently called Immediate Intervention for Under Performing Schools (II/UPS) and incorporated the 1988 recommendation that individual schools be classified as either high-performing, acceptable, or low-performing.
- ¹⁵ But there is a fundamental difference between a business and a school. In a business, all employees agree on what the goal of the work is that they do. There is no such consensus over the goals of education. (See Appendix D for a short list relating to the 2000-year-old debate over the goals of education.)
- ¹⁶ Corporate elites and educational professionals have historically perceived alternative schools as an experimental or compensatory dimension to the basic standardized and hierarchical public school system. The degree to which they have seen a “crisis” in the basic system has matched the degree to which they have provided support for “alternatives.” During the Progressive Era (c. 1890–1940) and in the sixties (c. 1960–1975), corporate funding swelled the ranks of alternative schools to the point where historians have recognized the increased numbers as a “movement.” In both eras, corporate funding was pulled and the “movements” ended when many of the alternative schools became oppositional. In the sixties, policy elites hoped to make hierarchal and bureaucratic school systems less crisis-ridden by “lowering the locus of control.” Today, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

has contributed millions of dollars with the expectation that a “small schools” national network will develop as a means to offer solutions to the crisis-ridden public school system. Corporate capitalists believe they had found the right formula for reform in Total Quality Management supported by magnet and small schools.

- ¹⁷ Apparently, the CBR authors believed that these recommendations were important in the event that School Site Councils began to choose instructional methods (one of the new “freedoms” teachers gained from such councils) that promoted goals other than those defined by the state.
- ¹⁸ The report defines “master learning” in the following “simplified terms”: (1) “teachers identify in advance the level of learning that they expect all students to achieve”; (2) teachers “divide the curriculum into small units [e.g., two weeks] and provide instruction geared to students learning the unit”; (3) “after each period of instruction, students are tested to see how much they have learned”; (4) students keep learning until “they have mastered the material” while those who have mastered it before the others become “peer instructors” or are given material to master “beyond the expected mastery level”; (5) “the class continues as a group to the next curriculum unit after all students have reached the mastery level” (pp. 141–42).
- ¹⁹ Bill Hauck, the president of CBR, indicated as much when he complained that other states only took the lead in school reform because they didn’t have strong unions to oppose passage and implementation of systemic reform (interview, 3/12/02).
- ²⁰ An indication of how closely business and political leaders had been working together to develop consensus over educational reform in the 1980s can be seen in Minnesota. The 1988 CBR report argued that its recommendations would be successful in California because they had been successful in Minnesota. In 1994, Congress appointed Ken Nelson as executive director of the National Education Goals Panel. Nelson was a member of the Minnesota House of Representatives and had been the chief author of Minnesota’s education reform bills. Furthermore, “while in the legislature, Nelson worked closely with several education, government, and business organizations including the Education Commission of the States (ECS), the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), the National Governors’ Association (NGA), National Alliance of Business, and the Business Roundtable” (from NEGP web page: www/negp/NEGPTestimony, viewed 1/13/02).
- ²¹ In 1948, George Kennan, in a state department memo discussing the future shape of the Cold War, wrote: “We have about 50% of the world’s wealth, but only 6.3 percent of its population . . . In this situation, we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity without positive detriment to our national security” (quoted by Lewis Lapham in *Harper’s*, March 2002, p. 9). See also LaFeber (1985) for a description of the Cold War as a “pattern of relationships” which has successfully “maintain[ed] this position of disparity.”
- ²² Such an analysis may seem vague and suggest that Hauck doesn’t have a clear understanding of the dynamics of power. But one must consider that Hauck’s audience for this interview are businessmen with whom Hauck shares a great deal of knowledge and assumptions. As a result, much is left unsaid or is implicit when public statements are made. Like diplomats who do not wish to tip their hand to foreign heads of state, business leaders, too, tend to speak in carefully chosen euphemisms whose fine shades of meaning are lost on the uninitiated.
- ²³ One only need compare the history of the Knights of Labor with that of the American Federation of Labor to see which unions survive and which do not, and why. Interestingly enough, such a history never made it into the California history and social science standards.
- ²⁴ CLAS was developed in 1991 in order to ensure that a statewide test was “aligned” with the state’s curricular framework: to “better measure curricular attainment by performance-based assessment”; and to gather scores for individual students as well as districts and schools (Kirst, 1996; p.2). Governor Wilson vetoed the reauthorization of CLAS asserting that the 1994 bill did not allow for the gathering of individual scores and that “implementation prioritized performance-based aspects” of the test (Kirst, p. 6). Kirst argues that Wilson vetoed the legislation because he believed that it was too expensive to

