

POLICY WATCH – June 2013

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Last month, NBLC produced a conference on “Ready to Work: Solving the Skills Mismatch and Talent Shortage in the North Bay.” The sold out conference received a great response from employers and educators. We are looking for ways to “step into each other’s worlds,” as urged by the keynote speaker, Steven Aronowitz. One outcome was the recognition that both sides have opportunities to improve the situation and that both employers and educators are eager to be a part of the solution. This issue delves into some of the challenges and opportunities. The good news is that having a skilled workforce that is ready to do the jobs being generated in the North Bay is within our reach as long as we work collectively and creatively.

Best,



Cynthia

NBLC Applauds the Inclusion of Local Control Funding Formula in the State Budget

NBLC’s top public policy priority is improving public education. We are excited about the opportunities presented by the passage of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) in the state budget, which is based on the proposal by Governor Brown. Louis Freedberg, EdSource, June 21, 2013, writes that “Less than a week after the state Legislature approved a sweeping school finance reform plan that will funnel additional funds to low-income students and English learners, the state’s finance chief says school districts will have to spend the extra funds in a way “that shows improved outcomes” among their students.” That is a key reason for NBLC’s support.



Freedberg continues, “The passage of the most far-reaching reform of California’s school financing system in decades...has as its central feature a local control funding formula which provides a base level of funding for all districts, with additional funds for high-needs students to take into account the higher costs of educating them.” He cautions, “But details of the plan and its implementation must still be worked out for the nearly 1000 districts enrolling 6.2 million students, and it is evident that the transformation of a convoluted school finance system will be complex, raising multiple questions for local officials and communities.”

According to Freedberg, “Michael Kirst, president of the State Board of Education, noted that the plan delegates a great deal of control to local districts to spend funds as they see fit, marking a decisive shift from the rigid top-down requirements imposed by Sacramento and Washington over the past decade.

Said Kirst, “A lot of accountability (for how funds will be spent) will not be stage managed from Sacramento. People will have to get active at the local level to make this (funding plan) meet their needs.” At the same time, he said, the law approved by the Legislature last week gives considerable powers to the State Board of Education to establish procedures for how to hold school districts accountable for the money they will receive.”

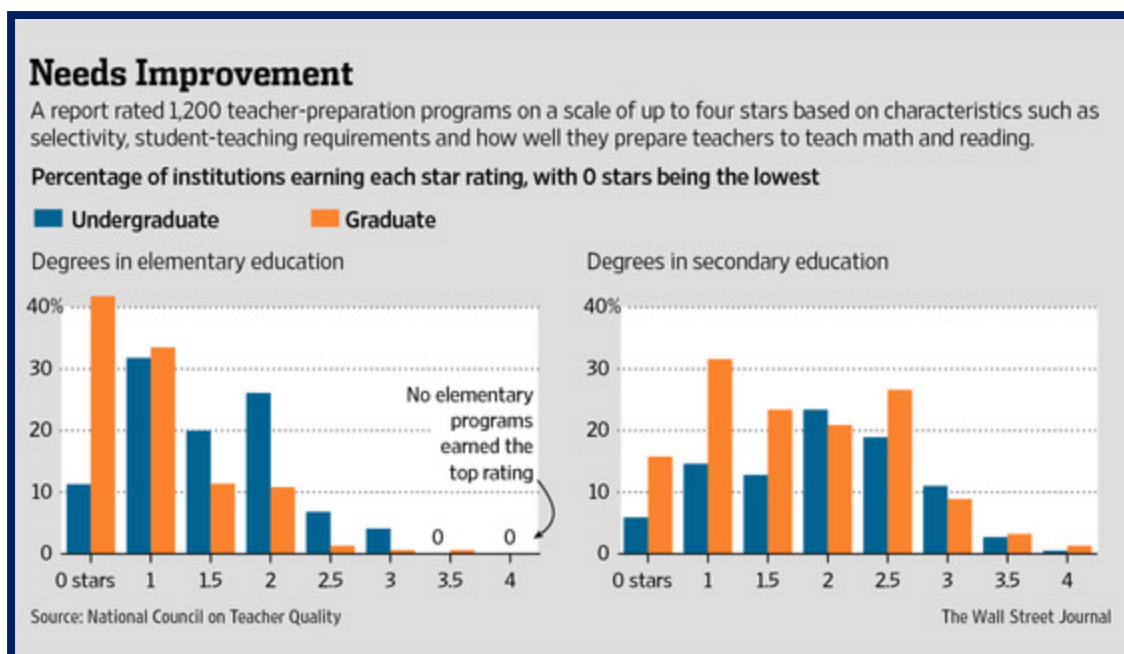


By early next year, Kirst said, the board will draw up a “template” for the “local education plans” that school districts are required to draw up under the new school funding laws, based on public hearings and parental and community input. Later in the year the board will develop a “rubric” for a range of accountability measures – such as attendance rates and how well students are prepared for college – that local districts will be expected to meet.” Let’s hope that this greater flexibility produces the improvements we have all been seeking.

