



GOVERNOR HOLDS PRESS CONFERENCE TO DISCUSS RACE TO THE TOP LEGISLATION

Latest News

MR. ALLEN:

Good morning and welcome to Noralto Elementary School. I'm Brad Allen, the proud principal of this school and it's an honor to be able to host this press conference supporting Race to the Top.

Anyone involved with Noralto can tell you this is a very special place. We're currently celebrating incredible growth in API scores, 55 points. This is due in large part to the dedicated and talented staff who go above and beyond every day to ensure students' success. The Twin Rivers School District has also been instrumental in providing support through professional development, technology resources and, specifically for me, coaching and mentorship, which has all but paved the way for Noralto to be successful.

At this time I'd like to introduce and thank the following officials that are here in attendance. Alice Huffman, president of the California State Conference of the NAACP. (Applause) Frank Porter, District Superintendent of Twin Rivers School District. (Applause) We also have with us Cortez Quinn, who is a Twin Rivers Board member; (Applause) Ted Mitchell, president of the California State Board of Education; (Applause) Dr. Glen Thomas, Secretary of Education. (Applause) We have Mr. David Weichert and his incredible high-achieving fifth grade students with us. (Applause)

And without further ado, our Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. (Applause)

GOVERNOR SCHWARZENEGGER:

Well, thank you very much. It's wonderful to be here at the Noralto Elementary School. And also, thank you very much to the school principal, Brad Allen. I have just been greeted by him this morning and he immediately said, "Have you worked out already, Governor?"

So I said, "Of course, an hour."

He says, "Me too." So this is a fit school principal that you have here. It's great.

And then we have, of course, Alice Huffman here. I want to thank her also, who is the president of the NAACP. Thank you so much for your great support in making sure that we have equal education in California. And you have been fighting tirelessly on this issue, so thank you very much for that. And Superintendent Frank Porter, we want to thank him also and president of the State Board of Education Ted Mitchell, thank you. Then we have, of course, Secretary of Education Dr. Glen Thomas, thank you also very much. And we were supposed to have Superintendent Jack O'Connell also here but he got stuck, I think, in traffic. Maybe he's coming a little bit later on.

But I heard wonderful things here about this school, wonderful things about this elementary school and I wanted to come here and just see it for myself and hear about their great success story, how well you are doing with your grades. And of course this school has been on the federal program improvement for five years and now you're trying to get off that program.

And I heard that you're doing so well with the test scores, that your test scores are better and improvements are better than any other school in this district, so this is really terrific and I'm very proud of you on that. And, of course, it takes a lot of work and I think that your school principal here has shown great leadership. Mr. Allen has worked very, very hard to bring everyone together here and I think that this summer you have a good shot of getting off this program.

And I've heard also the kind of things that are working here and how well you're using data to drill down and find out the things that are working and that are not working. And I also have heard of the great after school programs, that this school is making you stay after school if you need some additional attention with homework assistance, with tutoring and with helping you with your education. I think that has been also very helpful.

Then you also have the whole community together here. You have the special nights, the math nights, you have the science nights, the reading nights, the English nights and all of those kind of nights that are also very, very helpful. And of course let me tell you that your school principal, Mr. Allen, is a big believer in partnership. I mean, this is one thing he's really known for, that he feels like not one single person or entity can make you successful. It is a partnership between the school principal and the teachers, a partnership between the students and the parents and everyone working together and that's exactly why you have been so successful here, so we're very proud of that.

Now, a lot of what the Noralto Elementary School is already -- what you're doing right here is something that we want to do all over the state of California, because we want to provide equal education to all of the kids. And talking about equal education, there is one person that is also really heavily into that and that is President Obama and his administration has a program called 'Race to the Top,' and there they have provided a certain amount of money, \$4.3 billion, for schools all over the United States that want to reform and want to change and they want to really excel.

And so we want to be competitive with that money. We want to go in there and get a lot of that money; at least \$700 million that is available to us. The only problem is that the state of California is not really yet able to compete for that money because we don't have certain laws in place. And this is why it is very important that we get serious about this competition and do everything that we can to get that money and that's why I called a special session of the legislature on education and on education reform.