make a test that would provide reliable and valid scores for individual students (p. 7). Wilson also apparently believed that “performance accountability” would undermine school deregulation (p. 9).

²⁵ The California Academic Standards Commission was made up of two members appointed by the legislature, 11 members appointed by Governor Pete Wilson, six appointed by the state Superintendent of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin, and Eastin herself.

²⁶ Those AEA members with specific educational programs are Microsoft, Intel, Texas Instruments, and National Semiconductor (AEA web page: Government Affairs >> Education >> AeA Member Company Education Initiatives, viewed 3/12/02).

²⁷ The committee was cochaired by Sam Araki, former president, Lockheed Martin Missiles & Space, and Charles McCully, former Superintendent, Fresno Unified School District. The largest group among the thirty-five members of the committee were twelve representatives of major corporations (e.g., National Semiconductor, Chevron, Hewlett-Packard). The second largest group comprised eight school district administrators of various levels. Other members included one person representing each of the two teacher unions (CFT, CTA), a representative from the California PTA, one from the Education Commission of the States, one from the National Center of Education and the Economy, one school board representative, and the director of PACE.

²⁸ WestEd is a nonprofit “research, development and service agency.” In 1995, two federally established Regional Educational Laboratories, Far West and Southwest, joined together to form WestEd. With its headquarters in San Francisco, WestEd provides “services” throughout the United States by its 400-person staff and 15 regional offices. Among the members of the 2002 board of directors are the superintendent of the San Francisco Unified School District, the current state superintendent, former president of Pacific Telesis Foundation, and the program manager from Silicon Graphics. In 1997, WestEd prepared a report on the role of Technology in Education with IBM for a state education symposium. In 1998, WestEd published a report supporting state intervention as a method to improve academic performance. WestEd houses federally funded Comprehensive Centers to help schools accomplish “system-wide reform” and oversees BASRC (see Chapter 3). It is partnered with Education for the Future whose *Initiative* was developed upon the recommendations of the California Business Roundtable. Peter Farruggio, an Oakland, Cal., bilingual teacher, teacher educator, organizer, and PhD graduate student in the fall of 1996, described being invited to an all-day “Equity Committee” meeting at WestEd. Farruggio described the meeting thusly: “Ray Bachetti of the H-P Foundation was the obvious biggest shot of the big shots present. Other foundation honchos and “professional minority” types [were there as well as] a handful of real educators from poor schools with more than just a few years of experience. I guess I fit in this latter group, and we were there to “make it real.” Anyway, I remember the general discussion being about how we all felt about things, and if we were sensitive to the issues of poor minorities in poor schools. . . . So when it came my turn I told about how I had organized the Mexican and Black parents in my neighborhood in Oakland to protest the bad principal we had been stuck with, and the horrible year round schedule, and the fact that downtown had been ripping off our categorical budget and not allowing us to exercise our legal rights to choose how to spend our funds, etc. And I described the parents’ strike and picket line we had and how we marched into a few school board meetings demanding action, and how we used to meet clandestinely in local churches because our school board “rep” was in cahoots with the official bureaucracy and was trying to threaten both parents and teachers. You know, a little slice of life from the urban ed jungle. Well, there was a polite chill around the table of 20 or so people. Real uncomfortable, like I had farted in church. And there was a look of horror on Mr. Bachetti’s face, like King Kong was coming through the huge conference door. So I realized that this was too much “equity” for this crowd” (personal e-mail, 3/12/02).

