



March 19, 2015

Hon. Loni Hancock
State Senate
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

SB 463: SUPPORT
Senate Education Committee

Dear Senator Hancock:

The California Association of School Psychologists (CASP) is proud to be a co-sponsor of your SB 463. We are in full support of the bill.

SB 463 will establish a statewide program of training for trainers for PBIS multi-tiered intervention and support programs including restorative justice. The bill, to the extent one-time funding is available in the 2015-16 Budget Act, would require the Superintendent of Public Instruction to apportion funding to a designated county office of education that would be the fiduciary agent and operate the program. The county office would be required to consult with key stakeholders to implement a plan that would fund statewide professional development, program support and training in schoolwide PBIS.

CASP supports SB 463 for several important reasons. First, one of the most important goals at every school should be the creation of positive cultures in schools. PBIS is one of the most effective approaches to creating a positive school culture. This approach is in use and growing in a number of California schools. The passage of the bill will allow for a targeted professional development program to be developed statewide that would enable school leaders, principals and teachers to become familiar with these strategies as well as understand how suspensions and expulsions affect students both socially and academically.

Second, CASP believes it is critical to spread the use of preventative and positive school discipline practices in California. PBIS is not a specific curriculum, intervention, or practice, but is a decision making framework that guides selection, integration and implementation of the best evidence-based academic and behavioral practices for improving important academic and behavior outcomes for all students. This framework is an integral step toward the goal of establishing a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary prevention and intervention model that provides a continuum to identify and meet the needs of all students before they require more intensive levels of intervention. Within the body of the PBIS system is the concept of restorative justice. It is an approach to resolving conflicts and behavioral problems that is grounded in mutual respect, positive relationships, and productive accountability. Restorative practices help students understand the impact of their actions. Practices such as Peacemaking Circles and Restorative Conferences are designed to help students take responsibility for their actions and repair the harm they may have caused. Through this process, students learn how to interact and manage their relationships. A Restorative Justice approach enables school personnel to intervene more effectively, increasing support without compromising accountability. There is growing evidence that school-based restorative practices reduce violence and school suspensions

Third, CASP believes that with the training and professional development required in SB 463, all California school districts would be able to establish a statewide model that will allow all districts to implement PBIS multi-tiered frameworks that are aligned with the priorities established by the

Local Control Funding Formula. These include: (a) flexibility to meet student needs, (b) equity through student focused funding, and (c) decision making power that will allow LEAs to act based on the needs they see for students. PBIS provides an operational framework for achieving these outcomes. The PBIS multi-tiered support systems framework addresses at least five critical areas of the required Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). These include: 1) academic outcomes, 2) Common Core State Standards, 3) school culture and climate, 4) parent involvement, and 5) student engagement.

Finally, CASP believes that public policies have generally approached safety and mental health in schools with ad hoc and piecemeal approaches. This is certainly born out with the narrow view of discipline that has resulted in very narrow laws related to student suspension and expulsion. While a number of worthy statutory changes were made to these code sections in recent years, there is more work that could and should be done. Zero tolerance approaches to discipline have limited school district efforts to appropriately intervene in a timely manner with appropriate steps. We must establish systems for promoting social-emotional development that helps to respond to and prevent negative behaviors and to re-engage disconnected students. With the passage of the Local Control Funding Formula every district is now able to prioritize strategies like PBIS as a part of their Local Control Accountability Plans. However, CASP believes that the vast majority of districts are not aware of the PBIS system and thus are not aware of the benefits or strategies needed for implementation. SB 463 would provide valuable awareness, training and follow-up options for districts.

Again, CASP supports SB 463. If we can assist you in any way please contact me at (916) 447-8420.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Frost", written in a cursive style.

Jeffrey Frost
CASP Legislative Advocate

cc: Senate Education Committee members