

Educational Options Council: Report to the ACSA Board

May 15, 2009



Achievements and Strides Forward:

- Significantly increasing the visibility and advocacy of Ed Options issues via strategic marketing; publishing articles in newspapers and journals; lobbying legislators and policy makers; working closely with CDE and ACSA legislative advocates; and promoting the vision that our "of promise" students are "everybody's kids."
- Providing immediate and targeted feedback to Sherry Skelly Griffith, most recently on the Independent Study Bill, which was withdrawn due to her skillful advocacy and the strategic lobbying efforts of Ed Options.
- Developed on-going dialogue with Senator Darrell Steinberg, Speaker Pro Tem of the Senate and his staffers on accurately calculating drop out rates for at risk students, taking into consideration their high mobility rate and providing expertise from the field on drop out prevention.
- Contributed to the West Ed Report, "Alternative Educational Options: A Descriptive Study of California High Schools," supporting a focus on at risk student "save rates" rather than "drop out rates" as a more accurate measure.
- Supporting Jack O'Connell's position in his letter, "First Annual Report on Drop outs and Graduates Using Individual Student Level Data," which commended alternative education schools for "their hard work in helping at risk students continue their education." Specifically, opening the dialogue on the use of CBEDS to capture data for alternative schools with high mobility rates. "Because of the way drop out data is reported, using as a baseline a school's enrollment on one day in the fall, schools with large numbers of students transferring in and out each year are likely to have misleadingly high drop out rates, even while effectively serving their student population."
- Promoting "best practices" of Model Continuation High Schools in the state, working closely with CDE Ed Options Director John Burns and CDE Ed Options Consultant Dennis Fisher to replicate exemplary programs.
- Joining the Educational Options Alliance, the largest dropout prevention and recovery effort in California, comprised of members from ACSA's Ed Options Council; the California Continuation Education Association; the California Consortium for Independent Study; Community Day School Network; and the Juvenile Court, Community, and Alternative School Administrators of California.



- Contributing to the redesign of the Alternative Schools Assessment Model (ASAM). California is the only state in the nation that has proposed this type of measurable accountability for alternative education schools.
- Actively supporting regional meetings on Ed Options topics, including the recent Region 15 meeting hosted by member Christine Krohn, attended by ACSA Legislative Advocate, Adonai Mack, who provided budget updates.
- Wrote an activity design proposal for a presentation at the November ACSA Leadership Conference, entitled "Save Rate: Best Practices for Educational Options Students."
- Provided continuous, diverse, and strong line of leadership for the Council: President, Robin Geissler (Region 15); President Elect, Kathleen Sutphen (Region 2); Vice President, Lynn Murray (Region 8); Secretary, Janie Yoguchi Gates (Region 14); and Legislative Representative Barbara Boggio (Region 13).
- Successfully advocated for the month of May to represent "Educational Options Month" in California.

Future Areas of Focus:

- Continue updating and expanding upon the ACSA Ed Options web page.
- Consider additional activity designs, possibly a "best practices" position paper on drop out recovery.
- Continue building bridges with legislators in our fight to close the achievement gap for "of promise" students.

Top left- Principal Cheryl Le Beouf, Senator Darryl Steinberg, Council President Robin Geissler, and Principal Janie Yoguchi Gates discuss drop out data at an Ed Options Council meeting. **Middle right-** Legislative advocate Barrett Snider of the Ed Options Alliance, John Burns, CDE Ed Options Director, and Dennis Fisher, CDE Ed Options Consultant meet with President Robin Geissler and the Ed Options Council. **Bottom left-** Ed Options Council members congregate in April, 2009