²⁹ Apparently it was not “balanced” enough. In December 1998, the CBR formed, with 10 other businesses, the California Business for Education Excellence which was to focus on “promoting high academic standards, measuring student achievement, establishing accountability for educators, and improving the competitiveness of the United States in the world economy” (BRT, 1999; p. 10).

- ³⁰ Another factor may have been the fear of how time-consuming (and costly) the development of a performance-based test would have been. Purchasing a commercial, off-the-shelf, multiple-choice, norm-referenced test satisfied the desire for test scores that could both provide scores for individual students and have those scores nationally compared. Instead of protracted meetings needed to develop performance standards, a single test score could be plugged into a formula that would calculate a school's rank compared to other schools.
- ³¹ An interesting revision of the more common expression “drill and kill” or Linda McNeil’s “drill and deskill”.
- ³² “Stay the course” was the same expression used by Louis Gerstner at the 1999 governor’s education summit that he convened in Palisades, New York. Gerstner, CEO of IBM, explained, “We understand the pain [that is being inflicted by high-stakes testing]. And we’re going to have to deal with it. But we’re not going to deal with it by backing off” (Steinberg, *NY Times*, 1999). The use of quotation marks by the WestEd authors indicate that, among the people they associate with, it is a common expression.
- ³³ Debbie Meier, founder and principal of Central Park East Secondary School in Harlem, argues that “there are multiple, legitimate definitions of ‘a good education’ and ‘well-educated’ and it is desirable to acknowledge that plurality” (p. 16). She explains that the new standards movement “will not help to develop young minds, contribute to a robust democratic life, or aid the most vulnerable of our fellow citizens. By shifting the locus of authority to outside bodies, it undermines the capacity of schools to instruct by example in the qualities of mind that schools in a democracy should be fostering in kids — responsibility for one’s own ideas, tolerance for the ideas of others, and a capacity to negotiate differences. Standardization instead turns teachers and parents into the local instruments of externally imposed expert judgment. It thus decreases the chances that young people will grow up in the midst of adults who are making hard decisions and exercising mature judgment in the face of disagreements. And it squeezes out those schools and educators that seek to show alternate possibilities or explore other paths. The standardization movement is not based on a simple mistake. It rests on deep assumptions about the goals of education and the proper exercise of authority in the making of decisions — assumptions we ought to reject in favor of a different vision of a healthy democratic society (pp. 4—5, Debbie Meier, *Will Standards Save Public Education?*, Beacon Press, 2000).
- ³⁴ This is a particularly egregious example of manipulation. While everyone can agree that they want “better schools” and “higher levels of learning,” disagreement emerges immediately when one begins to define what these vague terms mean.
- ³⁵ “Study findings, however, suggest that communication about accountability becomes increasingly diluted (or even worse, becomes increasingly muddled) from the pinnacle of the system (the state) to the foundation of the system (the classroom). In addition, very few districts appear to have a consistent local vision of accountability. In many cases, districts’ notions of accountability had not filtered much beyond district staff. Principals often had different notions of what accountability required, and teachers either had no awareness or a different concept of the accountability process” (WestEd, 1999; p. 164).
- ³⁶ David Grissmer and Ann Flanagan, *Exploring Rapid Achievement Gains in North Carolina and Texas*, NEGP, Washington D.C., November 1998.
- ³⁷ Selections from the California Schools Magazine interview with Hauck can be found by going to www.csba.org>>Q&Awith Bill Hauck
- ³⁸ The current (2002) State Board of Education is appointed by the governor. As of 11/20/01 the eleven-member state board consisted of four businessmen (one of whom is president of the board), the executive director of CBEE, two former mayors, two former school administrators, one teacher union representative, and a student from a San Francisco high school (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/board/bio.htm>, viewed 6/2/02). This suggests that business leaders seem to be particularly endowed with “broad” perspectives.

