

AB 723 Tolerance Curriculum Talking Points

- 1. Violence toward any person based on his or her personal characteristic is wrong and there are criminal statutes to ensure harm against persons will be punished. All people should be afforded common courtesy; however, the definition of tolerance, formerly relating to courtesy, has changed during recent years such that individuals are not merely expected to act with kindness toward others, but to accept all their differences, particularly those involving alternative sexual behaviors, as normal and equal in all ways. A “tolerance” curriculum that includes homosexuality, bisexuality, transgenderism and other such behaviors identified in AB 723 (Penal Code Section 422.55) would be unacceptable to most parents.**
- 2. Teaching children to respect each other and get along with each other as an underlying precept is admirable. This can be done simply as children are encouraged to treat others with courtesy, as they would want to be treated. A separate curriculum is not only unnecessary, but would also divert important class time for non-academic purposes. Teachers are rightly concerned that there is already insufficient time to teach required subject matter.**
- 3. California schools continue to struggle with high remediation rates. A recent report to the California State University (CSU) governing board showed only minimal progress toward CSU’s goal of lowering the percentage of incoming freshmen needing remediation. Last fall only 43 percent of freshmen were fully proficient in both English and math. There had been no change since fall of the prior year in students requiring help in math and only a one percent decrease in remediation rates for English. Rather than add another non-academic curriculum (and a questionable one at that), it would seem our schools should focus instead on increasing their emphasis on academics.**
- 4. Another concern with AB 723 is the requirement that the development of the curriculum involve “civil rights” organizations representing all the characteristics in Penal Code Section 422.55. These would include homosexual, bisexual, transsexual and other groups representing sexual behaviors, rather than immutable characteristics such as race and ethnicity. Most parents would object to their children being taught about sexual behavior in the classroom and that they are all morally equivalent. These moral issues and the acceptance of behaviors as normal or “right” are the domain of the family, not the schools.**