



SACRAMENTO  
STATE

# THE LEGISCHOOL PROJECT

fall 2006

## The LegiSchool Project

Welcome to another year of LegiSchool!

Approaching 14 years of service to educators and young people around the state, we are enthusiastic about the wonderful and exciting opportunities that LegiSchool makes available to California teachers and students and yet, concerned about the ongoing trend of pessimism towards government and its leaders. It is the goal of LegiSchool to introduce state government to young people in a positive way, highlighting some of the issues that are being addressed at the state level that potentially impact the lives of youth. In doing so, we hope to engage students in the very discussions that state leaders have on myriad public policies and to motivate young people to take action, be involved in their communities and, above all, become engaged citizens in our democracy.

This year's line-up of Town Hall Meetings promises to be exciting, educational and engaging to all! From the high school exit exam to teen health issues to immigration, the 2006/07 Town Hall Meetings are sure to spark dialogue and debate.

Founded in 1994, LegiSchool is all about engaging students in the same debates that California's policy makers are engaged in. Learning by doing is LegiSchool's philosophy on getting high school students interested 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. Ultimately, LegiSchool activities and curriculum materials are designed not only to engage students in public policy debates that are taking place everyday at the Capitol, but also to heighten students' awareness about state government, how it works and

the importance of civic involvement as a means to improve the society in which we live.

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 it's a Town Hall Meeting videotape you're using in the classroom or curriculum materials on the initiative process, LegiSchool materials are designed to be easily incorporated into the states' social science and history content standards.

By making government relevant to young people, it is LegiSchool's goal to help lay the groundwork for their on-going commitment to civic life. Learn more about LegiSchool at [www.csus.edu/legischool](http://www.csus.edu/legischool).

## Dear Friends,

Welcome to the LegiSchool Project, a unique collaborative program sponsored by the California State Legislature and California State University, Sacramento, administered by the Center for California Studies. LegiSchool provides California teens with an opportunity to discuss important public issues—together with state policymakers and community leaders.

The format is simple. Students are invited from schools around the state and gather at the State Capitol in Sacramento to participate in live tapings of debates on current issues. Thanks to the California Channel, live broadcasts of the debates are available to teachers in their classrooms, making them part of the dialogue. Last year, for the first time, discussions continued

after the broadcasts as students participated in online dialogues hosted by LegiSchool.

This year promises to be particularly exciting, as we focus on important subjects such as immigration, teen health, and the controversial high school exit examination. Students will also have the opportunity to vote in a mock election as we approach the opening of the polls in November.

We look forward to your involvement, and your special efforts in helping LegiSchool prepare the leaders of our state for the 21st century!

Best wishes,  
Greg Schmidt  
*Secretary of the Senate*

## Thank You...

The LegiSchool Team wishes to thank those members who participated in 2005-2006 meetings: Assembly Members John J. Benoit, Jackie Goldberg, Bill Maze, Gene Mullin, Roger Niello and Todd Spitzer.

Additional thanks to the following policy makers and community leaders for their participation in 2005-2006 LegiSchool meetings...

Robert Arias, Mario Corona and William "Blinky" Rodriguez, Communities in Schools Greater Los Angeles; Brad Dacus, Pacific Justice Institute; Gus Frias, Los Angeles County Office of Education; Ann Knickebein, Northern California School Nurses Organization; Paula LaBrie, California State Automobile Association; Akili Moses Israel, LEED Sacramento; Robert Oakes, Office of Senator Tom Torlakson; Ray Reinhard, Office of the Secretary for Education; Reverend Carol Scott, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Inglewood; and Paul Warren, Legislative Analyst's Office.

LegiSchool would also like to thank the California Teachers Association and the Wells Fargo Foundation for their generous support.

*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 more than \$110 billion, 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 its 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 state's political agenda.

## Checks & Balances: The Three Branches of State Government

This ten-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 ten-and-a-half-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 key 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.

## Other Materials

### 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 of the legislative process
- A step-by-step description of the 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!

## 2006-2007 LegiSchool Dates and Deadlines

### Mid September, 2006

California Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools  
Celebrate the U.S. Constitution!  
Visit [www.cms-ca.org](http://www.cms-ca.org) for complete details!

### September 21-22, 2006

Center for California Studies, Envisioning California Conference  
How Well Are We Preparing Our Young People for Life After High School?  
Visit [www.csus.edu/calst](http://www.csus.edu/calst) for complete details!

