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Resolution on Civic Education
J. Lauritzen and J. Huizar

Whereas, For more than 225 years, Americans have shared a vision of democracy in which all citizens understand, appreciate, and engage actively in civic and political life;

Whereas, The goals of a quality civic education should help young people acquire and learn to use the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will prepare them to be competent and responsible citizens throughout their life;

Whereas, In recent decades, concern has grown about the increasing numbers of Americans who are disengaging from civic and political institutions, volunteer associations, religious congregations and community-based organizations;

Whereas, Voting trends have seen a continued decline in Americans under the age of 25 who are less likely to vote than either their older counterparts or young people of past decades;

Whereas, Surveys show that young people do not understand the ideals of citizenship, they are disengaged from the political process, they lack the knowledge necessary for effective self-government, and their appreciation and support of American democracy is limited, at best;

Whereas, Too many young people dropout of school before they take their single semester civic course in the twelfth grade;

Whereas, It is crucial for the future health of our democracy that all young people, including those who are usually marginalized, be knowledgeable, engaged in their communities and in politics and committed to the public good;

Whereas, Encouraging the development of civic skills and attitudes among young people has been an important goal of education and was the primary impetus for originally establishing public schools;

Whereas, Schools are communities in which young people learn to interact, argue, and work together with others and arenas for developing and promoting civil discourse, an important foundation for future citizenship,

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Whereas, The California Constitution specifically recognizes the importance of citizenship education, stating that, "A general diffusion of knowledge and intelligence being essential to the preservation of the rights and liberties of the people," and

Whereas, The recently published Education for Democracy: California Scope and Sequence, a project mandated by the California State Legislature and funded by the California Department of Education, provides a blue print for Civic Education; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, As we continue to develop literacy and plan professional development opportunities in the content area of social studies in preparation for the social studies standardized tests, that civic education be an integral part of the curriculum at every level;

Resolved further, Every student in grades kindergarten through grade twelve be provided formal instruction that leads to the development of democratic and civic dispositions and attitudes; promotes an understanding of our nation's identity and constitutional heritage; encourages them to effectively exercise their rights and responsibilities and that prepares them well for their role as citizen living in a democratic society; and be it finally

Resolved, The Superintendent provide a comprehensive plan to this Board of Education by January 2005 that addresses and fulfills the goals of "the civic mission of schools."