



SACRAMENTO
STATE

THE LEGISCHOOL PROJECT

fall 2008

The LegiSchool Project

Welcome to another year of LegiSchool!

Since its creation in 1994, the LegiSchool Project has introduced state government to thousands of young people in a positive way, highlighting many of the issues that potentially impact the lives of youth in California. LegiSchool's mission has become increasingly important as civic engagement studies continue to point to a loss of faith in government among young people in America. Through our Town Hall Meetings, curriculum materials, and annual contests, the LegiSchool Project aims to educate and engage students in the myriad of public policies and issues currently being addressed by state leaders. Most importantly, LegiSchool hopes to motivate young people to take action, be involved in their communities, and, above all, become engaged citizens in our democracy.

Learning by doing is the philosophy that LegiSchool employs to engage and involve high school students in the politics that impact so much of what goes on in their everyday lives. LegiSchool Town Hall Meetings offer students the chance to meet directly with legislators and other state leaders to share their thoughts and concerns on actual legislation as it works its way through the legislative process. Additionally, LegiSchool's curriculum materials are designed to provide a broad background on complicated issues in order to give students the basic knowledge to form educated opinions on issues important to our state and country. Feedback from participating educators and students indicates that young people who take part in LegiSchool activities leave knowing more about state government, how it works and the importance of civic involvement as a means to improve the society in which we live.

This year's Town Hall Meetings will, without a doubt, be informative, thought provoking and interactive. Students will have the chance to weigh in on the 2008 presidential election, career technical education developments, offshore oil drilling, and the recent ban on cell phones while driving. These issues are on the forefront of California's legislative and political agenda and are sure to spark dialogue and debate.

In addition to our Town Hall Meetings, LegiSchool, in conjunction with the California Channel, offers a wide range of free, government-oriented classroom

materials to help students learn about the basic functions of state government. Whether you use our *Understanding California's Budget Process* video or a past Town Hall Meeting video to prompt discussion in your classroom, LegiSchool materials are designed to be easily incorporated into the states' social science and history content standards.

By making government relevant to young people, LegiSchool hopes to lay the groundwork for an on-going commitment to civic life by California's young people. Read on to learn how you can involve your students in one of our LegiSchool Town Hall Meetings or contests and how to order LegiSchool's

free classroom materials. You can also find out more about LegiSchool at www.csus.edu/legischool.

Dear Friends,

On behalf of our partners – the California State Legislature, California State University, Sacramento, and the California Channel, I would like to welcome you to another stimulating year of LegiSchool. We are excited about working with students and educators to make this year's program the most successful and thought-provoking ever!

Last year we discussed bullying and violence in our schools. Students shared

thoughts and experiences as to why some school environments have become frightening and unsafe places. We examined the current state of our environment and what can be done now to keep our planet safe for future generations. The Budget Challenge gave students an opportunity to set priorities for California by creating a budget that reflects their values and vision while learning about the process our lawmakers face. We examined health care and the consequences for our state if we don't address current costs and delivery problems.

This year LegiSchool is preparing to conduct equally exciting Town Hall Meetings on timely issues of concern to all Californians. High school students in past years have traveled from all ends of the state to participate in this dynamic learning experience. It is my hope that we will continue to draw on the enthusiasm of our kids, from the diverse corners of this great state, as we head into the new session working together to mold tomorrow's leaders.

Sincerely,
Greg Schmidt
Secretary of the Senate



California State Capitol, Photo by Don Nahhas

Real Issues, Real Debate, Real Curriculum

FREE Videos and Curriculum Materials

Offered by the LegiSchool Project and the California Channel

Each video is accompanied by a Video Viewing Guide, which includes two pages of critical thinking exercises and pertinent vocabulary for teachers to use as an assignment for students.

Understanding California's Budget Process

With a budget of over \$110 billion dollars, California ranks among the top ten economies in the world! Imagine the work that goes into preparing a budget of this magnitude...the entire process takes roughly one year. This 8-minute video examines California's budget process through the eyes of a family trying to balance their own budget. Emphasis is placed on the many players involved in the process, the constitutional constraints that dictate how the money is spent and the compromise needed to pass the budget with a 2/3 majority in the legislature.

