

Gubernatorial Candidates Differ on Schools

ALAN TAM
News Editor

The contest for California's governorship has been a closely fought race for both Republican Meg Whitman and Democrat Jerry Brown. Topics such as immigration reform, taxation and the environment have been debated by both candidates on television, as well as radio.

To AHS students, however, these issues take the back burner when the topic of education comes into discussion. Teacher layoffs, class terminations and extracurricular funding cuts are just a few of the worries that students must contend with

Universities (CSU) systems. Jerry Brown states that he will focus on the CSUs and community colleges.

For high schools, each candidate proposes opposing solutions to the problems the state faces. Whitman wishes to extend the voucher system and allow parents to easily remove their children from failing schools. Brown hopes to institute a stricter standardized testing system and provide more opportunities for advancement.

In a Nutshell

- Jerry Brown advocates more teacher oversight
- Meg Whitman wants an increase in charter schools
- State legislature and Superintendent of Education will ultimately be the main arbiters

"Whitman is capitalizing on her status as a political outsider and CEO to win votes," said AP American Government teacher Johnnie Lau.

"Brown is banking on his experience as former governor and public servant to appeal to voters."

According to Lau, however, the governorship is not the only platform to engage in education reform. State legislature and the superintendent of education also play a role in the changing policy in public school districts.

Although the gubernatorial candidates would not be able to directly dictate the measures added on to bills, the new governor will wield enormous power in deciding whether or not a piece of legislation will become law.

How will a new governor extricate us from the already dire education situation in California?

"The state's budget problems will make it hard for anything to be changed," said senior Ming Yue. "The new governor is going to have a [challenging] time getting legislation passed."

Both prospective governors wish to improve the quality of schools in California. Both have widely different methods of achieving this. Meg Whitman has proposed redirecting more money to the Universities of California (UC) and California State

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A SPECIAL DISTINCTION AHS alumnus Aaron Pfeiffer is awarded a scholarship by Jerry Ruiz on behalf of the Academy of Special Dreams to continue his studies in photography at Mt. San Antonio College.

AP Exams Undergo Scoring Change

ELLEN LI
Staff Writer

There are five minutes left on the clock for your AP Biology Exam and you have ten unanswered questions left on the multiple-choice section. You don't know whether to guess on those questions and risk losing points or to leave any of them blank and not be awarded points.

However, beginning with the May 2011 AP testing, the way that AP Exams are scored will be changed internationally. This change applies to all exams, excluding AP Studio Art.

The College Board has decided that a quarter point will no longer be deducted from each incorrect answer on the multiple-choice sections of the AP Exams, and as before, no points will

be awarded for unanswered questions. Scores on the multiple-choice section will now be based on the number of questions answered correctly.

"Students may find this [as] a bit of relief in approaching the multiple-choice portion of the test," said AP Language and Composition teacher Nancy Padilla. "This may take some of the pressure off. Overall, for those who go in knowing the material, it should be a better gauge of what they know and how they will perform in college."

In order to ensure that each version of the AP Exam is the same difficulty, the College Board decided to streamline the scoring process by only scoring the correct responses.

"There used to be a specific strategy

involved in guessing [on the multiple choice]. Now, since the penalty for guessing is gone, it makes it easier to guess. However, it will be harder to get a higher score because of the recalibration of scores," said AP World History teacher David Jauregui.

Some students are not enthusiastic about the change in scoring.

"This is worse because all of the other students who are used to the old system are forced to rethink their strategies and get used to a new system. This is especially hard if you are in your final years of high school," said senior Omar Jishi.

Nevertheless, only time can tell whether the new scoring system is going to benefit the students, hurt them or have any effect at all.

Stress is Common Trend with Students

JENNIFER PIERCE
Staff Writer

Between AP classes, clubs, sports, family and friends, high school students are finding that stress is unavoidable.

"Handling stress is not discussed enough. There's no class to help cope with stress," said counselor Jacqueline Herrera.

The school nurse, Anita Man, sees symptoms of stress everyday, ranging from stomachaches to migraines, although not always specified as stress related by the students.

Herrera and Man both said that the causes of stress are everywhere, from peers and relationships to academic pressure or financial difficulties.

They encourage students to confront the issues that are causing them stress and make an attempt to solve them. Herrera suggests that students take a few minutes everyday to relax.

For some students, however, school takes priority over relaxation.

"Once it's towards the [end] of first quarter, I might start to stress more [...] with balancing homework and extracurricular activities," said senior Kathleen Chen.

One of the biggest issues among high school students is time management. Herrera reminds students who are struggling to prioritize that they should come and consult their counselors. Time management also correlates closely with lack of sleep,

which is a major stress factor.

Herrera strongly recommends eight hours of sleep. Man explained that if a student is exhausted, they are easily irritated. For a good night's rest, she recommends not eating heavily before sleeping and to avoid highly caffeinated drinks like coffee and soda.

If students need help relieving stress, both Man and Herrera suggest talking to the counselors, the school psychologist and teachers. Herrera explained that all counselors are required to keep any student's health and problems confidential, unless it poses a threat to the well-being of other students.

"Come in, [because] that's what we're here for," said Herrera.



PIECE OF CAKE Students gather in the Quad to celebrate the Harvest Festival with mooncakes distributed by Chinese International Club.

AHS Becomes PI School

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Oct. 8th.] Everyone was impressed," said Walsh.

There are also two ways to be reclassified as a regular school; both are determined by CAHSEE scores. For ELA, subgroups must have at least 66.7 percent proficiency; for Mathematics, 66.1 percent proficiency is required.

The other method is called "safe harbor," which involves decreasing the amount of non-proficient students by ten percent.

"Students are extremely capable.

We're only a PI school because they don't take the CAHSEE seriously, [but] my sophomores this year are motivated; they can help get us to safe harbor," said English teacher Kristen Keenan.

If AHS does meet its AYP this year, it will "freeze" and no further changes will be implemented. After that, the school must meet its AYP for another year, and then it will return to being a non-PI school.

"Most people are happy to be here. I hope everyone takes the attitude that we're too good to let this happen to us," said Walsh.

