

ALERT

VOLUME 34, NUMBER 31 • NOVEMBER 7, 2008



Redistricting Reform Passes in Record Turnout Election



In an election characterized by observers as reflecting voters' desire for change, California voters turned out in record numbers this week and narrowly

approved a California Chamber of Commerce-supported measure changing the process for drawing political district boundaries.

Proposition 11, the redistricting reform measure, won support from 50.6 percent of the votes counted as of early morning on November 6. An estimated 2 million absentee ballots remained uncounted as *Alert* went to press.

CalChamber President and Chief Executive Officer Allan Zarembeg was

a co-chair of the Yes on Proposition 11 campaign.

The CalChamber has long believed that fair redistricting is key to meaningful political reform. Proposition 11, the California Voters First Initiative, will allow the citizens of California—rather than the Legislature—to create legislative districts that will require elected officials be accountable to the voters.

The broad, bipartisan coalition supporting Proposition 11 grew to include more than 2,300 organizations and individuals, including civil rights groups, cities, community organizations and businesses. The measure was sponsored by the League of Women Voters of California, AARP and California Common Cause.

See Redistricting: Page 6

Governor: Cuts, Taxes, Economic Stimulus Needed to Address California Budget Shortfall

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has called a special session of the Legislature and proposed a combination of cuts, taxes and economic stimulus measures to address a budget deficit now estimated at \$11.2 billion.

As *Alert* went to press, the California Chamber of Commerce was analyzing the proposal, which includes new taxes on businesses and consumers; reducing costly litigation for employers through changes in overtime and meal/rest period requirements; and accelerating the use of infrastructure funding already approved to push dollars into the economy.

Taxes/Revenues

As outlined November 6, tax elements of the Governor's proposal include:

- A temporary increase in the state sales tax, from 5 percent to 6.5 percent, estimated to generate an additional \$3.2 billion in 2008-09 and \$6.6 billion in 2009-10 for the General Fund. The sales tax would revert back to 5 percent at the end of three years.

- Broadening the sales and use tax to include certain services, such as vehicle and appliance repairs and sporting and entertainment events. This permanent increase is expected to generate \$357

See Governor: Page 4

CalChamber, Voters Agree on Energy Measures, Hospital, Veterans Bonds



California voters and the California Chamber of Commerce agreed on two costly energy measures on the November ballot, rejecting both

Proposition 7 and Proposition 10.

In addition, voters approved bond measures to fund construction of children's hospitals and to provide home loans to veterans, and rejected reduced penalties for crimes against business.

Energy Measures

With all precincts reporting on November 6, both Proposition 7 and Proposition 10 were failing by large margins: 64.9 percent "no" to 35.1 percent "yes" on Proposition 7 and 59.8 percent "no" to 40.2 percent "yes" on Proposition 10.

The CalChamber and more than 300 organizations opposed Proposition 7, warning that the initiative was so flawed that it would have resulted in less, not more, renewable power and would have significantly increased electricity rates.

Proposition 7 would have required government-owned utilities to generate 20 percent of their electricity from

See CalChamber: Page 4

Inside

- Draft Climate Change Plan: Page 3

Labor Law Corner

Employee Who Quits Job May Be Eligible for Unemployment Insurance



Ellen S. Savage
Labor Law Consultant

One of my employees quit to go to work for one of my competitors. After a few months she got laid off from her new job and now she's collecting unemployment insurance from my reserve account. How can she do that when she's the one who decided to quit my firm?

Many employers believe they will have to pay unemployment insurance

(UI) only when an employee is fired or laid off. Surprisingly, there are many circumstances where an employee who quits a job can collect UI.

Any employer the employee worked for in the "base period" of the claim (see Base Period chart below) may be liable to pay benefits, even if they were not the last employer.

'Good Cause'

Under California law, an employee who quits with "good cause" may be eligible for UI benefits. "Good cause" means the employee's reason for leaving must be something substantial and compelling that would cause a reasonable person who genuinely wanted to remain employed to quit anyway.

