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## ENDORSEMENT

### ADAM MURRAY FOR ASSEMBLY

Adam Murray is the best of the four challengers for the seat of incumbent Carol Liu, who is out of the race because of term limits. Murray is an up-and-comer with a comprehensive knowledge of the biggest challenges facing the state and his district...he is a true policy wonk, but one who knows how to communicate with both voters and politicians.



"I am a teacher. I support Adam Murray because he has innovative solutions on how to improve our schools."

—Kristina Richards, Teacher, LAUSD

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## Ten Common Sense Solutions for Improving our Schools

"Education is  
and must continue to be  
America's great door  
to opportunity."

**ADAM MURRAY**  
DEMOCRAT FOR ASSEMBLY



"I support Adam Murray because he understands the challenges facing our schools and has common sense solutions for addressing them."

—Dr. Susan Kane, former Pasadena Unified School Board Member



"Adam Murray and I have taught classes together for many years. Adam understands what we need in our classrooms."

—Juan Flores, Community College Teacher

“We must do better.  
We can do better.”  
—Adam Murray.



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## ADAM MURRAY DEMOCRAT FOR ASSEMBLY

### Dear Friends and Neighbors,

I am a teacher and a Democrat. I have taught elementary, high school and adult education classes. I currently teach Economics at East Los Angeles College. I am proud to come from a family of teachers. My mother teaches high school, my father teaches in college, my grandmother taught elementary school and was the school librarian, and my grandfather taught at the New York City Police Academy.

When I agreed to run for the California Assembly, I did so on the condition that my campaign would focus on common sense solutions to the very real challenges that we face in our great state. We face serious challenges relating to our economy, our healthcare system, and our environment. **But the single greatest challenge facing California today is improving the quality of our public schools.**

I understand in my heart how important public education is to a just and productive society. As the father of a eight-month old, it is unacceptable to me that 33% of our students fail to graduate from high school, that our secondary school class sizes are the largest in the nation, and that our students' reading and math scores are worse than those in every other state – except for Louisiana and Mississippi.<sup>1</sup> **We must do better. We can do better.**

To those who say that improving our public schools is too difficult, I say that we who live in the most creative state in the most productive nation in the world can figure out how to better educate our children. To those who say that improving our public schools is too expensive, I say that the ignorance and the poverty that failure breeds is far more expensive than investing in education. To those who say that improving our schools will take too long, I paraphrase John F. Kennedy's story about the gardener who objected to planting a tree because it would not reach maturity for 100 years. If that truly is the case, then there is no time to lose. We must plant the seed immediately.

Education is and must continue to be America's great door to opportunity. **I will not abandon our public schools or tolerate their failure.** This pamphlet discusses a few of my specific ideas about what we must do in order to improve our schools throughout the district and throughout the state.

If you agree that we must do a better job of educating our children, I invite you to help me plant the seed of education reform by voting for me in the Democratic primary on June 6.

Sincerely,

Adam Murray  
A Passionate Progressive  
with Common Sense Solutions

<sup>1</sup> Quality Counts (2005) EdWeek, January 6, 2005.



## Ten Common Sense Solutions for Improving Our Schools

“We must resist Governor Schwarzenegger’s efforts to blame teachers for our educational challenges. Teachers are the solution, not the problem.”  
– Adam Murray

### Governor Schwarzenegger has taken California in the wrong direction.

Governor Schwarzenegger’s response to the problems in education has been to blame teachers, make it more expensive to become a teacher, and cut the school funding necessary to attract, retain, and support teachers.

Instead of encouraging more of our brightest young people to pursue careers in education, he launched a drive last year to reduce the modest pensions teachers now earn. He forced a wasteful special election on his plan to put new teachers on five-year probation. He increased fees for students pursuing teaching credentials at California State Universities by 30 percent. And he broke his promise to schools to restore funding that was eliminated during the budget crisis.

As a result, our efforts to recruit, retain, and support teachers languish or have been eliminated. Not surprisingly, enrollment in teacher preparation programs has declined by 12 percent in the past two years. As the Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning warns, “Looking ahead, this lack of investment may prove disastrous.”

But failure is not an option. Adam Murray understands what we must do to confront this challenge. Adam received his B.A. in International Relations from Pomona College, his Master’s degree in Economics from the Claremont Graduate University, and his J.D. from U.C. Berkeley’s Boalt Hall School of Law. Based both on his formal education and practical experience as an educator, attorney, and policy analyst, Adam advances the following ten-point plan to improve California’s public schools. Adam’s Ten-Point Plan provides common sense solutions for empowering teachers, preparing students, bringing parents and the community back into the schools, and educating our citizens from preschool through college.

