

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 2556**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Hertzberg**

February 24, 2000

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An act to add Article 3 (commencing with Section 300) to Chapter 2 of Division 1 of Title 1 of the Government Code, relating to school facilities, and making an appropriation therefor.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2556, as introduced, Hertzberg. Schools: community centers.

Existing law authorizes the governing board of a school district to provide school facilities.

This bill would establish a pilot project to encourage the development of schools as community centers. The bill would appropriate an unspecified sum from the General Fund to the office of Planning and Research to allocate to an unspecified number of local community organizations.

Vote:  $\frac{2}{3}$ . Appropriation: yes. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

- 1 SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares  
2 all of the following:  
3 (1) As California enters the 21st Century, the  
4 projected increase in the population of the state raises  
5 concerns about the quality of life that will be experienced

1 by citizens of the state in the future. By the year 2020, the  
2 current population of the state of 33 million is projected  
3 to reach 45.3 million; in other words, the population of the  
4 state will increase by half the number of people it now has  
5 in the next twenty years.

6 (2) The population growth the state is experiencing  
7 places a burden on the financial resources and physical  
8 infrastructure of our communities.

9 (3) Social problems such as crime, drug abuse, juvenile  
10 delinquency, and academic failure are closely linked to  
11 the conditions in our communities.

12 (4) It is crucial that the state address how local  
13 communities are organized to respond to social problems.  
14 To this end, schools can serve as community centers,  
15 places where young people and adults receive lifelong  
16 instruction as well as having access to necessary social  
17 services.

18 (5) The Beacon schools program in New York City is  
19 a premier example of the success that can be achieved  
20 when schools are used as community centers. The  
21 program began in 10 schools in 1991 to fight youth drug  
22 abuse. At these schools, staff workers help pupils with  
23 homework and conduct after-school recreation  
24 programs. The schools are also home to health clinics and  
25 social service centers to make these services more  
26 accessible to local residents. These schools have become  
27 community centers at which children and adults  
28 congregate every day of the year. The Beacon schools  
29 program has grown to include 75 schools that provide tens  
30 of thousands of youngsters with a safe structured  
31 environment after school and on weekends.

32 (6) The Safe Haven after-school program operated by  
33 the city of Madison, Wisconsin, is another example of the  
34 opportunity schoolsites provide for improving the quality  
35 of life of our communities. The program is conducted at  
36 elementary schools in communities with high crime and  
37 poverty rates. Besides academic assistance and  
38 recreational activities, the schools also provide  
39 instruction in conflict resolution, such as peer mediation,  
40 to help pupils resolve disputes. The Safe Haven schools



1 report improved school attendance and fewer conflicts  
2 among pupils during after-school hours.

3 (7) Schools should serve as community centers at  
4 which individuals receive education throughout their  
5 lives. Schools should be places where learning occurs  
6 “after school,” in the evenings, and on weekends.

7 (8) Schools should provide a variety of social services  
8 in partnership with public, civic, and private  
9 organizations, as well as businesses. Any number of social  
10 services should be provided at school sites.

11 (9) Most schools in the state, however, have been  
12 designed to serve only as instructional facilities. In most  
13 cases, school facilities are not available for use by the  
14 general public. Schools should, instead, be designed to  
15 sustain the relationship between a school and its  
16 community.

17 (10) Schools should be built to serve as the centers of  
18 their communities. School gymnasiums and play fields  
19 should double as community recreation centers and  
20 parks, school auditoriums should also serve as community  
21 theaters, and the resources in school libraries should be  
22 made available to members of the local community. In  
23 addition, health clinics and other community services  
24 should be provided at school sites to increase the  
25 availability of those services to the residents of the  
26 community.

27 (b) It is, therefore, the intent of the Legislature that a  
28 program be established to encourage the development of  
29 schools as community centers.

30 SEC. 2. Article 3 (commencing with Section 300) is  
31 added to Chapter 2 of Division 1 of Title 1 of the  
32 Government Code, to read:

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34 Article 3. Schools as Community Centers

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36 300. A pilot project is hereby established to encourage  
37 the development of schools as community centers. The  
38 sum of \_\_\_\_\_ dollars (\$\_\_\_\_\_) is appropriated from  
39 the General Fund to the Office of Planning and Research  
40 to allocate to \_\_\_\_\_ local community organizations



1 seeking to deliver a variety of social services at local  
2 schoolsites.

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