Some examples include quitting to take a better job, to move a substantial distance when a spouse's job is transferred, or when the employer relocates and the new commute distance is unreasonable.

According to the California Employment Development Department (EDD), when an employee quits in order to accept a new job there is good cause for leaving if:

- there was a definite assurance of employment in another substantially better job that is at least as permanent as the job the individual leaves; or
- a reasonable person who genuinely wanted to remain employed would have left to accept the other work.

Substantially Better Job

In determining whether the new job is substantially better, EDD looks at relative pay, opportunities for advancement, skills required, seniority rights, working

conditions, location and permanency.

A 10 percent increase in pay generally would be considered good cause to quit, factoring in the basic wage, shift differentials, board and room furnished by the employer, guaranteed overtime, and fringe benefits such as vacation pay and insurance.

An employee who quits her job for a substantially better job and then is laid off from the new job due to a lack of work may be eligible to collect UI from the first employer's reserve account. The first employer's reserve account would be charged if wages were paid by the first employer during the base period for the claim.

An employee also would be eligible for UI benefits if she quit her job for a substantially better job and then, for reasons beyond her control, the new job did not materialize. This might occur when an employee quits her job based on being given a definite start date by the new employer, who then rescinds the job offer or delays the start date.

UI Eligibility Resources

For more information about what factors are used to determine UI eligibility, go to EDD's "Benefit Determination Guide" online at www.edd.ca.gov/UIBDG/. This is an excellent resource when responding to a former employee's UI claim.

Also available on EDD's website is a helpful online publication called "Managing Unemployment Insurance Costs" at www.edd.ca.gov/pdf_pub_ctr/de4527.pdf.

For more information about employer obligations under the UI program, go to the Benefits Library at HRCalifornia.com.

California Chamber Officers

Edwin A. Guiles
Chair

Frederick R. Ruiz
First Vice Chair

Larree M. Renda
Second Vice Chair

S. Shariq Yosufzai
Third Vice Chair

Russell Gould
Immediate Past Chair

Allan Zaremborg
President and Chief Executive Officer

Alert (ISSN 0882-0929) is published weekly during legislative session with exceptions by California Chamber of Commerce, 1215 K Street, Suite 1400, Sacramento, CA 95814-3918. Subscription price is \$50 paid through membership dues. Periodicals Postage Paid at Sacramento, CA.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Alert, 1215 K Street, Suite 1400, Sacramento, CA 95814-3918. Publisher: Allan Zaremborg. Executive Editor: Ann Amioka. Associate Editor: Blake Ellington. Art Director: Marcy Wacker. Capitol Correspondent: Christine Haddon. Photographer: Aaron Lambert.

Permission granted to reprint articles if credit is given to the California Chamber of Commerce Alert, and reprint is mailed to Alert at address above.

*E-mail: alert@calchamber.com.
Home page: www.calchamber.com.*

Base Periods for UI Claims

If the claim begins in:

January, February, March
April, May, June
July, August, September
October, November, December

The base period is the 12 months ending the previous:

September 30
December 31
March 31
June 30



Draft Climate Change Plan Overlooks Higher Energy Costs It Will Produce

CalChamber, Coalition Call for Comprehensive Economic Analysis



The California Chamber of Commerce and a coalition representing 170 business organizations have expressed concern about the billions

of dollars in increased costs that would result from a proposed climate change plan recently released by the California Air Resources Board (ARB).

In a press release, the CalChamber and coalition said there are better, less costly ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions—especially in these difficult economic times—than are proposed in the Scoping Plan released on October 15.

“The scoping plan will add to the worsening economic problems facing California companies and families,” said Shelly Sullivan, executive director of the coalition, known as the AB 32 Implementation Group. “Why not give consumers a break by adopting a well-designed cap-and-trade program that reduces the cost of cutting greenhouse gas emissions?”

Market mechanisms such as a cap-and-trade program give companies the ability to reduce emissions at the lowest cost, either on site or through the purchase of offsets.

Scoping Plan

The scoping plan, to be considered by the ARB for approval on December 11, contains the main strategies California will use to reduce greenhouse gases as it implements AB 32, the landmark climate change legislation enacted in 2006.

