

NEWS RELEASE



Directors Named to Lead Statewide Special Education Task Force

SACRAMENTO - Two seasoned educators have been selected to head a new state Task Force on Special Education. The Task Force, which includes parents, teachers, school and district administrators, university professors, members of the policy community and other stakeholder groups, will analyze California's complex systems for serving students with disabilities and forward recommendations to the State Board of Education, the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, and the California Department of Education for consideration.

Vicki Barber and Maureen Burness will serve as co-Executive Directors of this initiative. Barber, the recently retired Superintendent of Schools for El Dorado County, remarked, "I applaud the three key state education agencies for embarking on this effort. As we implement new standards and assessments in our schools, we must ensure that all students receive the support they need to be successful."

Says Burness, a former Assistant Superintendent and Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) Director at both the district and county levels, "I am honored to be asked to help direct this important work. I am very excited to be addressing the critical need to improve outcomes for students with disabilities in California."

Spearheaded by Michael Kirst, President of the State Board of Education and Linda Darling Hammond, Chair of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, the Task Force will examine effective program models, teacher preparation, student identification procedures and other key areas of policy and practice that shape the delivery of services to students with disabilities.

With funding from the Schwab Foundation, the Stuart Foundation and other philanthropic organizations, the Task Force will complete its work over the course of the next year and release a report with policy recommendations early in 2015.

#####