



Assembly Member **SANDRÉ SWANSON**

News Release

For Immediate Release:

May 21, 2009

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\$500,000 In Additional Funds To Oakland Schools Clears Assembly

(Sacramento) –The State Assembly passed a bill that would help the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) as well as other districts in state receivership to pay back their state loans while continuing to provide quality education programs. AB 980, authored by Assemblymember Sandré R. Swanson (D-Alameda), cleared the body on a 48-31 vote.

“This is an issue about fairness. When a district is recovering from financial crisis, it is only right that all parts of the district pay their fair share to help retire the loan. In fact, on February 3rd, State Superintendent Jack O’Connell ordered the State Administrator to transfer \$60 per student from Oakland’s general fund to charter schools. Superintendent O’Connell asserted that charters are a part of the district in which they reside. If that is the case, then they should certainly share in both the district’s assets and liabilities,” Assemblymember Swanson contended.

Currently, only traditional public schools in districts in state receivership are responsible for repayment of state loans. Under the provisions of the bill, both charter and traditional schools would be charged a prorated amount, based on the number of students enrolled at the school. The formula is based on agreements that approximately one-third of OUSD’s charter schools have signed to help share responsibility for the loan repayment. Under the bill, these charters would actually save money, Assemblymember Swanson noted. Estimates vary, but the district would gain an additional \$500,000 annually from charters not currently contributing.

The OUSD Board of Trustees ratified their support of the measure in a recent board meeting. Speaking before an earlier Assembly committee, Board Member Alice Spearman stated, “This bill will help evenly distribute the burden of debt repayment across all schools in our district. I consider this matter one of basic fairness,” she stated.

“AB 980 makes it possible to share the burden so that students are not penalized for attending the wrong school. It also ensures that the fiscal recovery of these districts is not further jeopardized, and protects the taxpayers’ investment,” Assemblymember Swanson concluded.

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