The Senate has already shown great leadership and they have passed our education reform package that we proposed. Now it's time, of course, for the next step. It is time for our State Assembly to pass the comprehensive package. So we want to put the pressure on them and want to let them know that it is very important to go and to pass what they have already passed in the Senate and anything less is jeopardizing additional funding and ultimately hurt our students. And it is not time for politics now. Watering down our children's education is not an option and watering down our education reform package is also not an option. Let's keep the momentum going now. The clock is ticking and the deadline for the Race to the Top is fast approaching. We cannot delay and we certainly cannot start from scratch on any of those kind of things.

So let's not let anything get in the way. I want to urge the Assembly to pass this package as quickly as possible. This is the chance of a lifetime and it is up to our State Assembly now to act immediately for the sake of our children and for the sake of our future, so I urge them to pass this legislation. Thank you very much.

And now I want to bring out our next speaker, which is Ted Mitchell, I'm sure who has some really good things to say about all of this. OK? Thank you very much. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. MITCHELL:

Thank you, Governor. And thanks everyone for being here and thanks to all of you fifth graders, especially thank you for the advice on my daughter's birthday present for today. It's my next stop.

GOVERNOR:

You don't have a gift yet for her? (Laughter)

It's trouble, isn't it?

MR. MITCHELL:

GOVERNOR:

That's kind of late.

MR. MITCHELL:

Cutting it close, isn't it?

GOVERNOR:

Exactly, yeah. Give her \$1,000 check. (Laughter) You start with that.

MR. MITCHELL:



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Governor Brown to Attend Equality California's Sacramento Equality Awards on Monday 03-06-2014



Governor Brown Announces Appointments 03-05-2014



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Governor Brown Signs Drought Legislation 03-01-2014

We got the Wii.

GOVERNOR:

Oh, OK.

MR. MITCHELL:

The Wii suggestion from a couple kids.

So as the Governor said, the Race to the Top competition is going to be a very serious competition and California needs to not only be in this competition but we need to win. California is a state that has been a leader in education reform for a very long time. We've been a leader in other sectors too, in the economy, in social justice. California needs to step to the plate and needs to be counted in the Race to the Top competition. And absolutely critical to that is the Assembly passing the Governor's education reform package. The Senate's package is admirable in many ways and it's our hope that the Assembly will likewise support the very important elements of the reform package.

Key to Race to the Top are four program areas and as the Governor mentioned and as Principal Allen indicated, in many ways this school is an example of what Race to the Top hopes to do:

- It sets very high standards for all of you.
- It creates ways of measuring your progress and information that teachers can use to improve that and in Race to the Top they call that "Standards and Assessments" on the one hand and "Data Systems" on the other.
- The third piece is improving or increasing the way we use great teachers and great leaders. And you've got great teachers and great leaders and moreover, with the professional development and the coaching, the kinds of things that Mr. Allen was talking about, this school has been able to use the talent that it has really effectively. So that's the third part of Race to the Top.
- And the fourth part of Race to the Top is turning around underperforming schools. And you're a success story. You have worked hard and you've turned this school around together.

What I'm aiming to say in that is one, to call out the success here. But the other is to say that California has a lot to build on. We're not starting this Race to the Top from ground zero, we're starting it from effective practices across the state. We need to build on those, we need to highlight those, we need to make it possible for more schools to do what you've done. That's what Race to the Top is about. It's about building on those strengths.

Now is not the time for us to equivocate. Now is the time to move boldly ahead, the way California does, the way the Governor has suggested that we do, to move boldly ahead on behalf of our state and our children.

It's now my opportunity to turn the podium over to Frank Porter, who is the wildly successful superintendent here in Twin Rivers. And Superintendent Porter, it's all yours. (Applause)

SUPERINTENDENT PORTER:

Thank you. And I want to welcome you, add my welcome, Governor and Ted Mitchell and other officials to Twin Rivers Unified.

And as you've heard before, this school is a turnaround school. Noralto Elementary is a turnaround school and in the face of some very drastic cuts in state funding for education, the teachers, the principals, the support staff and the students here at Noralto and throughout other schools, not only in Twin Rivers but also throughout the state. I think as I mentioned, we have many examples in California of turnaround schools doing phenomenal things and it's testament to the dedication and the commitment of teachers and principals and parents and students that these remarkable public schools exist throughout California and they continue to achieve and show significant growth and improvement.