Greenhouse gas reduction actions outlined in the proposed scoping plan include direct regulations, alternative compliance mechanisms, monetary and non-monetary incentives, voluntary actions, and market-based mechanisms, such as a cap-and-trade system.

Although the scoping plan provides that some of the reductions could be achieved by a Western Region trading

system, the plan has opted for a high-cost “auction” method for the cap-and-trade system. Such a program would act as a multibillion-dollar tax increase on energy providers, leading to higher gasoline and electricity costs for consumers.

“The last thing California companies need in this challenging economic climate is billions in more taxes,” said Amisha Patel, CalChamber policy advocate and co-chair of the AB 32 Implementation Group. “California is already one of the highest tax states in the country.”

Faulty Analysis

The ARB staff asserts that the scoping plan will save consumers money, but that analysis incorporates anticipated cost savings from existing laws to promote vehicle fuel efficiency, independent of AB 32.

The last thing California companies need in this challenging economic climate is billions in more taxes. California is already one of the highest tax states in the country.

Amisha Patel, CalChamber Policy Advocate

Relying on projected savings from the fuel efficiency law already in place hides the reality that measures in the scoping plan—according to ARB estimates—will cause electricity rates to increase by 11 percent and natural gas rates by 8 percent. In addition, according to ARB, gasoline costs would increase \$11 billion a year under the plan.

The AB 32 Implementation Group has submitted an 18-page critique of the ARB’s economic analysis of the

scoping plan and has called on the agency to correct major errors that led to its conclusions.

Before the plan is implemented, the ARB should conduct a more comprehensive economic analysis that determines the cost of the state’s climate change plan to California companies and consumers, the coalition states.

Economic Concerns in Europe

“Even the European Union has amended its climate policies before they become binding to require more comprehensive cost-effectiveness studies because many countries feared the EU’s climate plan would be too expensive, cause economic turmoil and would increase unemployment,” Patel said.

“You have to question why European countries believe the EU Plan will result in economic turmoil and lost jobs for a 20 percent greenhouse gas emission reduction while the Air Board staff asserts California’s plan, which requires a nearly 30 percent greenhouse gas emission reduction, won’t cost a penny,” she said.

The ARB introduced the greenhouse gas reduction measures proposed in the scoping plan through four workshops conducted between November 30, 2007 and April 17, 2008. A draft scoping plan was released for public review and comment on June 26, followed by more workshops in July and August.

The AB 32 Implementation Group is a coalition working for a climate change strategy that achieves real greenhouse gas emissions in a balanced, cost-effective way. More information is available at the coalition website, www.ab32ig.com.

Staff Contact: Amisha Patel

Next Alert:
November 21

Governor: Cuts, Taxes, Economic Stimulus Needed to Address Budget

From Page 1

million in 2008-09 and \$1.156 billion in 2009-10.

- Imposing an oil severance tax on any oil producer that extracts oil from earth or water in the state. Permanent increase generating \$528 million in 2008-09 and \$1.195 billion in 2009-10.

- Increasing the alcohol excise tax by 5 cents a drink. This permanent increase is estimated to raise \$293 million in 2008-09 and \$585 million in 2009-10.

- A \$12 increase in annual vehicle registration fees. This permanent increase (offsetting funds shifted from vehicle license fee revenue to support local criminal justice programs) is estimated to provide \$150 million in 2008-09 and \$359 million in 2009-10 and future years.

To address the solvency of the unemployment insurance fund, the Governor is proposing a gradual increase in the employer-paid tax supporting the fund, combined with a “small reduction” in benefits to maintain the solvency of the fund. The state projects the fund will run deficits of \$2.4 billion in 2009 and \$4.9 billion in 2010 if no action is taken.

Economic Stimulus

The Governor proposes:

- Injecting about \$160 million into the state’s economy by accelerating hospital construction.

- Expediting the use of infrastructure bond monies to create jobs and help unemployed residential construction workers in the areas of the state hit hardest receive training in a new type of construction.

