**PUBLIC EDUCATION** Revisions: 100115,100915, 102115, 102315

underlined=new relative to priginal GPCA platform plank; struck-out=deleted from original GPCA Platform plank

We support lifelong public education that is entirely funded through public funds to, ~~with an emphasis on giving our young people the tools they need to navigate their way~~~~through the sources of information which will~~ enable people ~~them~~ to lead meaningful and productive lives.

We know that the public education experience is the primary social institution factor that young people encounter outside of the family, and that it exerts a tremendous influence on them.

~~An important purpose of education is to prepare young people for leadership and participation in the governance and maintenance of their communities. To do this well, they need experience in participatory democratic practices. Since~~ We believe that ~~a~~ public ~~good~~ education~~al~~ ~~system~~

* is the most important insurance we have that ~~our country’s~~ California’s basic principles of social justice will be preserved. ~~, we must allocate sufficient resources to our public school system.~~
* is a basic right of all inhabitants of California, citizens and non-citizens
* must occur in a safe environment for all
* needs to provide knowledge, learning skills, and life-long learning opportunities
* must foster creativity
* must provide people the abilities to understand and use sources of information to be able to critique what ~~they hear and see in print and~~ is seen and heard in the media
* must confer the tools to participate and be initiators in the democratic process, discourse, governance, and social justice
* must be adequately funded and based on need (such as for schools who have students who are English language deficient and/or are in high poverty areas). The underfunding caused by the implementation of Proposition 13 must be addressed as must the underfunding of community colleges (they educate more students than the University of California and the State University systems combined.and have historically served immigrants, women, people of color, the working class, continuing education students, and others who cannot afford the other systems). Optimization of the procurement and spending of federal and state funds needs to occur also.
* must not rely on standardized tests to reflect educational achievement because of their biases that reduce education quality to the lowest common denominator. Instead we support the use of tools such as the “learning record” that rely on the authentic assessment of a student's actual work in terms of that student’s gifts and abilities.

Our public education system must facilitate people’s abilities to:

~~We owe our young people the right to learn to communicate well~~

* communicate (read, write, listen, operate electronic media including spreadsheets and speak), ~~to~~
* understand how the physical world works (pure and applied sciences that must include mathematics, ~~and~~ ecology, and environmental health), ~~to learn about the existence and~~
* ~~allocation of~~ allocate resources (economics, accounting, civics, politics, geology, and geography),
* Teach basic life skills including economics, bookkeeping, budgeting, and the everyday use of mathematics that are essential to participation in any society and democracy,. ~~to~~
* study the wisdom and shortcomings of people who came before us ~~and those who now inhabit the Earth~~ (history and anthropology), ~~and to~~
* understand health (nutrition, medicine, physical education, physical and mental activity, and public health)
* understand human nature (~~nutrition~~, psychology, ~~and~~ sociology, social and governance systems, legal and political systems, ethnic/gender/sexual orientation/race studies, and cultures). ~~We must also assure that they learn to value themselves enough. We must encourage them to critique what they hear and see in print and in the media.~~
* appreciate and enjoy creative arts (music, dance, drama, fine arts), and creative vocations
* design a balanced fulfilling life
* nurture and empower all, with parents wanting to send their children into the system, the teachers wanting to work in it, and the children and adult students wanting to learn within it
* fight the prejudices, biases, and stereotypes of our society
* advocate for diversity, cooperation, and ending student segregation based on any classification or perceived classification but addressing special needs
* encourage the sense of belonging to a greater society

~~Young people also should be exposed to the creative arts (music, dance, drama, fine arts) as well as physical education. Vocational education should be included in the curriculum as well.~~

~~School has a tremendous influence on people's lives, because it is the primary social institution that young people encounter outside of the family. Schools reflect society's mores, including all of the prejudices and stereotypes that abound in our society. This too often results in the segregation of students by perceived academic and physical ability, language proficiency, religion, wealth, ethnicity and gender, and in the fostering of unhealthy competition. Young people are often tested and graded on meaningless drivel. All of this contributes to the alienation of young people and to feelings of passivity, powerlessness and hopelessness. We must end these practices and transform our schools into communities that nurture everyone involved with them. Our schools must become places where parents want to send their children and where teachers want to work.~~

~~Every child should have equitable access to free and appropriate educational resources and opportunities in a well-maintained public school. Since equal state funding does not produce equitable educational opportunities, funding for schools should be related to need. Schools with students living in poverty require higher funding. In addition, schools and districts with high numbers of English language learners and special education students should be funded at higher levels because those students need and deserve enhanced resources.~~