The Voting Process: YOU Have the Power!

This energetic 8-minute video gives students a step-by-step look at procedures for voting in California. The goal of the video is to give young, first time voters the knowledge and confidence to become involved in our most cherished constitutional right, the democratic process. Registration, absentee ballots, resources (websites, phone numbers, etc.) and demonstrations of the three prevalent forms of voting systems in our state are given a thorough treatment.

The Initiative Process

This 8-minute video takes a step-by-step look at the initiative process and provides a strong message of civic involvement and personal empowerment. Daylight savings time and the banning of nuclear power plants are just two of the examples provided which illustrate the power of this important political tool of the people. Thomas Jefferson stated that "there is no safer depository of the ultimate power of society but the people themselves" - a frank recognition

of the important role the initiative process plays in making law and placing the public in power to set this states political agenda.

Checks & Balances: The Three Branches of State Government

This 10-minute video is geared towards helping students learn more about how our state legislative process works. The main premise for the lesson is that, as in the federal government, the framers of our state's constitution wanted to be sure that no one branch of government would have too much power, so they divided the powers of the government into three equal branches.

How a Bill Becomes Law

Produced by the California Channel, this 10-minute video uses AB 2268, the Bicycle Helmet Law, to describe how a bill becomes law in California. Ideal for high school students, the video introduces concepts such as how a bill is authored, the process of first, second, and third readings, and how legislation is assigned to various committees within the Legislature.

A Day in the Life of a Candidate

During an election, citizens are bombarded with campaign literature and media coverage of candidates, but running for public office takes much more than slick mailers and TV commercials. This video demonstrates some of the more routine, but critical work that goes into running for public office and features the Republican and Democratic candidates for the November 2000 race for California's 5th Senate District. Highlights include footage from precinct walking, phone banking, staff briefings, interviews with both candidates, and election night coverage.

A Day in the Life of the Secretary of State

Have you ever wondered what California's Secretary of State does? Approximately 25 minutes in length, the video examines some of the key aspects of the job, including the Secretary's role as chief elections officer, member of the World Trade Commission, and overseer of the State Archives.

A Day in the Life of the Legislature

This 30-minute video features two former members of the Legislature, Senator Jim Brulte and Assembly Member Robert Hertzberg. Highlights of the video include footage from a Senate floor session, an Assembly committee hearing, a meeting between Senator Brulte and a group of lobbyists, and a staff briefing with Assembly Member Hertzberg.

State Government for Beginners Handout Binder

Looking for good, basic handouts about state government and the legislative process? Then this binder is for you!

Easy-to-duplicate handouts include:

- Legislative terminology.
- A diagram and step-by-step description of the legislative process.
- A sample bill with instructions on how to read legislation.
- Voter registration and elections information.
- Useful state government and political websites and much more!

To request any of these materials, please complete the enclosed order form.

"Our children should learn the general framework of their government and then they should know where they come in contact with the government, where it touches their daily lives and where their influence is exerted on the government. It must not be a distant thing, someone else's business, but they must see how every cog in the wheel of a democracy is important and bears its share of responsibility for the smooth running of the entire machine."

— Eleanor Roosevelt

2008-2009 LEGISCHOOL DATES AND DEADLINES

OCTOBER 24, 2008

SACRAMENTO

LegiSchool Town Hall Meeting
Election 2008: Picking Our President

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APRIL 2, 2009

SACRAMENTO

LegiSchool Student Legislative Summit
Rules of the Road: Teen Cell Phone Ban

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NOVEMBER 7, 2008

(POSTMARK DEADLINE)

LegiSchool Annual PSA Video Contest:
Protecting and Improving California's Environment
Please see www.csus.edu/legischool
for details on how to enter.

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MAY 1, 2009

(POSTMARK DEADLINE)

LegiSchool Annual Photo Contest
California Through My Eyes

DECEMBER 4, 2008

SACRAMENTO

LegiSchool Town Hall Meeting
Career Technical Education: Is College for Everyone?