- Providing overtime exemptions and allowing more flexible work schedules to increase productivity to keep high-paying jobs in the state.

- Clarifying meal and rest period requirements to save businesses litigation costs and confusion from meal break violations, resulting in fewer terminations, according to the Governor.

- Reducing barriers to public-private partnerships and “design-build” agreements to permit more infrastructure to be built more quickly and economically, generating more jobs.

- Providing targeted tax credits to keep television and film production and thousands of associated jobs in the state.

- Helping borrowers and lenders modify existing home loans in ways that benefit both parties, thereby reducing foreclosure rates, and making changes in the lending process to help prevent a future mortgage crisis.

Cuts

The Governor proposed \$4.5 billion in General Fund reductions, including a \$2.5 billion reduction in K-14 allocations, smaller reductions for the University of California and California State University systems, the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and public safety grants. Reductions to Medi-Cal and other state-supported social services also are proposed, along with furloughs and two fewer holidays for state employees.

Special Commission

On October 30, the Governor signed an executive order creating a bipartisan commission to re-examine and modernize the state’s tax laws to establish a revenue stream that is more stable and reflective of California’s economy.

CalChamber, Voters Agree on Energy Measures, Hospital, Veterans Bonds

From Page 1

renewable energy by 2010, a standard that currently applies to private electrical corporations. The measure also would have raised the requirement for all utilities to 40 percent by 2020 and 50 percent by 2025.

Proposition 10 would have authorized \$5 billion in bonds paid from the state’s General Fund to help consumers and others purchase certain vehicles, and to fund research in renewable energy and alternative fuel vehicles. Voters realized, however, that while the reduction of greenhouse gases is a priority for California, this measure was not the most cost-effective way to achieve reductions.

Bond Measures

CalChamber-supported Proposition 3 was supported by 54.9 percent of voters. It authorizes \$980 million in bonds for construction and new equipment at eight non-profit and five University of California children’s hospitals.

CalChamber-supported Proposition 12 won support from 63.5 percent of voters. It authorizes a bond issue of \$900 million to provide farm and home aid for California veterans.

The initiative makes today’s wartime veterans eligible for the CalVet loan program, enabling more of them to purchase homes at low interest rates. The program is self-liquidating and does not have an impact on overall bond indebtedness for the state.

Other Measures

CalChamber-opposed Proposition 5 failed, 60 percent to 40 percent. Proposition 5 would have allocated \$460 million annually to improve and expand treatment programs.

The CalChamber pointed out that Proposition 5 would have reduced penalties for crimes against business and would have limited the ability of judges to hold parole violators accountable.

CalChamber-opposed Proposition 1A,

asking voters to authorize nearly \$10 billion in bonds to establish a high-speed rail system in California, was supported by 52.2 percent of voters.

The CalChamber argued there are many competing demands for resources in California and that other traffic mitigation projects should take priority. In addition, the CalChamber has said all along it is important for California to reserve future debt capacity to address the state’s critical water needs.

Supported by 63.2 percent of voters was Proposition 2, which requires that certain farm animals be allowed, for the majority of every day, to fully extend their limbs or wings, lie down, stand up and turn around. The CalChamber opposed Proposition 2, voicing concern that its restrictions will increase costs to consumers and reduce competitiveness of California’s farmers and ranchers.

The latest election results are available at the Secretary of State’s website at www.sos.ca.gov.

Profiles in Trade

Custom Brokerage Firm Helps Businesses Navigate Responsibilities of Import/Export

More than half the goods for sale in U.S. markets come from abroad. In 2007, imports into the United States were valued at more than \$2 trillion.

Every importer has the responsibility to learn about the laws and liabilities it faces when bringing foreign goods into the United States. If there is a recall, the importer is liable. If someone finds contaminants in an imported product, the importer is liable. Companies that actively import goods always need to stay on top of suppliers, the safety of their products, and changing regulations.

For those considering entering the import business, there is a lot to learn, but there are many resources for California businesses to leverage.

“Importing can be tricky,” says John Leitner, president of custom brokerage firm W.J. Byrnes & Company, a member of the California Chamber of Commerce and its Council for International Trade, “but if you spend the time to do your homework, you can avoid a lot of problems.”