~~Since the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, California budget allocations have slighted education. Because of insufficient funding, teachers are woefully underpaid. An entire generation's music, art and foreign language programs have been dismantled. This is true at the preschool and K-12 grade levels, and in the area of higher education as well. California's community colleges, which educate more students than the University of California and the California State University systems combined, and which particularly serve immigrants, women, people of color, and working class students, receive far less money than they need. We will never have a quality educational system until we provide adequate funding. Special education is a federal program that has received decreasing funds that has crippled the program since funding can only then come from the school general fund. The Federal Government must fund such programs at the level it promised to do.~~

~~Another area of particular concern is the increasing use of mandatory standardized tests. High-stakes tests impose a climate of fear on students, parents, and teachers. They reduce education to memorizing disconnected facts - the very opposite of the thoughtful engagement in learning our children need. Standardized tests exhibit persistent racial, gender and economic bias. Reliance on test scores inevitably leads to students, teachers and schools being sorted along the lines of race, class, and learning styles. As an alternative to high-stakes tests, we should support the use of tools such as the learning record that rely on the authentic assessment of a student's actual work and have as their primary purpose improving student achievement. Meeting the needs of historically neglected schools in working class communities and communities of color should be a priority.~~

In addition, the Green Party advocates the following specific proposals:

* Oppose state or federal requirements to make significant decisions about schools, teachers or students based primarily on standardized test scores.
* Increase compensation for teachers. Improve teacher support, training, mentoring and sabbaticals. Work to recruit and retain qualified teachers, especially those ~~teachers~~ of color.
* Substantially increase and make more equitable state and federal funding for public education at all levels, from preschool and K-12 to the community college, the California State University, and the University of California systems.

* ~~Rea~~Affirm the value of public education and reject the allocation ~~use~~ of public funds ~~to pay~~ for ~~students' attendance at~~ private or parochial schools, or ~~to pay~~ any for-profit organization to manage or run a public school.
* Decrease the student-teacher ratio in classrooms and increase the number of counselors, nurses, librarians and social workers ~~Provide smaller, more personalized schools and a greater diversity of choices.~~

* Advocate the design and use of a variety of developmentally appropriate assessment techniques that allow necessary accommodations, modifications, and exemptions and are bias-free, reliable and valid.
* Advocate for the rights of parents to opt their children out of all mandated standardized tests without penalty for students, parents, teachers or schools.
* Oppose any advertising or promotion of commercial products on a school site or in any adopted or recommended curricular materials or school-based Internet access.
* Develop curricula that reflect ~~make~~ the connection between our rights as individuals, and our responsibilities to others and to a healthy planet ~~the earth~~. ~~New or expanded topics could include bioregional studies, cultural sensitivity, sustainable development, global interdependence, human rights, civics, sex education, public health, environmental justice, and peaceful conflict resolution.~~
* Add before-school and after-school programs and provide nutritious, ~~preferably~~ plant-based organic breakfasts and lunches ~~must be available~~ for all students, subsidized according to financial need.
* Make all public education sites gun-free to provide a safe learning environment
* Include ~~Promote~~ self-defense skills in the physical education curriculum ~~ability for children~~ at elementary school level
* Provide a curriculum on ~~training in how students should interact~~ non-violent~~ly~~ interaction ~~with peers and adults~~ at the junior high school level.
* Advocate for the inclusion of curricula on ethnic studies at the high school level.
* Provide training in negotiation, mediation, non-violence skills at the ~~, and in dealing with diverse peers/adults in~~ senior high school~~s~~ level
* ~~Mandate~~ Provide researched-based drug, tobacco, and alcohol prevention ~~in middle and high schools~~
* Include curricula focusing on ~~Schedule civics courses that include histories of how~~ civil rights history, actions, and advances ~~were achieved~~, and how current law can be used to achieve personal civil rights
* Provide age-appropriate education on sex, ~~Promote explain the roles of~~ gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, ~~and~~ age, and safer sex. ~~in the real world, as the maturity of the student allows~~

~~Work toward putting fully trained teachers in every classroom~~.

~~Work for free education eventually to be available from preschool through community college, university, graduate and professional schools.~~

~~While high-stakes testing remains in use, support legislation encouraging~~

~~Promote and fund bilingual and second-language immersion education with trained teachers and appropriate materials and support services.~~

~~Vocational education high schools and vocation education programs in comprehensive high schools should be revived, expanded and fully funded. Training during the high school years should prepare graduating students for a variety of careers that pay a living wage.~~

~~Educate children and their families as early as possible through role-play in how to recognize, prevent, and react to adult behavior that is violent and addictive.~~

~~Promote creativity in children at elementary school.~~

~~Offer small classes generally in senior high school.~~

~~Educate children how and when to be individuals, and when to be team players.~~

~~Expand special classes to address students' academic needs in light of their disability and language status. The state must enforce existing laws in this area by funding these programs, by increasing the accessibility of needy students, and by funding/training teachers in these special areas~~.

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