

# Public Denied LAUSD's Teacher Records

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Staff Writer

Parents of students in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) went to court on July 23 to make the district release the individual records of teachers alongside their names. This information is kept within the district and is not revealed to the public, or even the teachers. The parent's case was overturned by a three judge appellate court. The judges felt that keeping the information private served a greater public interest than releasing it because it could cause conflict among teachers.

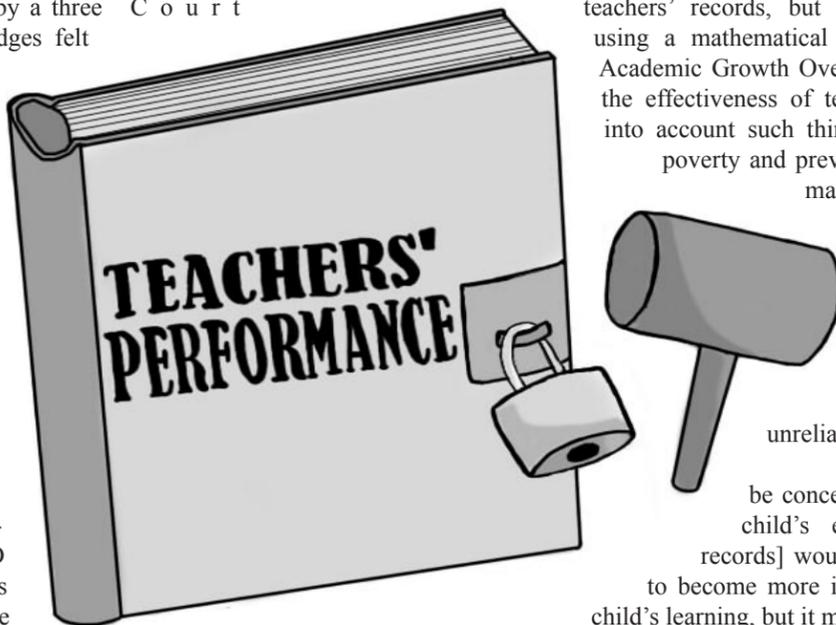
The parents involved in the case felt that releasing the records would not be harmful, and it would help them understand what kind of teacher that their child was studying under. According to the LA Times, the judges said that parents wanting to place their children with the highest-performing teachers was of particular concern. The LAUSD and the union, United Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA) were against releasing the records.

"Releasing the names would lead to resentment and jealousy among teachers, spur unhealthy comparisons among staff, cause some instructors to leave the nation's second-largest school system and interfere with teacher recruitment," LAUSD Superintendent John Deasy said,

according to the Los Angeles Times (LA Times).

A year ago, a case on the same issue arose between the LA Times and the district. Kelli Sager, an attorney for the LA Times, said that the district presented no evidence that harm would come to teachers, but the panel decided it was best not to release the records.

LA County Superior Court



Judge James C. Chalfant ruled that the public's interest in the teachers' records took priority over the California Public Records Act, which keeps teacher records private. The district relinquished up the records, but did not meet the condition that the records also contain the names of the teachers.

"It will make parents form assumptions on teachers without meeting them. I think it creates a tone of evaluation rather than one of collaboration. I don't think it [releasing teacher records] is even close to happening in our district because we have a strong union." English teacher Dorothy Burkhart said.

As stated by the LA Times, the district will not be releasing the individual teachers' records, but instead will be using a mathematical formula named Academic Growth Over Time to judge the effectiveness of teachers. It takes into account such things as the race, poverty and previous test performances of students.

The UTLA, however, is strongly opposed to the formula, arguing that the system is unreliable.

"Parents should be concerned about their child's education. [The records] would allow parents to become more involved in their child's learning, but it might not be good for parents to take action," junior Tina Le said. "If I were a parent, I would want the best teacher for my child, but I wouldn't go to extremes."

The UTLA and the LAUSD will continue to fight against releasing the teachers' records.

MOOR graphic by SAMMIE CHEN

# Hampshire College's Test-Blind Policy

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On June 18, Hampshire College, a competitive four-year private liberal arts college, decided to enforce the "test-blind" policy. Hampshire College will no longer consider ACT or SAT scores when accepting applicants, because they believe it gives a disadvantage to students who do not come from wealthy families. According to a demographic conducted by the College Board, SAT scores, mainly the essay portion, match up with how much income a family makes.

"I believe that having a "test-blind" policy will be effective in the applicant accepting process because it will even up the odds for minorities, such as myself," junior Andrew Payan said.

Hampshire believes that by accepting applicants based on non-test related aspects, such as their academic abilities and extracurricular activities, they will accept the most potential applicants. According to the Washington Post, the fact that the SAT or ACT can be taken multiple times benefits those who come from affluent families who apply to institutions that depend on standardized test scores, because they can increase their scores each time they have taken the test.

"The SAT is essentially one test on one day in a given year. Students' high school academic records, their history of civic engagement, their letters of recommendation from mentors and their ability to represent themselves through their essays trump anything the SAT could tell us," Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid of Hampshire College Meredith Twombly said.

# Bill Proposes Community College Bachelor's Degree

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California is making an effort to be the 22nd state, following Michigan, to give community colleges the legal authority to issue bachelor's degrees. The California State Senate is currently reviewing SB850, a bill drawn up by Senators Joel Anderson of San Diego, Marty Block of San Diego and Jerry Hill of San Mateo. SB850 passed the state Senate last month with a 34-0 vote and is in the Assembly Committee on Higher Education. SB850 will enable the community college system's chancellor to create an eight-year pilot program that allows a community college in each district to offer a degree known as the applied baccalaureate in the 2017-2018 academic year.

According to Edsource, although the bill does not state specific majors, they would mostly be in skilled professions. These professions may include engineering and medical field related professions such as nursing, dental hygiene and automotive technology. The bill states that students will learn everything necessary to secure jobs in their area because local businesses will assist the development of the program.

In addition, a reason that this bill was proposed was because the state will need about one million additional bachelor's degrees by 2025 to meet the growing demand for skilled workers. The bill states that California is not producing a large enough skilled workforce to compete in a changing economy.

"I don't think this will be beneficial to [our] society. There's a reason that professional careers require you to walk down a certain path

in life," senior Monica Wu said. "It's a great idea for those [who] want to catch up in life and [who] want to be able to get a second degree in something, but it shouldn't offer bachelor degrees in a career that [can] make or break a life, such as engineering [or] medical field related professions."

According to the Spartan Daily, there will be an extra fee for students to pay in order to obtain a bachelor's degree, but it will still be far cheaper than four-year universities' tuition. However, SB850 states that community colleges will not offer degrees that are available at nearby four-year institutions such as those of the California State University (CSU) system or University of California (UC) system. Yet, resources will be in place to create a worthwhile program to maintain its ability to educate students.

According to Edsource, legislators had tried to propose 4 similar bills since 2004 and failed because it was faced with opposition from CSUs, UCs and some community college systems.

"I think this bill is really going to be really beneficial for the people who want to pursue a career and get a bachelor's degree but may not have the financial support to do it. However, at the same time, it's only really going to benefit those who want to pursue the majors the community colleges will provide," sophomore Belinda Cai said.

This bill would then expire in eight years after it goes into effect; a report evaluating the program would be filed a year before the expiration date.

MOOR graphic by SAMMIE CHEN



THE KICK-OFF AHS in attempts to successfully promote parent and student interactions with teachers holds the annual Back to School night on Aug. 28.

MOOR photos by YIBEI LIU