W.J. Byrnes & Company has been in the business for years. Formed in 1907 as a sole proprietorship by the same name and incorporated in 1917, it holds license number 60, issued in 1928 by the Bureau of Customs, U.S. Department of the Treasury in keeping with new legislation providing for licensing of customhouse brokers. Leitner purchased the company in 1973.

Leitner has written books about international trade, taught at Golden Gate University, and served on the President’s Export Council. He lectures widely about how to get into the business of international trade and how to stay out of trouble.

Expert Help

Leitner says, “Importing is similar to taxes and a court of law in this way: You can do almost anything and everything yourself, or you can hire an expert to help you. You can do your taxes yourself, or you can hire an accountant. You can represent yourself in court, or you can hire an attorney. If you don’t pay the right amount of tax, or get yourself unjustly



convicted, too bad. You’re still liable. The government operates on the same premise for importing. You can do it yourself, or you can work with a professional customs broker.”

Customs brokers act on behalf of importers in preparing and filing the required customs documents, and basically shepherding goods through the multi-layered import protocol. Customs brokers

also can represent a business in customs matters, including payment of duties and release of goods.

Being Prepared

“Informed compliance” is the official government term that describes importers’ responsibility to know the law and comply with it. Compliance includes using “reasonable care”—defined legally as the degree of care that a reasonably prudent person would use under like circumstances.

At some point, U.S. Customs and Border Protection will randomly select an importer to be examined, meaning businesses need to be ready at all times.

“Don’t wait for someone to come knocking on your door. Start making sure

See Custom: Page 6

Government Entities Important to Importers

John Leitner, president of custom brokerage firm W.J. Byrnes & Company, a member of the California Chamber of Commerce and its Council for International Trade, suggests importers need to be well aware of at least these government entities:

- **U.S. Customs and Border**

Protection (CBP). This government agency is part of the Department of Homeland Security. It’s responsible for communicating requirements to importers.

The CBP website, www.customs.gov, is a great resource for new and established importers alike. CBP also posts all of its Informed Compliance Publications here (in the Trade section), including information on recordkeeping, reasonable care, rules of origin, fines, seizures, penalties, etc., as well as papers on specific types of products.

The must-have CBP publication, *Importing Into the United States, A*

Guide for Commercial Importers, is available as a free download on the site.

“This is the basic primer for importing into the United States,” says Leitner. The document’s 211 pages explain the process of importing goods, as well as many industry terms, in detail.

- **Consumer Product Safety Commission.** “They cover a huge range of products, including apparel, power tools and toys, among many others,” Leitner says.

- **U.S. Food and Drug Administration.** “If you deal with food of any kind, the FDA is going to be involved,” says Leitner. “After 9/11, they realized that another way of causing great harm to this country would be with tainted food.” Consequently, all food importers must file prior notice of what they’re bringing in and who their manufacturers are. All the manufacturers also must register.

Custom Brokerage Firm Helps Businesses with Import/Export Duties

From Page 5

that you have all of the answers you need before anyone starts asking questions,” Leitner says.

“Nobody expects you to be a super sleuth, but if you’re just going to throw a dart at a map to find a supplier, or randomly pick one off the Internet, then you’re not using reasonable care,” he adds.

“I encourage my clients to bend over backwards to show that they’ve used reasonable care,” says Leitner. “You need to know your manufacturers and use quality control. If you can show them everything they need to see right away, they’ll look it over and be out of there in a jiffy. If you can’t, they can camp out for weeks. Keeping a paper trail of written documentation is imperative, and you need to keep it for five years. If you don’t, you’ll be subject to penalties.”

Choosing Business Partners

In addition to compliance, choosing

reliable business partners is one of the most time-consuming aspects of importing, and choosing poorly could harm a business. In fact, it’s one of the top reasons new importing ventures fail.

Disaster stories abound about importers finding a really good deal, only to find out after the fact that they paid a high price for junk.

