



Assembly Member **SANDRÉ SWANSON**

News Release

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State Assembly Passes Legislation Returning Full Local Control To Oakland School District

(Sacramento) –Assemblymember Sandré R. Swanson’s (D-Alameda) bill to complete the transition to local control for the Oakland Unified School District cleared the full Assembly today on a 44-26 vote.

“With the passage of AB 791, we are one step closer to setting a concrete deadline for the complete return of control to the Oakland Unified School District. After repeated delays in transitioning to local control, it is time that the State sets a date certain so that the board, teachers, parents, and the community can once again fully participate in the direction of their children’s education,” announced Assemblymember Swanson.

AB 791 would mandate that the remaining areas of Financial Management and Pupil Achievement be returned to the District’s board of trustees by July 1st, 2010, which is the start of the new fiscal year. This would formalize the recommendation of the independent Fiscal Crisis Management and Assistance Team (FCMAT), which conducted a complete audit in December of 2008. Since the District entered State receivership in 2003, FCMAT has conducted regular audits of the District, recommending the return of certain areas of authority as they reached a level of recovery that FCMAT deemed sustainable.

This is not the first time that the State has been slow to return governance, nor Assemblymember Swanson’s first attempt at returning local control. Despite several audits and repeated recommendations to return the area of Board Governance and Community Relations, the State refused to do so. Upon his election to office in December of 2006, Assemblymember Swanson introduced AB 45, which aimed to institute a transparent process for returning control. As a result, the District received its first area of control in July of 2007. A subsequent FCMAT audit, funded at the request of Assemblymember Swanson in November of 2007, resulted in a recommendation to return Facilities and Personnel. The Superintendent of Public Instruction returned these areas five months later.

“Education is the heart of our democracy. When the State comes in to recover a district in extreme financial distress, it is incumbent upon State Administrators to return the district to health and return local control in a clear and transparent fashion. This ongoing stalemate is harmful to the District, and continues to cast doubt on the State’s system of receivership. With FCMAT’s recommendations, the Superintendent of Public Instruction is free to return authority as quickly as he wants. However, the District and the State will have an end point so that the local board, teachers, parents, and students can get on with the business of directing their schools,” Assemblymember Swanson concluded.

The bill now moves to the State Senate.

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