

FEDERAL WAIVER COVER SHEET
CALIFORNIA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
JANUARY 2004 AGENDA
Item No. WC-4

TITLE: Request by Sacramento City Unified School District to waive No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB); Title IV, Part A, Section 4115 (a)(1)(C) to use Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities funds to support the cost of Connecting With Kids , multi-media approach to teaching life skills for grades 3-12.	<hr/> ACTION <hr/> INFORMATION <hr/> PUBLIC HEARING <hr/> X CONSENT
CDSIS: Fed-12-2003	

RECOMMENDATION:

The Department recommends:

Approval on the condition that the district submit **Connecting with Kids** to the National Registry for Effective Programs (SAMHSA) for review and possible recognition as a Center for Substance Abuse Prevention model program. The district's timeline for submission is May 2004. Evaluation data is to be collected and analyzed in collaboration with staff under the direction of Ron Anderson, Ph.D., Vice President of Research and Development at **Connecting With Kids** and in collaboration with **Compass Consulting**, a national evaluation firm based in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, affiliated with the University of North Carolina. All evaluation instruments must be tested for reliability and validity with both random assignment of students and control groups included in the study. A report of progress in meeting this condition must also be submitted to the department no later than January 2005.

Denial

Summary of Previous State Board of Education Discussion and Action:

State Board Policy 03-01 contains guidelines for approval of applications for waiver of the NCLB requirements that Title IV funds be used for "science-based" prevention programs.

Summary of Key Issue(s):

The waiver application from the **Sacramento City USD** regarding the **Connecting With Kids** program has been reviewed to ensure compliance with the three major criteria described in SBE policy 03-01 that must be met in order for the waiver to be approved by the board. The waiver application's success in meeting each of the three criteria is described as follows:

Is the program innovative?

The **Connecting With Kids (CWK)** news was first broadcast via television in September 1998. The related curriculum first became available for use by schools in Spring 2001. The CWK program does meet the test for being a new program. The program design is based on prevention

theory drawn from published research related to peer influences, factors relating to bullies, victims and aggression. The program promotes a school violence prevention model with five major components the most innovative of which is the use of televised media as an intervention. The program's coordinated use of televised and video-taped programming with curriculum is based on research cited in half a dozen published studies described in detail as part of the supplement to the application submitted by the district (Research Supporting the CONNECT Program, Anderson and McHenry, June 2003).

The hallmark of this program's innovative nature is its use of a televised reality-based education series consisting of half-hour programs and corresponding character education and life skills curriculum. The primary objective of the CWK program is to build a televised network that is the most trusted resource for reality-based programming on children's issues available to local communities, educators, school districts and families. This multimedia integrated intervention and prevention program for grades 3-12 includes videos and lesson plans with Web-based resources for teachers, parents and students. Each video documentary features real stories about real students, while focusing on key social issues or behavioral topics. The curriculum is designed to support peer-led discussion and a high level of teacher and student participation.

Does the program demonstrate substantial likelihood of success?

Preliminary program evaluation from an unpublished report (July, 2003 Institute for Social Development) has shown the program demonstrates the likelihood of success for improving general classroom behavior related to politeness, obeying teachers, anger, threats, and bullying. Overall, the majority of areas assessed remained stable across the school year according to both students and teachers. A mix of positive and negative trends was found for a sub-set of items. Students tended to see the school climate as safer and more conducive for learning at post data collection. However, students saw their own behavior and those of other students more negatively. Clearly, more research on the efficacy of the CWK program is warranted and needed. Initial research is quite limited because without a control group, natural changes in the measured dimensions over time could not be assessed or controlled for in this evaluation. Therefore, it is not possible to determine whether the observed changes are due to the presence of CWK in the schools. In order to directly assess the impact of CWK on school climate and student behavior, use of a control group in future research is needed. The next proposed evaluation and research investigating CWK includes randomized selection of treatment and control groups as stipulated by the department's recommendation for approval with conditions.

The opportunity to subject CWK to evaluation employing scientifically-based research methodology in order to determine if peer-led, televised supported, character education curriculum will change student behavior related to alcohol, other drug, and tobacco use and violence represents a valuable addition to the field of prevention research consistent with the Board's criteria.

Is there a plan and timeline for submitting the program for review and recognition?

The applicant has stated that when the 2003-2004 evaluation of CWK is completed, the program will be submitted to the National Registry for Effective Programs (SAMHSA) for

review and recognition as a science-based program. The timeline for submission is May 2004. This fully meets the Boards criteria in this regard.

Waiver Authority: NCLB, Title IV, Part A, Section 4115(a)(3)

Local board approval date: 11/17/03

Effective dates of request: 10/1/03-6/30/04

Fiscal Analysis (as appropriate): Waiver approval will allow the district to use funds for this program.

Background Information: Waiver request forms and supporting documents are available for inspection in the Wavier Office.