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JANUARY 23, 2009

(POSTMARK DEADLINE)

LegiSchool Annual Essay Contest
Rules of the Road: Teen Cell Phone Ban

.....

FEBRUARY 5, 2009

SACRAMENTO

LegiSchool Town Hall Meeting
California Offshore Drilling: Exploration vs.
Conservation

Thank You...

The LegiSchool Team wishes to thank **Senator Darrell Steinberg** (D-Sacramento) and **Assembly member Alan Nakanishi** (R-Lodi) for their participation in the April 2008 Student - Run Press Conference.

Additional thanks to the following policy makers and community leaders for their participation in 2007-2008 LegiSchool Town Hall Meetings:

- Rafael Aguilera**, The Verde Group;
- Erahm Christopher**, Erahm Christopher Films/Teen Truth;
- Adam Dondro**, Assembly Budget Committee;
- Michael Jarred**, Office of Senator Corbett;
- Dr. Roxana Marachi**, Department of K-8 Teacher Education, San Jose State University;
- Aram Nadjarian**, Executive Fellow, California Environmental Protection Agency;
- Matthew Newman**, Next 10;
- Anthony Ortiz-Luis**, Youth 4 Positive Change;
- Noel Perry**, Next 10;
- JC Pohl**, B1 Films/Teen Truth;
- Nicole Vazquez**, Assembly Budget Committee; and
- Anthony Williams**, Wada Williams Law Group.

2008-2009 LEGISCHOOL CONTESTS

Make a Difference California!

Environmental PSA Video Contest

What are *you* doing to make a difference? Break out your video camera and show your policymakers what individuals in your community are doing to help make a difference for our environment. It could be something you do at home, at school, or a community-wide effort to protect or improve California's environment. Send us your 60-second PSA video (public service announcement) showcasing your environmental efforts for the chance to win an all expense paid trip to Sacramento to attend LegiSchool's Town Hall Meeting, February 5, 2009. The top voted PSA video will be shown on the California Channel and viewed by policymakers in the State Capitol. So get to work on showing them your efforts to protect or improve California's environment! The postmark deadline to enter your PSA Video is **Friday, November 7, 2008**. Please visit LegiSchool's website for complete details on how to submit your PSA video entry.

California Through My Eyes

Photo Contest

How do you envision California? What represents California to you? Poverty? Wealth? Technology? Farms? Water? Mountains? Towns? People? Cities? Cars? Hiking Trails? Family? Community? Landscapes? These are just some of the images that students are invited to photograph for LegiSchool's annual photo contest. The photo can be a person, place or anything - big or small. The FIRST PLACE winner will receive \$100.00 and 4 runner-ups will receive \$50.00 each. Look for complete details in January. **Postmark deadline is May 1, 2009.**

Below: 2008 California Through My Eyes Photo Contest Winner: Cheyenne Cirera, Sunny Hills High School



An educational collaboration between Sacramento State and the California State Legislature

Thirteenth Annual Essay Contest

Rules of the Road: Teen Cell Phone Ban

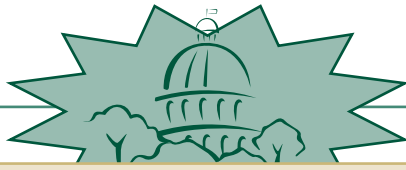
You've lived with it, now this is your chance to write about it! In September of 2007, SB 33, authored by Senator Joe Simitian (D-Palo Alto), was signed into law by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. Under the law, as of July 1, 2008, drivers under the age of 18 were banned from all cell phone use (talking and text messaging), while driving. The issue was hotly debated in both the Assembly and Senate, but in the end, SB 33 proved successful in changing the rules of the road. Please share your views and thoughts on this controversial issue. How has this law had an impact on you and your driving skills? Has this law been effective in creating better teen drivers?

Ten winning essayists will be invited to spend a day in Sacramento at LegiSchool's 13th Annual Student Legislative Summit on April 2, 2009. Look for essay contest details and deadlines in November.

Postmark deadline is January 23, 2009.