### October 19, 2006

LegiSchool Town Hall Meeting  
The Race for California's Governor: What Students Have to Say!

### December 7, 2006

LegiSchool Town Hall Meeting  
The California High School Exit Exam: Preparation, Promotion or Politics?

### January 19, 2007 (postmark deadline)

LegiSchool Annual Essay Contest  
Teen Health Issues: A Discussion on Troubling Trends

### February 8, 2007

LegiSchool Town Hall Meeting  
California and Immigration: An Examination of Public Policy and Student Perspectives

### March 29, 2007

LegiSchool Student Legislative Summit  
Teen Health Issues: A Discussion on Troubling Trends

### May 4, 2007 (postmark deadline)

LegiSchool Annual Photo Contest  
California Through My Eyes

## Celebrate the U.S. Constitution!

Mark your calendars for mid-September when the California Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools hosts an educational celebration of the United States Constitution. Free resources and activities for teachers are available at: [www.cms-ca.org](http://www.cms-ca.org).

### THEY INCLUDE:

- Free Lessons for All Grade Levels
- Materials for the California Capital Constitution Display
- Planning Guides for Classroom, School and Community-wide Events
- Professional Development

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

### History-Social Science Content Standards for California Public Schools

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 cur-

riculum 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;  | cultural, religious, economic, and political purposes; | 12.6.4   | Describe the means that citizens use to participate in the political process; |  |
| 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;   | 12.7.5  | Explain how public policy is formed, including the setting of the public agenda and implementation of it through regulations and executive orders; |
| 12.2.3 | Discuss the individual's legal obligations to obey the law;   | 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.                        |
| 12.2.4 | Understand the obligations of civic-mindedness, including voting, being informed on civic issues, volunteering and performing public service; |  |  |   |  |
| 12.3.1 | Explain how civil society provides opportunities for individuals to associate for social,   | 12.6   | 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](http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/hstgrade12.asp).

## Simple Ideas for Engaging Students

- Have students follow the November election. Ask students to share who they would vote for and why. What issues or ideals do the candidates represent that are appealing to students? Have the class vote in a mock election and compare results with those of the electorate.
- Offer extra credit to students who go to the polls with a parent on election day. Have students write a short essay on their impressions of the experience. Which system of voting was used? Were they surprised by anything they saw? What impressed them most about the voting process?
- 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 and asking for the person who "staffed" the bill, or visit these websites to learn more information: [www.sen.ca.gov](http://www.sen.ca.gov) or [www.assembly.ca.gov](http://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, and where does it stand in the legislative process?
- Ask students to interview an elected representative and share the experience with class members. Possibilities include the city council, school board, county board of supervisors or state representatives.
- Ask students to identify and research an elected official who they admire and the changes that person has made, or desires to make, in his/her community.
- Have students read up on California's three branches of government ([www.leginfo.ca.gov/califleg.html](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/califleg.html)) and then ask them to imagine that they are either a member of the legislature, governor of the state or a Supreme Court justice. Have students write down their reasons for selecting one particular branch and why they did not select one of the other two branches. Ask students to identify three public policy issues that they would want to address as a member of one of the three branches of government and explain why those issues are important to them.
- Discuss separation of powers and checks and balances with the class and explain how these principles impact how government functions. Examine the history of these principles and have students explain and provide examples of what can happen in a government that does not adhere to such principles.



# THE LEGISCHOOL PROJECT

## LEGISCHOOL CONTESTS

### LegiSchool's Eleventh Annual Essay Contest

#### Teen Health Issues: A Discussion on Troubling Trends

According to the Center for Disease Control, between 1999 and 2004, there was a significant increase in the prevalence of overweight girls (13.8 percent in 1999 to 16.0 percent in 2004). Similarly, among boys, the prevalence increased significantly from 14.0 percent in 1999 to 18.2 percent in 2004. What impact does epidemic obesity have on individuals and on our society? How can we shift this trend to encourage a healthier more active population? Students will be asked to share their opinions on these important issues. Ten winning essayists will be invited to spend a day in Sacramento at LegiSchool's Eleventh Annual Student Legislative Summit on March 27, 2007. Look for essay contest details in early November!

### LegiSchool's Photo Contest

#### California Through My Eyes Photo Contest

How do you envision California? What represents California to you? Poverty? Wealth? Technology? Farms? Mountains? People? 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 any thing—big or small. The FIRST PLACE winner will receive \$100 and 4 runner-ups will receive \$50 each. Look for complete details in January!

