

ADVERTISEMENT



CALL (800) 455-4485 FOR THE OFFICE NEAREST YOU • www.imperialcapitalbank.com

April 26, 2005 latimes.com : Business : Work & Careers

E-mail story Print Most E-Mailed

## Governor Wants to Pay Teachers More to Work at Poorly Performing Schools

•Unions discount the offer. Schwarzenegger says he is also committed to merit raises.

By Robert Salladay, Times Staff Writer

SACRAMENTO — Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger said Monday that he would offer California teachers extra money to work in poorly performing schools, an incentive shrugged off by educators who said the lure of more cash was not enough.

Schwarzenegger said he remained committed to paying public school teachers based on their performance rather than years of service. Such a "merit pay" system, which the governor wants voters to approve through an initiative, has been fiercely opposed by teachers unions. Through another initiative, he proposes to make it harder for teachers to get tenure job protections.

But in a signal that he wanted to work directly with the Legislature on the issue, Schwarzenegger said he wanted teachers to get so-called "combat pay," a term he acknowledged was controversial because it equates some schools to war zones. The Republican governor said he would propose, when he unveils a revised state budget in May, paying teachers more money if they move to low-performing schools.

The governor's comments came at a news conference where he characterized reports of infighting among his top advisors as just "drama." And he defended his wife, Maria Shriver, who is said to now play a larger role, as an integral part of his administration. He said that "a lot of times women are smarter than guys" and that it would be foolish to reject Shriver's advice on public policy.

During an appearance in Chatsworth, Shriver dismissed reports that she was worried about recent political missteps by her husband and his aides. "I'm not trying to save an administration that doesn't need to be saved," she told reporters. "This is an administration that has a clear idea where it's going."

Schwarzenegger acknowledged that extra money for teachers would not be a panacea at low-performing schools. The administration, he said, may propose more money for textbooks and materials and find ways to remove bad principals. He did not say where he would get the money.

"I think our inner-city schools have been getting the short end of the stick," Schwarzenegger said. "I think they have been disadvantaged tremendously with the lack of books they are getting, the lack of homework material.... There are a lot of great teachers that maybe would want to go there. All they need is a financial incentive or better school principals in some."

Schwarzenegger believes he can offer more money for teachers in specific districts because the state's budget picture is looking brighter — at least this year. The \$8.6-billion budget shortfall projected last January is shrinking because extra tax revenues are flowing into the state and because a successful tax amnesty program is expected to add another \$2.7 billion.

School districts across the state that are working with teachers unions now can offer incentives to lure teachers into low-performing schools. But the districts would have to provide the money from existing budgets. Educators said other priorities have been more urgent.

"What we need are safe and clean schools, lower class sizes and all the best, up-to-date textbooks," said Barbara Kerr, president of the California Teachers Assn. "It's not about an extra \$5,000 for teachers. It's about having the stuff kids need to learn."

In the early 1980s, struggling Los Angeles schools offered incentives for teachers. But now only a few offer as much as an extra \$2,500 a year. John Perez, president of United Teachers Los Angeles, said the program had not been a success. He said teachers were making their decisions about where to work for a variety of reasons: a cooperative relationship with administrators, a good principal, their own safety, good materials and textbooks, even the commute.

"If they know that the school is in turmoil, and it's in turmoil because the principal cannot run the school," Perez said, "people are not going to go into that situation."

In a move that could bolster support for his calls for merit pay, Schwarzenegger last week appointed Yvonne Chan, principal at Vaughn Next Century Learning Center in Pacoima, to the State Board of Education, which sets policy for the state's about 9,000 schools. Over the last seven years, Chan, 60, has successfully used a performance-based pay system at the 1,450-student charter school, in which teachers can receive bonuses of up to \$4,000 a year.

At the news conference, the governor also was asked about a story in The Times last week, which was based on interviews with more than a dozen Schwarzenegger aides, consultants and associates, that outlined widespread concern that Schwarzenegger was being hampered by infighting among his inner circle and that Shriver was looking for outside help.

"From Day One when I met her, even when she was not yet my wife," Schwarzenegger said, "she read all my scripts and helped me make decisions — with which director to work with, which producers to work with, which studios to work with and on marketing. She is doing the same thing now. No one can stop us from working together."

He added: "I love getting input by women. Because a lot of times women are smarter than guys, have better solutions, and I would be a fool to have a smart woman around and be married to her and not utilize this great talent."

As Shriver was defending the administration, Schwarzenegger retreated on yet another proposal. His office agreed to withdraw emergency regulations that it had written to combat Medi-Cal fraud, after nursing home advocates complained that the rules would harm in-home workers who care for the frail and elderly. Schwarzenegger said that instead of rushing the regulations, he would get them approved through the regular public-hearing process.

Pat McGinnis, executive director of California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform, said that rushing the regulations with an emergency order would have been unconscionable and that Schwarzenegger's retreat "is a victory for California consumers."

Times staff writers Peter Nicholas and Joel Rubin contributed to this report.



If you want other stories on this topic, search the Archives at [latimes.com/archives](http://latimes.com/archives).

TMSReprints

Article licensing and reprint options

### Times Headlines

Stem Cells May Help a City Heal

County Questions King/Drew Outlays

Mayor Takes Leave Over Molestation Charges

Mexico Runs on Sidewalk Economy

Rail Workers' Post-Crash Actions Appall Japanese

more >

### Most E-mailed

Our innate need for friendship

Once Again, the Big Yalta Lie

2 Hurt in Deputies' Crossfire

> more e-mailed stories

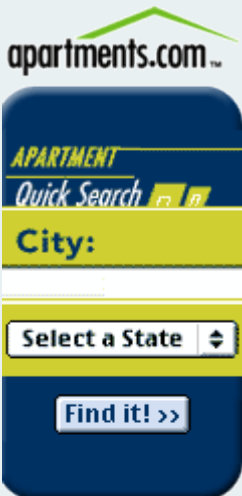
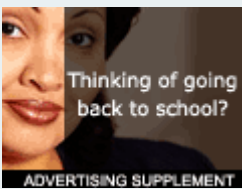


CLICK HERE to have Times news sent to your inbox

Sign up now for home delivery!



### ADVERTISEMENT



### Apartments SEARCH BY

- > Map
- > City/State
- > Corporate Housing

### Moving Services SEARCH

- Credit Reports
- Rommates
- Storage
- Moving Companies
- Packing/Boxes
- Truck Rental
- Utilities