Above: 12th Annual Student Legislative Summit Participants and LegiSchool Essay Contest Winners, April 2008: Christina Amato, Mission Viejo High School; Ruth Arbeiter, Poway High School; Tegan Brindley, Academy of Our Lady of Peace, San Diego; Carolyn Chiu, LA County High School for the Arts; Ann Luong, Oakland High School; Stephanie Miller, Lodi High School; Kelsey Ripp, San Rafael High School; Megan Reed, Mt. Shasta High School; Alissa Weber, Mt. Shasta High School. Pictured with Senator Darrell Steinberg and Assembly Member Alan Nakanishi.



2008–2009 LEGISCHOOL TOWN HALL MEETINGS

Mark your calendars now for this year's LegiSchool Town Hall Meetings!

Election 2008: Picking Our President

October 24, 2008

The turnout of young voters is expected to have a huge impact on the 2008 presidential election. With many issues facing the nation -- the war in Iraq, rising gas prices, and the economy, the 2008 election is widely regarded as the most important election in years. The two major party candidates are Senator John McCain of the Republican Party and Senator Barack Obama of the Democratic Party. This Town Hall Meeting will examine the process by which we elect our president and the hot issues in this election. The goal of the meeting is to enable students to make informed voting decisions as they learn more about the candidates seeking the presidency and the issues driving the election. Following the Town Hall Meeting, students will vote in a mock election using the latest voting technology.

Career Technical Education: Is College for Everyone?

December 4, 2008

Trade and industry jobs are on the rise in California, but there are not enough trained individuals to fill them. With more and more pressure for high school students to attend four year colleges, the educational focus has shifted to a college prep based-curriculum, while career technical education has, for the most part, not been fully funded. While a college degree is very valuable, is college for everyone? There are many career paths in California that high school graduates can pursue that do not require a college education, but do require specialized career technical education. After years of neglect and underfunded programs, career technical education (vocational education) is making a comeback in California high schools. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has increased funding for these programs. In 2005, \$20 million was invested to expand the availability of career technical education programs, with additional funding appropriated in the 2007-2008 budget. It is clear that California is determined to send the message to all high school students that there is a road for everyone. During this Town Hall Meeting, students will have the chance to discuss with policymakers the importance and relevance of career technical education in their high schools, and how it impacts teens and their educational experience.

California Offshore Drilling: Exploration vs. Conservation

February 5, 2009

Home to one of the longest and most beautiful coastlines in the world, California has banned offshore drilling for over a quarter century. However, with rising gas prices and increased energy needs, some policymakers are proposing that California lift the ban and allow companies to drill for oil off California's coast. Conversely, there are those who remain opposed to lifting the ban, and instead advocate for the development of alternative energy sources and conservation as the answer to com-

bating the record gas prices and increasing energy needs. This Town Hall Meeting will give students a chance to examine both sides of this extremely controversial issue with policymakers. Additionally, students will have the chance to share their ideas regarding what individuals can do to have a positive impact on the environment.

Rules of the Road: Teen Cell Phone Ban Student-Run Press Conference

April 2, 2009

You've lived with it, now this is your chance to talk about it! In September of 2007, SB 33 authored by Senator Joe Simitian (D-Palo Alto), was signed into law by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. Under that law, as of July 1, 2008, drivers under the age of 18 were banned from all cell phone use (talking and text messaging), while driving. The issue was hotly debated in both the Assembly and Senate, but in the end, SB 33 proved successful in changing the rules of the road. Supporters of the measure relied on key studies to argue their case for the ban. According to a Ford Motor Company study, teens are four times more likely to be distracted by cell phone use than adults. Additionally, in a study conducted by the California Highway Patrol, they found that cell phone use is a primary cause of accidents caused by distracted drivers. On the other hand, some studies have made the point that it is not the holding of the phone that is distracting, but the conversation itself. During this Student-Run Press Conference, students will have the opportunity to discuss with policymakers the positive and negative impacts that this law has had on teen drivers, and examine whether or not they think it has been effective in creating better teen drivers. This meeting is part of LegiSchool's Annual Student Legislative Summit. Participants are selected from LegiSchool's annual essay contest.