## 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.

### 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](http://www.csus.edu/legischool)

—Eleanor Holmes Norton

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can speak is to support the rights of people you  
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# LEGISCHOOL EVENTS RESPONSE AND CURRICULUM MATERIALS ORDER FORM

## Town Hall Meeting Materials

Packet includes free video tape and curriculum guide

### The Race for California's Governor: What Students Have to Say! October 19, 2006

- Please consider my class for attendance at this meeting.
- We will view the meeting on video after the broadcast.
- Please include my class in the online discussion following the meeting (complete details to follow soon).

### The California High School Exit Exam: Preparation, Promotion or Politics? December 7, 2006

- 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.

### California and Immigration: An Examination of Public Policy and Student Perspectives February 8, 2007

- 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.
- Please include my class in the online discussion following the meeting (complete details to follow soon).

### Teen Health Issues: Critical Concerns March 29, 2007

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

## State Government Curriculum Videos

Packet includes free video tape and Video Viewing Guide including key terms and critical thinking questions

### 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.

# 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](http://www.csus.edu/legischool)



# 2006–2007 LEGISCHOOL TOWN HALL MEETINGS

**M**ark your calendars now for this year's LegiSchool Town Hall Meetings! All meetings will take place at the State Capitol in Sacramento. To find out how to participate in a meeting, please read on.

## The Race for California's Governor: What Students Have to Say!

**October 19, 2006**

In November, voters will head to the polls to determine who California's next governor will be. The new governor will pave the way for public policy priorities in the next four years. This meeting will examine some of the issues that are critical to voters such as education, immigration policy, health care and reform of our prison system. Following the meeting, students will cast their vote for governor using an electronic voting system. Who will "win" the election? Stay tuned...

Following the Town Hall Meeting, this discussion will continue in the form of a statewide online dialogue with students, educators and policymakers. Anyone who has internet access will be able to participate in this exciting and innovative deliberation. If you and/or your students would like to be part of this, please indicate on the "Events Response Form."

## The California High School Exit Exam: Preparation, Promotion or Politics?

**December 7, 2006**

California's graduating class of 2006 was the first required to pass the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE). With a passage rate just over 90 percent, many deemed the exam a success. But an estimated 40,000 students from the class of 2006 still haven't passed the exam. This meeting will examine some of the issues and concerns surrounding the exam. With a passage rate so high, is the test sufficiently difficult? What kind of support is provided to students who cannot pass the test? What recommendations can students offer to improve the test and its passage rate? What happens to those 40,000? Will their failure to pass the exam hinder their futures?

## California and Immigration: An Examination of Public Policy and Student Perspectives

**February 8, 2007**

The debate over immigration came to a head last year as the public and our policy makers grappled with concerns surrounding the impact of illegal immigration on our country's resources and safety. Californians are not strangers to the debate with the state being home to more immigrants than any other. What are the impacts of illegal immigration in California? What rights do American-born children of illegal immigrants have? How California and the nation addresses these issues will ultimately impact all of us. Join LegiSchool in this important discussion—share your concerns and ideas as we examine this timely and contentious issue.

Following the Town Hall Meeting, this discussion will continue in the form of a statewide online dialogue with students, educators and policymakers. Anyone who has internet access will be able to participate in this exciting and innovative deliberation. If you and/or your students would like to be part of this, please indicate on the "Events Response Form."

*"The interaction with experts and politicians was impressive to my students. They loved it."*  
**Teacher and Town Hall Meeting Participant**

## Teen Health Issues: Critical Concerns

**March 29, 2007**

With teen obesity at an all-time high, and related health problems on the rise, this meeting will be devoted to an examination of what families, schools and our society can do to curb these alarming trends. According to the Center for Disease Control, between 1999 and

2004, there was a significant increase in the prevalence of overweight girls (13.8 percent in 1999 to 16.0 percent in 2004). Similarly, among boys, the prevalence increased significantly from 14.0 percent in 1999 to 18.2 percent in 2004. Obesity and being overweight are a result of an imbalance between food consumed and physical activity. How can we reverse this trend and what are the implications to individuals and society if we don't?

This meeting is part of LegiSchool's annual Student Legislative Summit and participants are selected from LegiSchool's essay contest.

See reverse side for information on how to watch and/or order free curriculum materials for these meetings.

## 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](mailto: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.