However, our efforts to sustain these efforts at Noralto and to create the conditions for other turnaround schools throughout California, while we've laid a lot of the groundwork and a lot of the pieces are there to make that happen, they're made more daunting by the lack of adequate financial resources. There's been nearly a 20 percent drop in state funding for K-12 schools that occurred during the past 24 months. And as you all know, we're in a state of an economic crisis and this has resulted and -- you know, we are where we are -- it has resulted in increasing class sizes, reduced parent conference time, reduced supply budgets, reductions in music programs, delaying building repairs and countless other reductions and services and support for our students.

We cannot afford and should not forgo providing the legislative and policy support for California schools and districts to be competitive in acquiring and competing for these federal Race to the Top funds. As the superintendent of California's newest unified school district, Twin Rivers Unified, I join with the Governor and the officials here and many others from throughout this state to urge the legislative leadership in Sacramento to take bold and prompt action to pass legislation that will improve California's competitive position for the federal Race to the Top funds.

If we're provided at the schools, at the local level, with these legislative statutes, local school districts working cooperatively with our professional teaching staff and principal leaders and other school officials at the state level, we can create local and statewide applications that will be very competitive. But we cannot delay. We encourage and urge the State of California legislature and the Senate to take prompt action so that California schools can be competitive for these funds. It is imperative that we do that. Thank you. (Applause)

And now it's my pleasure to introduce Alice Huffman. (Applause)

MS. HUFFMAN:

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Governor, Mr. Secretary and all the dignitaries. This is a wonderful opportunity. Now, I am Alice Huffman. I told a couple of you over there, I'm from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. One hundred years old, that's how old our organization is. Now, when I look in this room, colored people look like all of us in this room. We're all colored people.

And the reason I'm here is because the NAACP, as we like to be called -- some say the N Double A CP -- it's NAACP. I'm here because we've been fighting for equity in public education for a long time. We believe in public education. And so when the Governor and the Secretary decided to join President Obama to try to improve our schools in California, it was only natural that the NAACP should partner with them to try to make this happen.

Now, you all are probably wondering why you're sitting here listening to all of this grownup talk. You're sitting here listening to all this grownup talk because you are an example of what we're fighting for. We believe that every child in California should have the same opportunity that you're getting right here today.

And it really makes my heart happy to come and see a very diverse population like yours, because it disproves the myth that children of color cannot excel. You can do as well as anyone else if you have the right school board members, you have the right principals, you have the right teachers and you have the right superintendents. They have to be people who believe that you can learn.

And so we're fighting for every child in California to have this opportunity. We had the litigation in 1954 that integrated the schools and we've been going uphill ever since then, trying to figure out how is it we get our school system to the place where all young people can have their brains tuned, trained and ready to participate on the world market. So when we come to a school like this and see a teacher like this and know the kind of administration you have here, we know we're on the right track.

Now, this Race to the Top, obviously you've got to compete and that's why we're out here trying to make sure that people understand how important it is to compete. You know, you all read the papers. As a matter of fact, you asked me, one of you asked me if the Governor was strong and we were talking about his latest movie that we laughed at last night. Well, he's strong in a lot of ways. He's strong because he has the courage to take on a system and try to change the system, some changes that's been long overdue, so that we can get in this Race to the Top to get some of this money that California is entitled to if only we would change some of the regulations and some of the rules in California that will prevent us from competing.

So I'm hoping that this time next year in January we will have those laws changed and we will be competitive, trying to get our fair share of that money called Race to the Top. And I'm sure if we get it they're going to remember that they came over here and they're going to make sure that this district gets some more of that money so that you all can continue to improve.

So I thank you for being here and I wish you a merry Christmas. (Applause)

GOVERNOR SCHWARZENEGGER:

Thank you, Alice. You said it again exactly right. And I want to add that you talked about the lawsuits. I mean, the interesting thing also was that when I came into office in 2003 there was a lawsuit that was filed -- the Williams lawsuit, remember? -- about equal education. And the state of California then hired an outside law firm and paid \$20 million to fight and say that the state of California does not have the obligation to provide equal education. We settled that lawsuit very quickly after I came into office and I said yes, we do have an obligation to go and provide equal education to all of our kids and equal homework material and books and all of those kind of things. So I think that great things have happened since then.

