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New post on **Truth in American Education**

Education Policies Gone Bad at Our Children's Expense

by [Shane Vander Hart](#)



Below is a guest post from John Walker. He is a research and design software engineer with 18 years of experience doing contract work for NASA air traffic management tools. He is also an elected member of the Modesto City Schools Board of Education since 2015 and currently its Vice President. He is also the father of 2 high school students in public schools.

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By John Walker

In 2012 the Governor signed [AB 1246](#) cementing Common Core as the K-12 standards in California. In 2013 the Governor signed the bill enacting the "[Local Control Funding Formula](#)". The State Board of Education (SBE) and the California Department of Education (CDE) have struggled for 7 plus years to convince the public there is a plan to lift student achievement and close achievement gaps. The results have been far from stellar. When one looks at SBAC assessments California has not only failed to succeed, but by any measure it has been a dismal failure.

What is the plan to rise from the ashes of categorically lowering the K-12 math and English language arts standards in the state? What is the plan to take experimental teaching philosophies which have shown little or no positive effect to become the end all be all for educating our children?

One in four California school districts will be required to get assistance due to students with disabilities not succeeding, and over [600 school districts](#) will need assistance when all students are accounted for. The results would have been worse if the SBE [did not change the rules](#).

The argument made is it will take time because the standards were raised. This is normally followed by a myriad of descriptions that imply that California has taken on the greatest educationally rigorous challenge ever. California junior colleges have [dropped intermediate algebra requirements](#) for most students. The California State

University system is poised to begin [teaching high school math and English for college credit](#). Meanwhile in 2013 the state passed legislation [categorically moving Algebra 1 from 8th grade to the 9th grade](#). How do any of these facts square with raising the bar? They don't but facts aren't important in Sacramento.

The California accountability plan was rejected by the [department of education](#). The response was to blame local school districts and throw the complaints downhill to the [local governing school boards](#). Fast forward and the CDE for the 3rd time is remodeling the LCAP and LGFF to force more compliance on [school districts](#).

They are calling it the "Test Kitchen", but let's be honest it's the next step in defending failed policies by throwing the kitchen sink at local governing boards. We have endured the [failed annual SBAC test](#). We have expended 100's of millions of dollars building web based networks and purchasing computers to meet testing mandates. The required local funding of pension liabilities continues to rise. By 2024 districts will be [contributing 28.2 cents for CalPERS](#) and 19.5 cents on every dollar for CalSTRS. Historically California continues to underfund education. [California ranks 45th](#) in the percentage of taxable income per student, 41st in per pupil spending, & 48th in pupil staff ratios.

The problem is not local school districts being held accountable. The problem is the public and the state legislature have not held the appointed (unelected & unaccountable) SBE & CDE accountable for their failed policies. So, keep throwing the kitchen sink at us, keep blaming us for not making failed policies work, & keep letting the privately funded nonprofit think tanks make & defend failed policies.

California education policy is an unmitigated disaster, and when it's over the blame will rest in the hands of the SBE led by Michael Kirst and the State Superintendent of Education Tom Torlakson. If the legislature cannot find the courage to act, they are just as much to blame.

Facts matter and policies that hurt children and families should never be tolerated, but we live in a state where accountability is only used to push problems downhill.

[Shane Vander Hart](#) | March 13, 2018 at 12:09 am | URL: <https://wp.me/p1ASmC-2B9>

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