

URGENT ACTION NEEDED

TWO BILLS PROPOSE TO REPEAL IB GRANTS

Assembly Democratic staff have unveiled a proposal for the consolidation of various major categorical education programs, including International Baccalaureate (IB) Program Grants, instructional materials, the art and music block grant, and beginning teacher support and assessment (BTSA), among others. Assembly Democrats and Republicans have both now introduced major proposals for categorical consolidation.

The Republican proposal has been amended into AB 2890 (Duvall). The Democratic proposal is included in AB2933 (Committee on Education). Both bills were amended earlier this week and are scheduled for consideration by the Assembly Education Committee on **Wednesday, April 16.**

Both measures are cause for serious alarm. Given the Democratic majority in the Legislature, AB 2933—the measure proposed by Assembly Education Committee Democrats—poses the greatest threat to the continued existence of the IB program.

Among other provisions, AB 2933 would create a “Pupil support block grant” that would include funding previously allocated under the following major programs: instructional materials, the School and Library Improvement Block Grant (funding for school libraries and the School Improvement Program), the arts and music block grant, and the IB Program. The funds could then be used by a school district to “provide pupil support services to pupils in kindergarten and grades 12, inclusive, to increase academic achievement and enrich their overall education.” In other words, the funds could be used for virtually anything the school district wants.

The bill then REPEALS the programs that are included in the block grant, including the International Baccalaureate program.

The Republican bill, AB 2890, calls its block grant the “Supplemental Academic Support Block Grant” and includes more programs (notably the new school counseling program), but has the same effect of repealing SIP and making the funds available for virtually any use.

IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED

Members of CIBO need to call the members of the Assembly Education Committee between now and next Tuesday to strongly oppose these two bills. In particular, CIBO members need to strongly oppose AB 2933, because that bill is the Democratic proposal and thus has the best chance of becoming law.

The key argument is this: IB programs support students in achieving at the highest academic level. There are many students in IB programs who are from poor and limited-English families who thrive in IB programs and whose parents cannot protect their interests in school. Given the almost total focus of school accountability on helping low-performing students, the proposed block grant does NOT provide a fair local debate on spending priorities—it puts all the emphasis on low performing students at the expense of programs that support students who thrive in academically challenging programs.

A list of the members of the Assembly Education Committee is attached. CIBO members are urged to call ALL members of the Committee. First priority should be calling those legislators who represent your community or a community near you.