Leitner recalls one disaster story: “I was at a meeting of the Maritime Exchange, and saw photographs of a couple of shipping containers that had blown up at sea. The contents were declared as scrap plastic. Apparently, the importer had gone to a website to search for scrap plastic, and picked the cheapest source. The stuff came out of Mexico, got put on a vessel in L.A., and was on its way to China when it blew up. The ‘scrap plastic’ turned out to be ground up old gas cans, and they blew up near the equator because the gas residue got so hot it combusted.

“The Internet is a great place to go shopping, but you have to be careful. You’re liable for what you import. If that’s the only place you know about your supplier, you’re taking a big risk.”

Watch the News

Leitner shares another good rule: “If you’re doing business in a part of the world that’s making the news, and it’s not because of the great weather or good deals for travelers, then it’s time to pay attention.”

Staff Contact: Susanne Stirling

*“Profiles in Trade” is a new, regular feature in **Alert** highlighting the international trade activities of member companies. Elke Peterson and Ham Dethero contributed to this article. Past profiles and more international trade information are available at www.calchamber.com/international.*

Redistricting Reform Passes in Record Turnout Election



From Page 1

Historic Vote

In a November 5 news conference, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and sponsors and supporters of

Proposition 11 highlighted the historic significance of the passage of the measure.

The Governor pointed out that Proposition 11 marked the sixth attempt at redistricting reform and “the first time that an initiative like this has won in America . . . the first time where . . . citizens independently of the Legislature, not being appointed by the legislators or anything, totally independently, will draw the district lines in the future.”

A common theme at the national and state levels, the Governor said, “was that the people want politicians, Democrats and Republicans, to work together. And I think this is why they voted yes on Proposition 11: because they are sick and tired of the gridlock, they’re sick and tired of politicians getting stuck in their

ideological corners and not willing to compromise.”

Citizens Commission

Proposition 11 creates a 14-member independent citizens commission to redraw state legislative district lines based on strict non-partisan rules. Unlike the current process, Proposition 11 will ensure that the redistricting process is open and transparent and will respect existing city and county boundaries and communities. It will exclude individuals with obvious conflicts of interest,

including elected officials and their staff, from serving on the commission. The commission will include five Republicans, five Democrats and four members not associated with either party.

Potential commission members could include university professors, CPAs, physicians, nurses, engineers, community advocates, teachers and more. There also are provisions in the initiative requiring the commission to represent the state’s significant diversity, including ethnic and regional considerations.

CalChamber-Sponsored Seminars/Trade Shows

For more information, visit www.calchamber.com/events.

International Trade

Trade Mission to Australia. Export. gov. November 17–21, Sydney and Melbourne, Australia. (202) 482-3973.
Friend or Foe? The Role of Egypt in the Region. World Affairs Council, Northern California. November 18, Sacramento. (916) 739-7271.

Governor’s Conference on Small Business and Entrepreneurship. Global Entrepreneurship Week and The Kauffman Foundation. November 18–19, Los Angeles. (415) 777-1230.

Labor Law

On-Demand Web Seminar Library. CalChamber. Through December 31. Call for details. (800) 331-8877.

Honor Roll School

Common Lesson Planning Produces High Marks at Moreno Valley School

Victoriano Elementary School is the highest performing school in its district and Principal Rick Aleksak credits its success to the mantra of always reinvesting and looking for new ways to meet challenges.

Located in a residential area south of Moreno Valley, Victoriano Elementary has held the highest standardized test scores of the 13 elementary schools in the Val Verde Unified School District for the last four years, according to Aleksak.

The 511 students who attend grades K-5 receive instruction that has produced increasingly high numbers in every category, year after year. Aleksak said the targets the school has set have paid off.

"We know what our goal is, there is a commitment and dedication on the part of the staff to get there," Aleksak said. "It's really just a matter of having a clear vision, a clear goal."

Soaring Numbers

Since 2002, the percent of socio-economically disadvantaged students—who make up 63 percent of the entire student body—performing at grade level has gone up roughly 50 percent in both language arts and math.

