

WHAT SHOULD THE STATE DO?

- **BUILD NEW SCHOOLS.**
There is no way to avoid this, and there is no cheap way to do it.
- **ADOPT NEW PRIORITIES.**
Make sure that any new money for building more schools goes to the communities with the worst overcrowding.
- **FIX PROBLEMS CREATED BY MULTI-TRACK CALENDARS.**
End Concept 6 calendars, and require that all students attend school the same number of days. Require year-round schools to offer the same high-quality classes to all students, regardless of the track they are on. Time vacations so that all students can prepare for important tests. Monitor enrollments to make certain that students are not segregated into different tracks.
- **ESTABLISH REAL ACCOUNTABILITY.**
The state must collect information to know where the problems are; monitor school overcrowding so conditions get better and not worse; and act, through law and policy, to correct problems as soon as they occur.



References are available at:

www.ucla-idea.org

www.decentschools.com

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OVERCROWDING IN CALIFORNIA'S SCHOOLS AN EPIDEMIC THAT IS GETTING WORSE!

- 1 of 3 California students attends an overcrowded school.
- California has more students per class than any state except Utah.
- Overcrowded California schools enroll up to 5 times the number of students they were built to serve. 4200 students attend South Gate Middle School in Los Angeles—a school designed for 800.
- Most students in overcrowded schools are Latino and still learning English; most overcrowded schools are in poor neighborhoods.
- By 2009, California will need schools for 1 million more students.

WHEN SCHOOLS ARE OVERCROWDED, OFFICIALS...

- Fill the playground with “temporary” classrooms that often remain for years. In 1999, over 85,000 “portables” or “trailers” were the classrooms of 35 % of California’s public school students.
- Convert gymnasiums, libraries, computer labs, special education rooms, teachers’ workrooms, and storage areas into classrooms.
- Move students elsewhere (bus them). In Los Angeles, between 15,000 and 25,000 students are bused because their schools are too crowded. Some ride two hours a day in rush hour traffic.
- Adopt year-round, multi-track schedules where students and teachers rotate being in school and on vacation at different times during the year. 1,000,000 California students attend such schools. 350,000 are in “Concept 6” schools that have a shorter school year.
- Leave students in crowded conditions (do nothing!)

WHAT'S WRONG WITH OVERCROWDING?

Students in overcrowded schools pay less attention, achieve less, and experience more violence. Overcrowded schools are more likely to have inadequate or substandard electrical and lighting systems, safety features, heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems, floors and foundations.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH BUSING?

Busing can be positive when used to integrate classrooms or provide challenging classes taught by highly qualified teachers. When schools bus just to lessen overcrowding, students receive few benefits in exchange for long bus rides away from familiar neighborhoods and schools. Instead, such busing results in

- Less parental involvement
- Temptation to skip kindergarten
- Limited access to after-school programs
- Students learning less

WHAT'S WRONG WITH MULTI-TRACK SCHOOLS?

1,000,000 students in multi-track, year-round schools

- Remain in large, overcrowded schools
- Can't take courses that are offered only on particular tracks, including electives and advanced courses
- Have ill-timed vacations that make it hard for students to get ready for state tests and prepare their college applications
- Miss out on extracurricular activities, remedial and enrichment programs

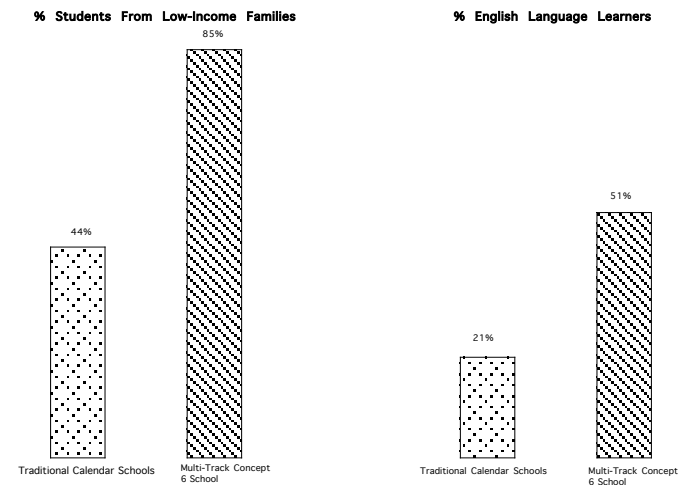
Nearly 350,000 California students in 240 Concept 6 multi-track, year-round schools with fewer (but extended) school days

- Lose the equivalent of a full year of school days and nights for homework (over their 12 years in school)
- Are far more likely to have a teacher without a full credential
- Learn less

WHAT IS CALIFORNIA (NOT) DOING ABOUT OVERCROWDING IN THE SCHOOLS?

- The State knows it has not reduced overcrowding or eliminated the hardships that overcrowded schools place on poor students and students of color.
- The state has failed to build new schools at a rate that keeps pace with increasing numbers of California school children, and it doesn't make sure that new schools are built in the communities where they are needed most.
- The state provides financial incentives for districts to convert schools to multi-track, year-round calendars instead of building new schools to relieve overcrowding. However, once a district enrolls students into multi-track schools, it reduces its chances to get funding to build new schools.
- Even though the public passed a state bond in November 2002 to pay for more schools, the new money is not targeted to eliminate California's multi-track schools with shortened calendars.
- Last year, the California Legislature passed a bill that would have phased out Concept 6 multi-track calendars by 2008. Governor Davis vetoed it, saying that providing enough classrooms for all students to have 180 days of school each year.

Overcrowded schools house large numbers of low-income and English language learners.



Source: CA Dept. of Ed. Policy Education Division