Teacher Training's Low Grade

A recent article in the Wall Street Journal (June 18, 2013) titled Teacher Training’s Low Grade by Stephanie Banchemo, identifies another area of concern about public education. According to a report by the National Council on Teacher Quality, a nonprofit advocacy group, the study represents the first comprehensive review of such teacher training programs; Banchemo said the report found that “U.S. colleges of education are an “industry of mediocrity” that churns out teachers ill-prepared to work in elementary and high-school classrooms.” The report also said that “fewer than one in nine programs for future elementary teachers, and just over one-third of high-school programs, properly prepare teachers to teach the Common Core standards, and about 75% aren’t preparing graduates to teach reading to youngsters.”

For years, many have criticized the preparation of teachers, including teachers. Teachers confirmed that they often don’t feel fully prepared and that their training had room for improvement. Banchemo says that “Education Secretary Arne Duncan, who has criticized education colleges, praised the ratings. ‘Teachers deserve better support and better training than teachers’ colleges today provide, and school districts should be able to make well-informed hiring choices,’ he said.”



In the article, Banchero reveals that, “The study rated 1,200 programs at 608 institutions that collectively account for 72% of the graduates of all such programs in the nation. The council included criteria such as the selectivity of the teacher programs, as well as an evaluation of their syllabi, textbooks and other teaching materials. It said fewer than 10% of the programs earned three or more stars. Only four, **all for future high-school teachers**, received four stars. About 14% got zero stars, and graduate-level programs fared particularly poorly.” The report was criticized by some educators for its methodology.

Banchero states, “As evidence mounts that teacher quality is one of the biggest determinants of student achievement, critics have complained that teacher-training programs have lax admission standards, scattered curriculum, and fail to give aspiring teachers real-life classroom training. The report echoes the complaints, saying many graduates lack the necessary classroom-management skills and subject knowledge needed. The report contends that it is too easy to get into teacher-preparation programs, with only about a quarter of them restricting admissions to applicants in the top half of their class. The typical grade-point-average to get into undergraduate programs is about 2.5, it said.” Improvements in school funding and teacher training will certainly get our schools back on a better path to providing 21st century skills to our students.

Housing Prices Soar: How Do We House the Workforce Today and Tomorrow?



Unfortunately, some people are fearful of looking ahead, more so when they don't like what they see in the future. It is no doubt that the Bay Area and the North Bay will continue to become a more diverse population. California is already a state with a majority-minority makeup, ahead of most of the rest of the nation. In a Brookings Institute analysis of the 2010 Census, it found that the U.S. is showing “an unprecedented shift in the nation's racial makeup in 14 states (especially in California), one that is reshaping schools, workplaces, and the electorate. Due to immigration, a combination of more deaths and fewer births among whites and an explosion of minority births, the U.S. is poised to become a majority-minority country sooner than predicted.”

That means that Californians need to prepare for these demographic changes. Anticipating job and population growth is important for planning ahead. One of the things that require a lot of pre-planning is housing, especially workforce or affordable housing. Coming out the recession, it is apparent from the soaring housing prices that the supply is not keeping up with the demand. And looking ahead for the next 10 – 20 years, we can see that we need to plan for future housing so that when we need it, it will be there.

NBLC recognizes that the North Bay operates as a region as an economy, transportation infrastructure, education, and housing. For example, 60% of Marin's workforce does not live in Marin. That means other counties are housing Marin's workforce. Therefore, looking at regional issues from a regional perspective is not only wise public policy but imperative to achieve the needed outcomes. Each county should be a participant in meeting its needs and coordinate regionally. No county should abdicate responsibility for doing its fair share of providing for its residents and workforce. That is one reason why NBLC supports Plan Bay Area.

NBLC is a member of Keep Marin Working, which represents companies and organizations that employ half of the county's 180,000 member workforce. The members of the coalition include: Rick Wells, San Rafael Chamber of Commerce; Coy Smith, Novato Chamber of Commerce; Klif Knoles, Marin Builders Association; Cecilia Zamora, Latino Council; Robert Eyler, Marin Economic Forum; and Edward Segal, Marin Association of REALTORS. The following article is an opinion piece submitted by Keep Marin Working on planning for the future in Marin County.



“The draconian changes proposed by a coalition of conservation organizations (*Marin Independent Journal*, April 22) would help destroy the very foundation that makes the Marin we know and love possible today and sustainable tomorrow. Among other things, the coalition seeks a series of drastic restrictions on our economic vitality, commerce, transportation, development, zoning, and property rights. The result would be to shutter and close Marin.

Their proposals are labeled “A Vision for Marin County.” Unfortunately, it is tunnel vision that fails to see the link between a vibrant local economy and maintaining a high quality of life here. The stakes are simply too great for the 180,000 people whose Marin-based jobs are dependent on a healthy business environment, or anyone who enjoys and appreciates all that is Marin today, from letting that vision become a reality.

