

# A Common-Sense Contract with Kids

## Mike McGuire's Education Plan for County Government

### POLICY BRIEFING

Tough times bring opportunities to innovate and focus on what matters most. That's why I am proposing a Common-Sense Contract with Kids – an education plan to focus county government on doing everything it can today to make sure our kids are prepared to compete for the jobs of tomorrow.

All of us have a stake in the health of our education system. Local governments, the business community, labor unions and non-profit organizations can all work together with our school districts to support stronger, safer schools that give all our kids a chance to succeed.

Indeed, it's an imperative. California 2025, a project of the Public Policy Institute of California, warns that if education trends continue, our children will be more likely to be unemployed or under-employed and more dependent on public health and social services. That scenario is less than 15 years away.

### **We can work together to do better than this for our kids.**

As one of northern California's youngest school board presidents, I led a successful effort to rebuild decaying schools. I created opportunities for engagement outside the classroom by starting a student trustee position on the Healdsburg School Board and co-founding a scholarship fund that rewards student leaders for community involvement and leadership skills.

As a councilmember, I helped free up more funds for education by helping to develop a model agreement between our city and schools to share the school district's largest playing fields.

As supervisor, I will put my experience and commitment to work to make education a priority in county government.

Together, we can make our county a true partner in our children's education.



*"Mike McGuire gets it. We need to build an educated workforce or we will never have a sustainable economy."*

— **Claudia Rosatti,**  
**Cloverdale Unified School**  
**District Superintendent**

## Common-Sense Contract for Kids

We, the co-signers of this contract, agree to work in partnership with local governments, schools, non-profit organizations, businesses, labor unions and all Sonoma County residents to improve the education of our kids and increase opportunities in these areas:

### 1) Create a Sustainable Workforce: Job Skills and Opportunities for Youth

California should make sure that every child that wants to go to college has an **opportunity to go to college**. Yet we must also deal with the reality that up to 70 percent of California high-school students will not obtain a four-year college degree. Providing job skills to these young adults is more than just an educational imperative – it’s critical to keeping our local economy strong.

The Sonoma County Office of Education, through its Regional Occupational Program and other efforts, is working hard to make sure that kids who aren’t on a college track get the job skills they need to succeed in life and support their families. The county has made some progress in creating partnerships with local industry, but it’s time to take this innovative collaboration to the next level.

**Let’s push this up the priority scale by creating a partnership plan that will expand job and technical skills** in our local high schools and provide links to Santa Rosa Junior College, Sonoma State University and the University of San Francisco Santa Rosa Campus.

The collaboration should include direct participation by the business, labor and educational communities, and should develop specific targets for certified apprenticeships and workplace learning opportunities. And the plan should be completed and ready for implementation by the start of the 2012 school year.

Healdsburg’s Construction and Sustainability Academy (CASA) is a good example of what we can accomplish by working together in tough economic times. Inspired by the demise of the woodworking class at Healdsburg High School, long-time residents organized a team of concerned local citizens, educational leaders and business representatives – all volunteers – to create CASA. This year, CASA will begin giving students practical skills in green building, solar power, energy efficiency and environmental regulation.



*“As a school board president, councilmember and mayor, Mike McGuire is the best-qualified candidate to make education a priority in county government.”*

*— Pat Sabo,  
Healdsburg Jr. High School  
Teacher*

## 2) Free Up Money for Classroom Education: Joint Purchasing and Joint Use Agreements

Our county should lead the way in bringing local governments together to pool resources and allow school districts to focus every dollar possible on the classroom.

**Let's use our buying power to negotiate the purchase of goods and services in higher quantities for lower prices and invest the savings in education.** Our local governments and schools can enter into agreements to jointly purchase everything from fuel and fleet vehicles to office supplies, potentially saving millions of dollars.

**Public resources should be available for public use, no matter what government agency is in charge.** Let's use school buildings that are empty in the evenings for job-training and neighborhood community centers. Let's use city parks to host after-school programming that will keep our kids off the streets and out of trouble. Let's make sure that county residents are getting maximum use out of the facilities they support with their tax dollars.

In Healdsburg, the city's parks and recreation department agreed to maintain the school district's largest playing fields – freeing up school dollars for education – and the school district opened the fields to all families in the city for additional recreational programming. The city also agreed to purchase an empty building from the school district for a desperately needed new community center, providing the school district with even more funds. Let's extend this model to our entire county.

## 3) Prioritize Student Safety: Safe Routes to School

**Kids can't learn if they can't get to school.** We are fortunate that our county is a partner in the Sonoma County Safe Routes to School Program. The program works to improve safety and encourages children to safely walk and bicycle to school. It's a win-win-win, giving children an active, healthy start and end to the school day, reducing traffic congestion and improving the health of the community and the environment ([www.sonomasaferoutes.org](http://www.sonomasaferoutes.org)).

**A number of recent tragic accidents, however, have highlighted the critical need to provide safe routes to and from school for our kids.** Let's work together to make the Safe Routes to School program both a higher priority and a success.

The truth is that in this tough economy, funds for infrastructure improvements will be hard to come by. Yet, we can't afford to wait.



*"Mike McGuire knows that strong counties cannot exist without strong schools."*

— **George Valenzuela,**  
**Windsor School Board**  
**member**

**Let's convene the stakeholders now** – including the Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition, the county, local cities and school districts – and develop a list of priority items such as traffic calming measures near schools, sidewalk repairs and construction, streetlight repairs and installation and assess the relative priorities of each. We can use this inventory to advocate for more funds, or to stop more cuts, and to be ready in the event the new vehicle license fee passes or other funds become available.

We know that the items in this contract are just a start. We also know that we need to start now to honor our commitment to provide the best possible future for our kids.

**Co-Signers:**

**Mike McGuire**

Healdsburg Councilmember & Candidate for 4th District Supervisor  
Former Healdsburg Mayor and School Board President

**Andrew Brennan**

Santa Rosa High School Teacher

**Rene Meza and Family**

Windsor School District

**Claudia Rosatti**

Cloverdale Unified School District Superintendent

**Pat Sabo**

Healdsburg Jr. High School Teacher

**Kay Schultz**

Mark West Unified School District Superintendent

**George Valenzuela**

Windsor School Board Member

**Judy Velasquez**

Healdsburg School Board President

**Add your name at:**

**[www.MikeForSupervisor.com/education.html](http://www.MikeForSupervisor.com/education.html)**