But this, nevertheless, is an extremely important kind of reform that we are fighting for, to get this extra money from the federal government. And it's reform that should have happened already years ago in California but I think this extra push from the Obama administration and this extra money dangling over our heads, I think gives us the extra motivation now to go and get the reforms done.

I just want to add that you kids have half of the responsibility, which is that you have to study, you have to listen to your coaches, you have to listen to your teachers, to your mentors, to your parents, to your school principal and do all the studying. We have the

other half of the responsibility and that is to provide a great education and great teachers and the money for education. So I think that you all have done a great job, you have done your part, so we are very happy. And that's why you're going to go and be very successful. You can achieve anything that you want, anything, if you're smart and if you do your homework and do your reading, writing and arithmetic and all of those kind of things and listen to your teachers. So keep up the great work.

So if you have any questions about that, please feel free.

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS:

GOVERNOR: Yes?

QUESTION: Governor, why is it that the Assembly needs to pass a different bill from that which already passed in the Senate?

GOVERNOR: They don't have to. The Assembly can pass the bill that the Senate has put over to the Assembly. That's a great bill, it has all of the ingredients in there that we need in order to be very competitive. And to me what is important is not to do just the minimum in order to be competitive. And that's the kind of language I hear in the Assembly side, what we have here is, I think, that would make us competitive.

I say that's not good enough. What we have to have is be the most competitive. We have to be number one. We have to show to the federal government that we take those reforms seriously and that we do all of the reforms that are necessary, so we are on top of the list when it comes to getting that money rather than on the bottom of the list.

QUESTION: Governor, what specifically is wrong with the Assembly bill, or is inferior to the Senate bill? And what sort of pressure are you putting on the Speaker to try and get that?

GOVERNOR: Well, I think that you will see press events all over the state of California today. As a matter of fact, May or Villaraigosa is having one at 1:00 o'clock, talking about this very same subject. There are parents that are having conferences, talking to the press and putting the pressure on the Assembly. It's just -- you know, they want to water it down and this is dangerous, because even though we may be able to go and fill out an application and go to the federal government and try to get that money, we will not be successful, we will not be competitive. That's what I fear and we will lose out \$700 million of very important money, which is very important especially in this economic crunch and financial crunch that we are in right now. The kids and education need every single dollar and so I will fight all the way to the end. And I want to urge the Assembly to do the same thing, not to go and make it tough and not to go and, you know, make it impossible to get this money but to make it possible. All they have to do is just sign on to what the Assembly has already signed and I think that we can be very competitive for this money.

QUESTION: Governor, how exactly is it watered down? According to an analysis by the Speaker it covers more of the guidelines in Race to the Top than the Senate version.

GOVERNOR: Well, I understand that that's what she feels but that's not what we feel and we have been on top of that. And I think maybe Ted, you can speak more closely to that.

QUESTION: What exactly, Governor, is avoiding you from signing?

SUPERINTENDENT PORTER: So I think, in terms of the side-by-side analysis that we've done of the Senate bill, the Governor's package and the Assembly bill, shows that there are some, the Governor's term, some watering down and some looseness in language about funding, about where standards are built and how from standards flow frameworks and curriculum materials. There's also a very different approach to the important aspect of choice as it applies to turning around failing schools and giving communities and parents much more of a role in finding and developing equal educational opportunities for all kids and making sure that they have rights with regard to both the schools their kids attend and their own voice in the conduct.

QUESTION: But choice is not in the federal guidelines, exactly. And so would that keep you, Governor, from signing the bill, from signing the Assembly version?

GOVERNOR: I think it is extremely important that if you have a child in a school that is failing and it's failing and it's failing, that this child you can take out of that school and not only move it to another school but move it to another district. And not to put a cap on that, either, that if you have 1,000 students that are failing that you can take 1,000 students out of that school and make them move over and let them move over to another district, rather than putting a cap on it and limiting it. So every time you put a cap on it or you put a poison pill in there, it doesn't appear to you, maybe but to us we know right away there's an intentional kind of like wanting to stop that from happening.