#### 1. Improve Teacher Recruitment and Retention:

“Teaching was the hardest work I had ever done, and it remains the hardest work I have done to date.” – Ann Richards, former Governor of Texas. As a teacher himself, Adam understands that great schools start with great teachers. We must recruit and retain the best and the brightest teachers. Over the next decade, a third of California’s teachers are likely to retire. In addition, too many talented individuals leave the profession – each year about 5% of teachers leave the public schools for reasons other than retirement. It is costly to have teachers leaving the profession too early. We spend approximately \$456 million recruiting and training replacements for these teachers who are lost from the teaching profession. Here are some of Adam’s ideas for how we can recruit the 100,000 new teachers we will need over the next decade:

- Support the California Teaching Fellowship Program to recruit talented students and mid-career adults who agree to teach at low-performing schools.
- Roll back Governor Schwarzenegger’s fee rased for teacher training programs. These fee increases have increased the cost of completing an undergraduate degree and receiving a teaching credential at California State University by over \$2,500.
- Pay our teachers better, pay more for quality. The research supports the common sense idea that paying higher salaries does attract more qualified teachers. We should also provide higher pay for experienced teachers who teach in high-need schools and hard-to-fill subjects.
- We should revise teacher transfer rules so that teachers with seniority do not automatically have the first priority for vacancies. To ensure that the best teachers teach where they are needed most, we should ensure that teachers are placed according to the needs of students and schools, and also that teachers have incentives to teach in high-needs schools.

2. Invest in Our Teachers by Providing Training and Mentoring: The vast majority of teachers enter the profession because they want to help children learn. The vast majority of

teachers who leave for reasons other than retirement do so out of frustration. The most important thing we can do to recruit and retain good teachers is to ensure that they have the necessary training and resources to educate our children. Study after study has shown that investments in teacher support and training improve the quality of education, improve teachers’ working lives, and keep teachers in the classroom longer.<sup>2</sup> Adam is committed to expanding programs such as the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program, which encourages experienced teachers to mentor new or struggling teachers. Adam also supports investing in professional development by supporting teachers who improve their teaching and leadership skills. We must also do a better job of identifying, training and supporting principals.

3. Involve Our Teachers in More Decision-Making: Teachers are the “unacknowledged experts” in teaching and learning.<sup>3</sup> Teachers should have increased input into key policy decisions such as curriculum selection, standards for student performance, teacher training and career development, teacher job responsibilities, and peer assistance and review programs.

Our elected officials in Sacramento should enlist teachers and their unions as leaders for educational improvements and reform. Schools that actively engage teachers in the design and implementation of reforms (such as incentive based pay arrangements, or changes to teacher transfer rules) have a much more successful track record at reform.

4. Offer a Rigorous Curriculum that Sets High Expectations for all Students: “The secret in education lies in respecting the student.” – Ralph Waldo Emerson. Adam understands that we must demand that all of our children have a high expectation for success. Research overwhelmingly indicates that higher expectations lead to higher performance.<sup>4</sup> We must embody high but achievable expectations by ensuring that all schools offer a rigorous curriculum. In particular, all high school students should have a college preparatory curriculum that meets the University of California and California State University A-G requirements for college entrance.

1 Quality Counts (2005) EdWeek, January 6, 2005. 2 Loeb, S., L. Darling-Hammond, and J. Luczak (2005) How Teaching Conditions Predict Teacher Turnover in California Schools, Peabody Journal of Education, Vol. 8, No. 3; Luken, M. T., D. M. Lyter, and E. E. Fox, Teacher Attrition and Mobility: Results from the Teacher Follow-up Survey (2004) U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, NCES 2004-301, Washington, D.C., 2004; and Reed, D., K. Rueben, and E. Barbour, Retention of New Teachers in California (2006) Public Policy Institute of California, San Francisco, California. 3 Charles Taylor Kerchner, Julia E. Koppich and Joseph G. Weere (1998) United Mind Workers: Unions and Teaching in the Knowledge Society.4 Omotani, Barbara J. and Les Omotani (1996) Expect the Best: How Your Teachers Can Help All Children Learn, The Executive Educator 18, 8.

**5. Allocate More Resources to our Schools:** “What will it cost to provide each student in California with an opportunity to receive a quality education?” Amazingly, no one knows the answer to this question. Adam supports the work currently being done by the Quality of Education Commission to answer this question.

Additional resources are not the only way to improve our schools, but they will be a crucial first step toward reform. Our schools are now under-funded by billions of dollars. California ranks 44th among the states in (cost-adjusted) per pupil funding. In 1978, we spent \$600 more per student than the national average. By 2000, we were \$600 below the national average.

During the past quarter-century, expenditures per pupil in California have fallen nearly 25%, in comparison to the national average. Education Week (2003) ranked California third worst in the nation in adequacy of resources for education. According to EdSource (2003), an independent information-gathering organization, taxpayers spend about 3 percent of their personal income on K-12 education, 40th in the nation.