The impact of the proposals, as outlined in the *Community Marin 2013* document, would: Discourage the creation of jobs by restricting development and making it more expensive to build, buy or rent. Higher costs equal less construction, thereby reducing or stagnating building- and trade-related jobs.

Discourage companies from expanding or moving here. Between 2009 to 2012, 565 net new businesses entered the Marin economy. But the county will not be able to compete with other jurisdictions if there are new fees imposed on and increased resistance to commercial development.

Make it harder to maintain or improve our infrastructure: The lack of local workers in the building trades would make any infrastructure projects either more costly and lessen the local economic benefits from those projects.

Make it more difficult for people who live here, to stay here, especially our children. Discouraging commercial development can be a deal-breaker for local residents. Finding new jobs will be harder, commutes will become longer for residents, and tax revenues that support local schools and public services otherwise will slowly diminish. Without jobs, new households are not formed, public safety is underfunded, communities are weakened and taxpayers pay more.

The Community Marin proposals come about a year after George Lucas suddenly pulled the plug on his Grady Ranch movie studio project, which would have generated much needed jobs and tax revenue here. Their coalition apparently doesn't remember the lessons from that debacle, simply doesn't care, or hopes that we will all forget.

In fact, the disconnect between economic vitality and funding for the conservation of Marin County through an already larger number of open spaces is why Measure A was sought last November: if more job and business growth took place in Marin County, sales tax initiatives would not be seen as necessary to fund local parks and open spaces, and the revenue would be naturally generated for the public's use.

But Marin's business community certainly remembers, cares, and will not forget. Whether your job depends on a healthy local economy or you want to guarantee a high quality of life for all residents, please help us ensure that the *Community Marin 2013* proposal does not become reality.

Speak up now and express your opposition to the proposal by signing an online petition at this address: <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/keep-marin-working/>.

Let's broaden our vision and learn from the mistakes of the past. Let's be the Marin that embraces planning that seeks to preserve the best of our community but is flexible enough to adapt to changing needs for housing, transportation and sea level rise in a way that opens opportunities.

Let's choose a vision that looks forward, not backward."

Signed by:

Cynthia Murray, CEO, North Bay Leadership Council

Cecilia Zamora, Executive Director, Latino Council and Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Marin

Coy Smith, CEO, Novato Chamber of Commerce

Edward Segal, CEO, Marin Association of REALTORS®

Members in the News

North Bay Leadership Council Points out the Major Changes Coming for Small Businesses Due to Health Care Reform

Small business owners and managers got a jaw-dropping glimpse Friday of what they need to know to comply with President Obama's health care overhaul next year.

Fireman's Fund names Torrance as CEO

Fireman's Fund Insurance Company today named Andrew Torrance as its new president and chief executive officer.

Basin Street Properties announces that they have signed Wells Fargo Advisors to Fountaingrove Executive Center

Basin Street Properties announces that they have signed Wells Fargo Advisors to Fountaingrove Executive Center, reaching 100 percent occupancy. The Santa Rosa office building is one of the 17 properties acquired from Equity Office Properties last year, all of which had been previously owned, managed or developed by Basin Street.

Sutter Health Selected an Architect for New Medical Office Building

Ware Malcomb, an international architectural firm, was selected to design Sutter Health's forthcoming 80,000-square-foot medical office building next to the \$284 million hospital currently under construction in northern Santa Rosa.

Buck Institute study shows anti-aging drug improves function of heart in mice

A drug that has been shown to extend the life span of mice also improves the health of the rodent's heart — and holds promise of similar benefits in people, according to a new study by researchers at the Buck Institute for Research on Aging.

North Bay Business Journal's Brad Bollinger Honored by Sonoma State University

Brad Bollinger was honored by Sonoma State University's School of Business and Economics for exemplifying "Outstanding Community Impact", recognizing his broad reaching, positive impact in our region.

St. Joseph Health president in Sonoma County, Todd Salnas, Honored by Catholic Health Assembly among "Tomorrow's Leaders"

Catholic Health Association honors Todd Salnas, Sonoma County president of St. Joseph Health, as one of “Tomorrow’s Leaders”

Kaiser Permanente’s George Halvorson to Appointed to First 5 California

Governor Jerry Brown appointed George Halvorson, CEO of Kaiser Permanente and Early Childhood Education Committee chair, to First 5 California Commission.

Sonoma Raceway Kicks-Off PG&E Heroes in Our Community Program

Sonoma Raceway, in partnership with Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), will offer race fans a patriotic way to pay tribute to the brave men and women in our community through the “PG&E Heroes in Our Community” program.

Read more www.northbayleadership.org/news



Who We Are

Over twenty years ago, business leaders founded the North Bay Leadership Council on a simple premise: We can accomplish more by working together. Today, the Council includes 44 leading employers in the North Bay. Our members represent a wide variety of businesses, non-profits and educational institutions, with a workforce in excess of 25,000. As business and civic leaders, our goal is to promote sound public policy, innovation and sustainability to make our region a better place to live and work. For more information: Call 707.283.0028 / E-mail info@northbayleadership.org

www.northbayleadership.org