And the same is also with charter schools. We want to go, as the Obama administration -- and I talk to Arne Duncan all the time, who is the secretary of Education, who is a terrific leader in education, who I know from the after School Programs when we had our After School Programs in Chicago -- and he made it very clear, we have to take the cap off charter schools. So what does the Assembly do is they put some other poison pills in there that make it impossible for charter schools to survive. That is all so they can't really go and increase the amount of charter schools.

So there are certain things in there that we want to get rid of. They know exactly what those things are that make us not be really competitive. And so what we basically just want to say to them is now is not the time for politics. Now is not the time to water down the bill or the reforms or anything like this. This is the time to be aggressive and to forget about the special interests that are out there that are fighting to keep the status quo. Forget that. Let's do something for these children here. They deserve better.

QUESTION: Would you veto the bill as written right now?

GOVERNOR: Well, it hasn't come to -- there is -- you know, you never --

QUESTION: If it came to your desk.

GOVERNOR: You never go and talk and answer questions about hypotheticals. What we want to do is, we want to work with the Assembly. And we want to work together because we have seen with the water infrastructure bill, when Democrats and Republicans, when the Senate and the Assembly worked together, we can perform miracles. And I think that now, at the end of the year, we want to make sure that this is one of those victories, just like water, or just like we have approached the budget, of looking at this \$60 billion deficit that we had and solved that. And we have another deficit coming up.

So what we want to do is we want to work together. And so what we want to say basically to the Assembly is, let's work together on this. Let's work together. It's not about me picking apart their bill. I have not gotten that bill, it's just hypothetical. They have a chance to vote on this. Let's do the right thing here.

QUESTION: Governor, I have a prisons question.

GOVERNOR: Yes?

QUESTION: There was a rally this morning about hundreds that say that they're going to get laid off next month from the department, training, vocational teachers that rehabilitate prisoners and they're going to be laid off next month, 900 out of 1,400. How do you expect our streets to be safe if our criminals are not going to be educated and have nothing to do on the outside?

GOVERNOR: Well, the question is, when you have a limited amount of money then you can only go and pay out the money you have. And so when you have all of a sudden \$60 billion less money, you cannot pay out the same amount to prisons, you cannot pay out the same amount to education, to higher education, to in-home services, to any of those things. So every one has to be cut back.

This is why it is so important not to talk about the cuts that have been made but much more about how do we prevent this from ever happening again. Because the \$60 billion, plus the \$20 billion plus that we have now coming up as a deficit, this is not because of the economy. This is because we have a budget system and a tax system that doesn't work. The economy only went down from an increase in economic activities from, instead of five percent, it's a two percent increase. So there's only a three percent difference, so we should have a decrease in revenues of maybe \$10 billion or \$15 billion but not of \$30 billion, not a drop of 27 percent. Those are huge drops of revenues in a short period of time only because we are relying so much on capital gains and personal income tax; 53 percent of our revenues come from that. Those are not steady revenue sources, so this is why we have to reform the system.

So we should concentrate on that so it never, ever happens again. But as you can see, it's very tough to do that. But that's the pressure, rather than thinking about, well, wait a minute, you're taking some dollars away from in-home services, you're taking money away from prisons, you're taking money away from education. That's not going to help us, because there's only a certain amount of money. And that's the way it works, not only in this state but in every state. But our state was hit twice as hard as other states because of our failing tax system and because of our failing budget system.

Yes?

QUESTION: Governor, you're also awaiting action from the legislature on your appointment of Abel Maldonado as lieutenant governor. You've heard the complaints, especially from the Senate pro tem, about the cost of a runoff election if his seat were to be vacated. What do you think the fallout would be on the legislature if they fail to confirm Maldonado?

GOVERNOR: Well, first of all, again, it's an 'if' question, a hypothetical question. I believe very strongly that the legislature is going to approve Senator Maldonado, because in the end they will ask themselves the question, shouldn't we reward someone that is the center? Shouldn't we reward someone that makes decisions continuously of what's best for the people rather than for the party? That's what we want to reward, not punish.

And this is why I think in the end they will go and send that signal to California, rather than the other signal and say you're going to be punished by Republicans, you're going to be punished by Democrats. So I think that he has a good shot of getting, you know, confirmed and he will make a terrific lieutenant governor.

Thank you very much. Thank you.