How you and your students can attend a LegiSchool meeting...

LegiSchool frequently invites small groups of students from around California to participate in Town Hall Meetings. Limited travel money is available from LegiSchool for this purpose. If you are interested in bringing a group to attend a LegiSchool meeting and spending the day learning about the legislative process, please contact LegiSchool at **(916) 278-6906** or send an email to **legischool@csus.edu**. If you are particularly interested in a specific meeting, please indicate so. If an opportunity arises for you and your students, you will be contacted by LegiSchool staff.

LEGISCHOOL EVENTS RESPONSE AND CURRICULUM MATERIALS ORDER FORM

Town Hall Meeting Materials

All packets include a free video tape or DVD and curriculum guide

Election 2008: Picking Our President October 24, 2008, Sacramento

- Please consider my class for attendance at this meeting.
- We will view the meeting live on the California Channel.
- We will view the meeting on video after the broadcast.
- We will view the meeting on DVD after the broadcast.

Career Technical Education: Is College for Everyone? December 4, 2008, Sacramento

- Please consider my class for attendance at this meeting.
- We will view the meeting live on the California Channel.
- We will view the meeting on video after the broadcast.
- We will view the meeting on DVD after the broadcast.

California Offshore Drilling: Exploration vs. Conservation February 5, 2009, Sacramento

- Please consider my class for attendance at this meeting.
- We will view the meeting live on the California Channel.
- We will view the meeting on video after the broadcast.
- We will view the meeting on DVD after the broadcast.

Rules of the Road: Teen Cell Phone Ban April 2, 2009, Sacramento

- We will view the meeting live on the California Channel.
- We will view the meeting on video after the broadcast.
- We will view the meeting on DVD after the broadcast.

State Government Curriculum Videos

Packet includes a free video tape or DVD and Viewing Guide including key terms and critical thinking questions

- DVD
- VHS

Indicate below which materials you would like:

- Understanding California's Budget Process
- The Voting Process: YOU Have the Power!
- The Initiative Process
- Checks & Balances: The Three Branches of State Government
- How a Bill Becomes Law
- A Day in the Life of a Candidate
- A Day in the Life of the Secretary of State
- A Day in the Life of the Legislature

State Government for Beginners handout binder

- FREE to California teachers and administrators
- \$10 per binder for non California teachers and administrators. Please send a check in the amount of \$10 payable to University Enterprises, Inc. to the address below.

Contests

To receive announcements of our contests, please select a box from each contest in which you are interested.

- PSA Video Contest: Make a Difference California! Protecting and Improving California's Environment.
- Essay Contest: Rules of the Road: Teen Cell Phone Ban
- Photo Contest: California Through My Eyes

HOW TO ORDER

Mail order to:

Name: _____
School: _____
Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____
E-mail: _____

Fax order to (916) 278-5199 (no cover sheet necessary) or send (with check if applicable) to:

LegiSchool
California State University, Sacramento
6000 J Street
Sacramento, CA 95819-6081

You can also submit your order electronically from LegiSchool's website at: www.csus.edu/legischool

Incorporating LegiSchool into the State’s History-Social Science Content Standards

History-Social Science Content Standards for California Public Schools Grade Twelve: Principles of American Democracy

California’s Grade 12 History-Social Science standards pay particular attention to the principles of American democracy, which are intended to provide students with the knowledge and skills that are required to assume the responsibilities of citizenship.

Topics addressed at LegiSchool meetings and in LegiSchool curriculum materials have been aligned with many of the social studies standards now required by the state. Below are just a few of the standards that can be met through the use of LegiSchool and its curriculum materials. By using LegiSchool materials, students are given the opportunity to:

12.1.6	Understand that the Bill of Rights limits the powers of the federal and state governments;	12.3.3	Discuss the historical role of religion and religious diversity;	12.6.3	Evaluate the roles of polls, campaign advertising, and the controversies over campaign funding;
12.2.1	Discuss the meaning and importance of each of the rights guaranteed under the Bill of Rights and how each is secured;	12.4	Analyze the unique roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government as established by the U.S. Constitution;	12.6.4	Describe the means that citizens use to participate in the political process;
12.2.3	Discuss the individual’s legal obligations to obey the law;	12.4.3	Identify their current representatives in the legislative branch of the national government;	12.7.5	Explain how public policy is formed, including the setting of the public agenda and implementation of it through regulations and executive orders;
12.2.4	Understand the obligations of civic-mindedness, including voting, being informed on civic issues, volunteering and performing public service;	12.5.1	Understand the changing interpretations of the Bill of Rights over time, including interpretations of the basic freedoms articulated in the First Amendment and the due process and equal protection of the law clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment;	12.7.6	Compare the processes of lawmaking at each of the three levels of government, including the role of lobbying and the media.
12.3.1	Explain how civil society provides opportunities for individuals to associate for social, cultural, religious, economic, and political purposes;	12.6	Students evaluate issues regarding campaigns for national, state, and local elective offices;		

For a complete list of the Grade Twelve History-Social Science Content Standards, visit the Department of Education’s website at: www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/hstgrade12.asp.

Getting Students Involved ... Simple Ideas for Engaging Students

- **Letter to the Editor:** Provide students with copies of several different letters to the editor from your local newspaper regarding a certain public policy issue important to your region. Have the class discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the writers’ arguments on the issue and what side of the issue they agree with. For a related assignment or for extra credit, ask students to write their own letter to the editor expressing their opinion on a matter of local importance.
- **Interview a Policymaker:** Ask students to interview an elected representative and share the experience with class members. Students can “go local” and interview someone from their city council, school board or county board of supervisors or state representative (Senators and Assembly Members have district offices which might be more accessible to students than State Capitol offices).
- **Public Policy Idol:** Ask students to identify and research an elected official who they admire and the changes that person has, or desires to bring about, in his/her community.
- **Bill Analysis:** If the legislature is in session, have students identify a bill that their Senator or Assembly Member has authored and that is of concern to them. Have students research the bill by contacting the legislator’s office to discuss it with the person who “staffed” the bill. Students should also be able to collect the bill’s legislative history via the internet (www.sen.ca.gov).
- or www.assembly.ca.gov). Have students write a brief history on the bill, including what motivated the legislator to author it, what does the bill propose to do, who supports/opposes it and why, has the media responded to the bill and where does it stand in the legislative process?
- **Student Survey:** Divide students into groups of five and ask students to identify a public policy issue that they would like to poll their classmates about (i.e. best solutions for illegal immigration, support/opposition to teen cell phone driving bill, drug/alcohol use among teens). Have the groups create a survey and ask that each group poll at least fifty students. Have student groups present their survey and results to the entire class. Lead a class discussion on how polling and surveys are used in elections and by policymakers to build support for their legislation.
- **Mock Debate:** Choose several bills from the current legislative session that have the potential to impact the lives of the students in your class. Divide students into small groups and assign them a support or oppose position on the bill they have been given. Ask the students to collect reports and media articles on the subject to increase their awareness of the pros and cons of the legislation. Hold a timed, but brief mock debate in your class and ask students to argue their position.



THE LEGISCHOOL PROJECT

Mission

The LegiSchool Project is a civic education collaboration between California State University, Sacramento, and the California State Legislature, administered by the Center for California Studies. The Project's mission is to engage California's high school students in matters of public policy and state government by creating opportunities for students and state leaders to meet and share ideas on issues affecting Californians. In doing so, we hope to motivate young people to take an interest in the public life around them and to encourage their active participation in our political process.

"The price of the democratic way of life is a growing appreciation of people's differences, not merely as tolerable, but as the essence of a rich and rewarding human experience."

— Jerome Nathanson

For more information about LegiSchool, contact:

California State University, Sacramento

Center for California Studies/LegiSchool

6000 J Street

Sacramento, CA 95819-6081

(916) 278-6906

legischool@csus.edu

Visit the LegiSchool website:

www.csus.edu/legischool

—Eleanor Holmes Norton

"The only way to make sure people you agree with can speak is to support the rights of people you don't agree with."

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