Victoriano Elementary is also the only elementary school in the district to receive a "good" performance score at every grade level in mathematics, according to 2008 Just for the Kids-California (JFTK-CA) data. In addition, it was the only school to receive a "good" performance score in three out of four grade levels.

Aleksak says the high scores of his student body—which is about 47.4 percent Hispanic, 29.9 percent African American and 11.9 percent white—are a direct result of two key strategies.

Strategies

Common lesson planning is one strategy used by all 18 of Victoriano's teachers at each grade level. The goal is to get each teacher, at each level, working off the same lesson plan.

"If I go from one class to the other to the other, there will be a little bit of variation because of pacing, but they are all teaching the same material," Aleksak said. "So if a student goes from one class to another, there is really no difference in



Principal Rick Aleksak of Victoriano Elementary School in Moreno Valley

the instruction that they are getting."

At the district level, the Professional Learning Community model (PLC) is used to promote collaboration between all of the schools. Under the PLC model, teachers come together to look at information and data as it relates to what the students in the district need. From that information, each school then plans accordingly, Aleksak said.

"That has really created that sense of team unity and cohesion in working together very closely," Aleksak said. "It's not just this teacher or that teacher looking out for their own kids; it's a

grade level of teachers putting their heads together."

Looking Forward

The strategy has worked so well that the ceiling for higher performance scores is getting shorter.

"We have kind of closed the gap as far as how much room we have to grow," Aleksak said. "We have come to a point where we're really looking at things differently as to how to really refine."

The direction now, he said, is to move away from focusing on school-wide performance scores and toward a specific and direct focus on individual students who need assistance. The school is aiming to meet the needs of every single student and develop a plan to help those who are struggling to be at grade-level proficiency by the end of the school year.

"Whether you call it 'No Child Left Behind' or 'every kid proficient' or whatever, we want to make sure we are getting every kid over the bar," Aleksak said.

*This profile is another in an **Alert** series highlighting public schools identified by the California Business for Education Excellence (CBEE) Foundation as high performers, based on academic achievement tests. More information, including easy-to-access test data for schools throughout the state, is available on the free Just for the Kids-California website, www.jftk-ca.org.*

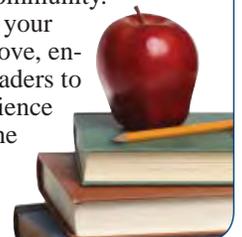
How Business Can Help Improve Schools

- Get involved with your schools locally.
- Go to www.jftk-ca.org to find information about how schools in your area are performing.
- If a school in your area is doing well, make sure state and local opinion leaders (elected officials, media representatives, community groups) know that schools in your community are honor roll schools being recognized for significant student academic achievement.
- Encourage those opinion leaders

to find out more about these schools by visiting and talking to school leaders and faculty.

- Help give honor roll schools a voice in your region and help them share their "best practices" with other schools in your community.

- If schools in your area need to improve, encourage school leaders to tap into the experience of their peers at the nearest honor roll school.



Get Ready for 2009



HR102: Labor Law Administration

A one-day perfect intro or refresher with even more HR-specific instruction than 101 courses

Master topics with important 2009 updates, such as:

- standards for wages and hours
- rest breaks
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) reasonable accommodations
- investigation procedures
- terminations and layoffs

Participants receive a FREE **2009 Labor Law Administration** book.
\$369. CalChamber Preferred/Executive Members: \$295.20.

HR201: Labor Law Update

A half-day advanced course for more seasoned HR managers

Even experienced HR professionals will need to know the impact of the new laws in 2009. Learn how to apply guidelines related to this year's big issues.

\$170. CalChamber Preferred/Executive Members: \$136.

Reserve Seats
for HR102 by
11/26/08 and
save \$30!

Reserve seats at www.calbizcentral.com/training

 **calbizcentral**[™]
presented by CalChamber

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Helping California Business Do BusinessSM

www.calchamber.com

P.O. BOX 1736 SACRAMENTO, CA 95812-1736
(916) 444-6670 FACSIMILE (916) 444-6685

CALIFORNIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ALERT

Periodicals
Postage
PAID
Sacramento, CA