

# Local School Boards Win More Control of Classes

By LEONARD KREIDT  
Education News Service

California's Legislature this year handed local school districts authority, opportunity and a challenge when it enacted SB 1, the hard-fought, controversial curriculum flexibility bill—often called the "Magna Carta" for education.

But what does it mean to students?

According to the law's author, State Sen. George E. Miller Jr. (D-Martinez), it can, at the option of the local school board, mean better education for students.

SB 1, passed after several other unsuccessful tries, drastically revises Division 7 of the Education Code. It reduces Division 7's bulk, clarifies its terms, throws

out obsolete and unnecessary material, and, of most importance, eliminates 33 mandated courses.

FOR THE 16 mandates retained, SB 1 eliminates time elements specified in the old Division 7, with one exception:

Physical education is still subject to a legislative time

requirement—at least 200 minutes of PE in any 10 school days at the elementary level and at least 400 minutes in any 10 school days for high school students.

Since the PE mandate was the hardest fought issue of the battle, it will serve as an example of how the legislation will affect students, depending on how individ-

ual school boards decide to put it to use.

UNDER THE old Division 7, elementary students had to spend 20 minutes per day in PE. The mandate for high school students was one 50-minute period per day. Out of these periods at the high school level had to come time for undressing, showering and dressing,

which took up half of the available time, according to statistics from one pilot project study.

Assume that a school board decided to require high school students to take PE 4 days out of 10, thus giving them 100 minutes per PE period. Only 25 minutes would be required for the dress-shower activity, leaving 75 minutes for PE. Over

the 4 days, 300 minutes would be devoted to exercise, whereas 10 days of 50-minute periods, each losing 25 minutes to locker room activities, would give only 250 minutes of actual PE.

If classes with set-up and take-down requirements, such as chemistry, shop, home economics or art operate similarly, equivalent time savings in on-instructional activities may be devoted to educating the students.

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He lists "more involvement of citizens in development of curricula" as another advantage. With most mandates removed, citizens may advocate changes, with confidence that a local board now has the freedom to make them, and fit them to local needs. The law does not eliminate requirements that schools teach morals, manners, patriotism, conversation, driver education, about the dangers of drugs, alcohol and so forth, but gives flexibility in fitting these subjects into the school day.

EXPERTS say some pupils cannot profit from foreign language instruction. SB 1 eliminates the mandate that foreign language be taught all students in grades 6 through 8, and allows districts to offer such instruction in this area as they feel is locally appropriate.

If the makeup of a community indicates the desirability of a greater emphasis on vocational education, for instance, the new law gives the local board the tools to provide it.

Graduation requirements

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**COLLEGE REPORT**  
By ROBERT M. BERSI  
Assistant to the President  
California State College, Dominguez Hills

It's rather tragic, I believe, when education is being accused of responding to, rather than taking the lead, in social change. Education should lead in civil rights reform rather than respond to it. Education should law the groundwork for major changes in technology, in the economy, or in our social patterns, rather than simply react to them; yet, except perhaps in the area of technology, we simply have not seen this process taking place to a reassuring degree.

Possibly, an examination of these pressures, or better yet of the source from which most of them spring, can give us some insight into the problems which education today stem from struggles throughout our society to cope with a torrential flood of knowledge.

year 2,000 there will be over a thousand times as much knowledge of all kinds to record, to sift, to store, to search out, to teach, and hopefully to use with some discrimination and effectiveness.

NONE OF US foresees any halt in the increasing rate in the production of knowledge. The fact of the matter is that an increasing number of people are working at the job of producing knowledge. More than 75,000 scientific and technical periodicals alone are currently being published in some 65 languages. This adds up, incidentally, to about two million articles per year. Finally, the realization of a fantastic and continuing rate of increase in knowledge has burst upon us with explosive force.

A combination of changes in society from new knowledge and pressure to prepare people to utilize effectively an even greater flood of knowledge in the future carries the main thrust of pressure to education.

Consider the impact upon subject matter and upon the learning process. We have begun to sense the impossibility, for example, of encompassing within a single course all that a student should know. We have come to face the fact that we simply cannot teach everything to everyone and have begun to embrace Whitehead's definition of the aim of education as being broad enough to teach people to utilize knowledge and not be limited to simple organization of knowledge.

UP TO A few decades ago we were geared to a more leisurely pace in the handling of problems. Today, however, we can no longer plan and act as though the knowledge of revolution does not exist. There have been such changes in the quantity and nature of what we know, indeed such a rapid acceleration in what we know, that new materials and new teaching techniques must supplant the traditional approach to learning.

More changes in how men live and work will occur during the next 35 years that were produced in all previous history. There is about a hundred times as much to know now as was available in 1900. By the

enrollment in grades one through eight, an estimated 2,830,000, a 2 per cent increase.

• Grades nine through twelve, estimated at 1,235,000, an expected 4 per cent increase.

• Full-time junior college students, estimated at 237,000, an expected 11 per cent increase.

• Full-time state college students, 132,000, an estimated 8 per cent increase.

• Enrollment at the University of California, an expected 95,000 "with qualifications." It was 92,000 last year.

Estimates on special students, such as various categories of mentally retarded, physically handicapped, and so forth, plus adults taking night courses were not finalized by the State Department of Education.

**California Schools Enroll 5.5 Million**

Full- and part-time enrollment in California's public schools, junior colleges, adult and special education, state colleges and the University of California is expected to exceed 5.5 million this fall.

Statistics supplied by the Population Division of the State Department of Finance and the State Department of Education include:

- Estimated kindergarten

enrollment, 375,000, an expected increase of a little under 1 per cent.

- Enrollment in grades one through eight, an estimated 2,830,000, a 2 per cent increase.
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