

Student Access, Accountability, and Transparency in California's Charter Schools

August 17, 2016

We urge you to support this bill co-sponsored by the California Teachers Association.

AB 709 Summary (Author: Assembly Member Mike Gipson D-AD64)

- Requires charter school governing board members to comply with:
 - Brown Act (Open Meetings)
 - Public Records Act (Open Books)
 - Political Reform Act (Declare Financial Interests)
 - Government Code 1090 (Subject to Criminal Prosecution for Self-Dealing)
- Provides that an employee of a charter school (Example: Teacher) is not disqualified from serving on the governing board
 - They must abstain from voting on, or influencing or attempting to influence another member of the governing board concerning any matter affecting his or her own employment

AB 709 Talking Points

- ***We are deeply committed to the success of every student***
- AB 709 will require charter schools to open up their meetings to the public, just like at other public schools. It also requires companies and organizations that manage charter schools to release to parents how they spend taxpayer money, including their annual budgets and contracts.
- AB 709 prohibits charter school board members and their immediate families from financially benefiting from their schools. This bill does not ask more from charter schools than of traditional public schools. Charter schools are public schools, and should operate with the same integrity and transparency.
- Charter governing boards, though they may be formally organized as nonprofit corporations, must operate as public bodies representing the communities served by the school - charter school governance must be representative and transparent
- California's public schools' conflict of interest laws and disclosure regulations should apply to charter schools that receive public funds
- Charter school governing boards must comply with statute that promotes **accountability and transparency** to parents and the public in the operation of public schools and expenditure of public funds
- The public's business should be transacted in public - public agencies must take their actions openly and their deliberations must be conducted openly