Governor Schwarzenegger must be held accountable for breaking his promise to restore school funding. Adam supports the voter-approved commitment to public education funding - Proposition 98 - which he considers a floor, not a ceiling for school spending. We need to increase state funding for K-12 education while at the same time implementing school reforms to ensure that those funds improve the quality of education: reforms like decreasing school size, decreasing class size, increasing the percentage of funding that ends up in the classroom, distributing funds to classrooms based on students' needs, and empowering teachers, parents, and principals to take more ownership of their schools.

**6. Increase Local Control:** Education decisions (including decisions about budgets and personnel) are best made by districts and at each school by principals, teachers, and parents at the community level, rather than politicians and bureaucrats in Sacramento. Adam believes we should empower schools that show improvement in student achievement to spend discretionary funds as they see fit. We should fully fund state mandates and work with local communities to implement sensible programs with workable guidelines and restrictions. Adam also supports reducing the threshold for approving new parcel taxes so local communities can have the freedom to decide to invest more in their schools.

**7. Increase Community and Parental Involvement:**

“Education is too important to be left solely to the educators.” —Francis Keppel, former U.S. Commissioner of Education. We must involve parents and local communities in our schools.<sup>5</sup> Parents should be invited to participate in school activities and given the means to do so. We must empower parents to make informed choices about their children's education. Businesses should be encouraged to support their local schools. Our schools must become community centers where people come together. After-school programs should be expanded to offer the physical education, arts, and other activities that have been cut so severely over the years. School facilities should be kept open later to accommodate the schedules of working families. We must do a better job of connecting community resources to our schools. For example, we should be locating public libraries on school campuses, and encouraging schools to allow community groups to use their facilities after-hours.

**8. Develop and Support Strong Principal Leadership:**

We must do a better job of identifying, training, and supporting principals.<sup>6</sup> State and local education leaders must work together to clearly define the principal's role and create the conditions that enable principals to be successful. We should put in place mechanisms for identifying and nurturing strong candidates who have the talent and drive to become principals. We must ensure that salaries for principals are sufficient to attract quality candidates. Principals must be given the authority to make school-level personnel and budgeting decisions, and they must be held accountable for results, such as improved student achievement, increased attendance, reduced truancy, higher graduation rates and better staff retention.

Education leaders should work together to redesign principal training programs to help principals be effective leaders. These programs should include clinical opportunities for observing effective principals and for gaining on-the-job experience. Principals need better training on how to manage and use data, including how to use test data to change course content and target teaching to address student weaknesses. And we must target recruitment incentives to persuade effective principals to work in low-performing schools where they are needed most. Principals are key leaders in quality schools.



**9. Support Early Education with Universal Preschool:**

We must start at the beginning by providing high quality, affordable preschool for all of California's children. Adam supports the Universal Preschool Initiative (Proposition 82) because study after study has documented the incredible benefits of expanding access to preschool.<sup>7</sup> Children who attend preschool are: less likely to be placed in special education or held back a grade; higher achievers on standardized math and reading tests; more likely to graduate high school and attend college; less likely to be arrested or incarcerated; and less likely to need public assistance as adults. It is estimated that for every dollar that we spend on universal preschool in California we will save somewhere between \$2.62 and \$17.00 in subsequent costs to society.<sup>8</sup> Not only is giving children a head start in life the right thing to do, but it makes sense from a financial standpoint and benefits our state.

**10. More Support for Our Community Colleges.**

As an economics teacher in a portable trailer at East Los Angeles College, Adam has experienced first hand the consequences of inadequately funding community colleges. Serving more than 2.5 million students each year, the California Community College system is the largest higher education system in the world

and is the largest workforce provider in California.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the Community College system provides affordable training in some fields that are not available at four-year colleges and universities. However, the State provides community colleges with only about \$4,200 per full-time equivalent student – compared with over \$7,500 per student in the California State University system, and over \$13,000 per student in the University of California system. We must also do a better job of connecting our community colleges with the business community, to ensure that our investments in education are satisfying the needs of business. There is no excuse for failing to provide our community colleges with the resources necessary to provide a quality, affordable education to the future workers of California. The investments we make in our community colleges today are an essential part of ensuring that California has the skilled workforce that is needed to attract business and commerce and to reduce expenditures for public assistance.

*Our educational system is failing our children. We must do better. We can do better. If you agree, please support Adam Murray on June 6.*

**ADAM MURRAY**  
DEMOCRAT FOR ASSEMBLY

5 Joy G. Dryfoos (1994) *Full-Service Schools: A Revolution in Health and Social Services for Children, Youth, and Families*. 6 *Action Agenda* (2005) *National Education Summit on High Schools*. 7 M.J. Guralnick (1993) *Second Generation Research on the Effectiveness of Early Intervention*, *Early Education and Development*, Vol. 4, No. 4, pp. 366-378. 8 Lynn Karoly and James Bigelow (2005) *The Economics of Investing in Universal Preschool Education in California*. 9 This issue directly affects our district. Our district is served by a number of Community Colleges, including Pasadena City College, Glendale Community College, East Los Angeles College, and Citrus College.