

# Safe Routes to School – Engaging School Districts in Creating Supportive Policy



California School Boards Association  
3100 Beacon Boulevard  
West Sacramento, CA 95691

Betsy McNeil

California School Boards Association

# Objectives

- Foster understanding of the role and responsibilities of school boards
- Discuss barriers and opportunities to SRTS
- Discuss model school board policies and administrative regulations
- Provide resources and strategies for engaging school board members

*CSBA envisions a state....where the futures of all children are driven by their aspirations, not bounded by their circumstances.*

# The Role of the School Board

*To ensure that school districts are responsive to the values, beliefs and priorities of the community*

# The Board's Responsibilities

1. Set direction for the district
2. Establish a structure for action
3. Provide support for implementation
4. Hold the system accountable
5. Engage and lead the community

# Physical Activity and Physical Education in California Schools

Project objectives:

- Address barriers and opportunities school districts face in implementing physical education and physical activity policies
- Support school districts to improve physical activity opportunities through policy resources and trainings

# **Survey Findings:**

## **Positive impact of physical activity**

The majority of respondents indicated that physical activity has a moderate to high positive impact on issues including:

1. Fitness levels (97%)
2. Academic performance (94%)
3. Lifetime physical activity behaviors (93%)

# Survey Findings: Key barriers

Impact on the budget (88%)

Limited time in a school day (77%)

Competing district priorities (73%)

# Real and Perceived Barrier to SRTS

## Liability

- Risk management
- “Recommended” or “suggested” routes, rather than “safe routes”
- Sponsoring, endorsing or planning and running?
- Insurance coverage



## The Good News

The school board can support and encourage SRTS efforts through their roles and responsibilities without exposing the district/COE to increased risk of liability.

# The School Board's Role: Setting Direction



- Develop an understanding of student needs
- Establish a vision and set specific goals
- Involve the district/COE and community in establishing goals

# The School Board's Role: Establishing Structure

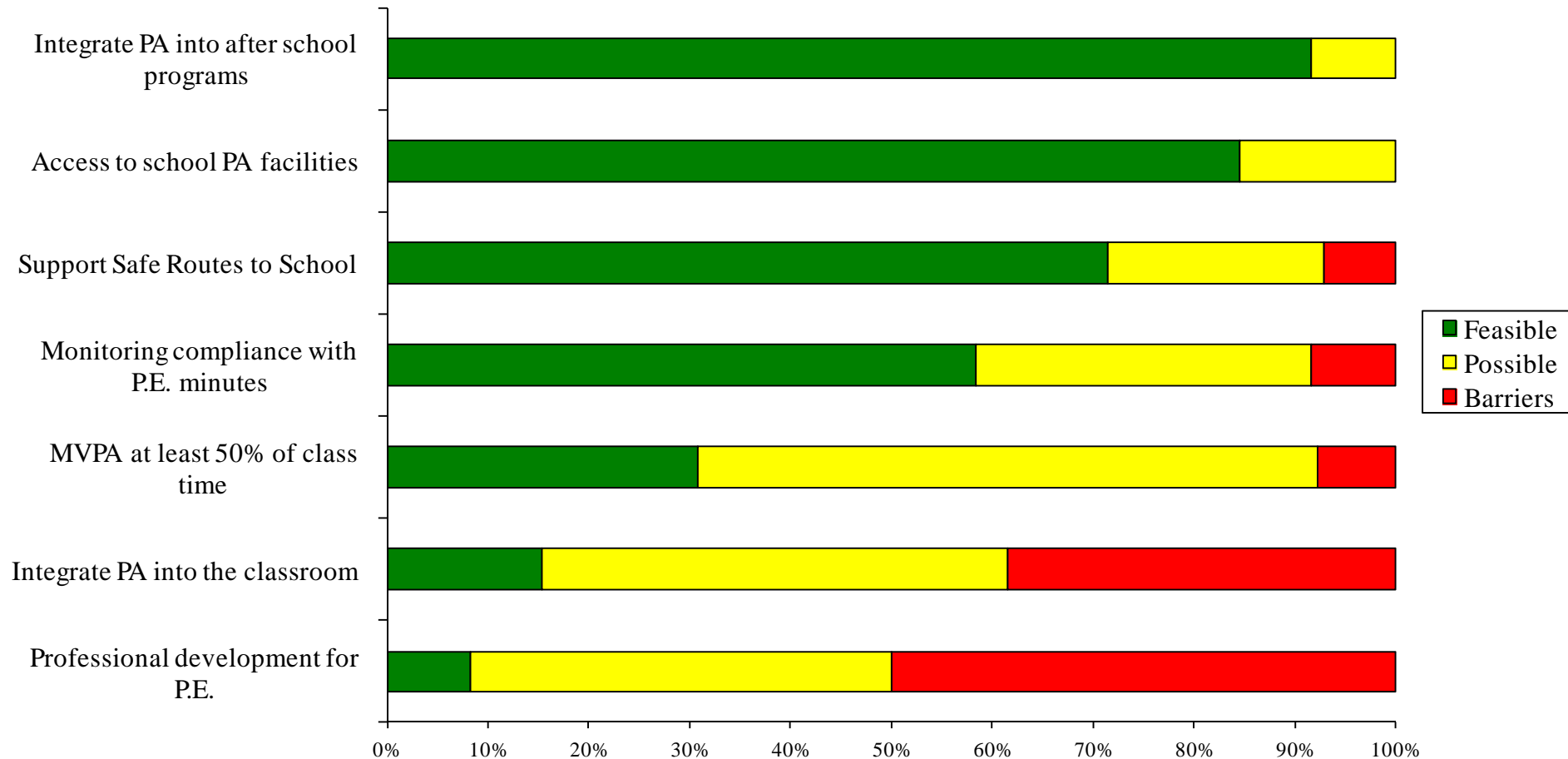


- Adopt policy and align with related policies
- Ensure adoption of curricular goals
- Ensure the district/COE is exploring the availability of grants and other funding opportunities

# SRTS-related policy adoption

- BP/AR Safe Routes to School Program
- BP 5030 Student Wellness
- BP/AR 0450 Comprehensive Safety Plan
- Green schools
- Physical activity
- Transportation
- Parent and community engagement

# School Health Advisory Committee Policy Priorities



# The School Board's Role: Providing Support



- Appoint board representatives to sit on a SRTS committee
- Ensure that the board decisions support walking/bicycling to and from school
- Participate and promote physical activity and SRTS



# The School Board's Role: Ensuring Accountability

- Ensure data is collected to monitor program effectiveness and guide program planning
- Schedule regular reports to the public
- Recommend program modifications, if needed
- Review and revise Safe Routes to School policies, as needed

# The School Board's Role: Acting as Community Leaders

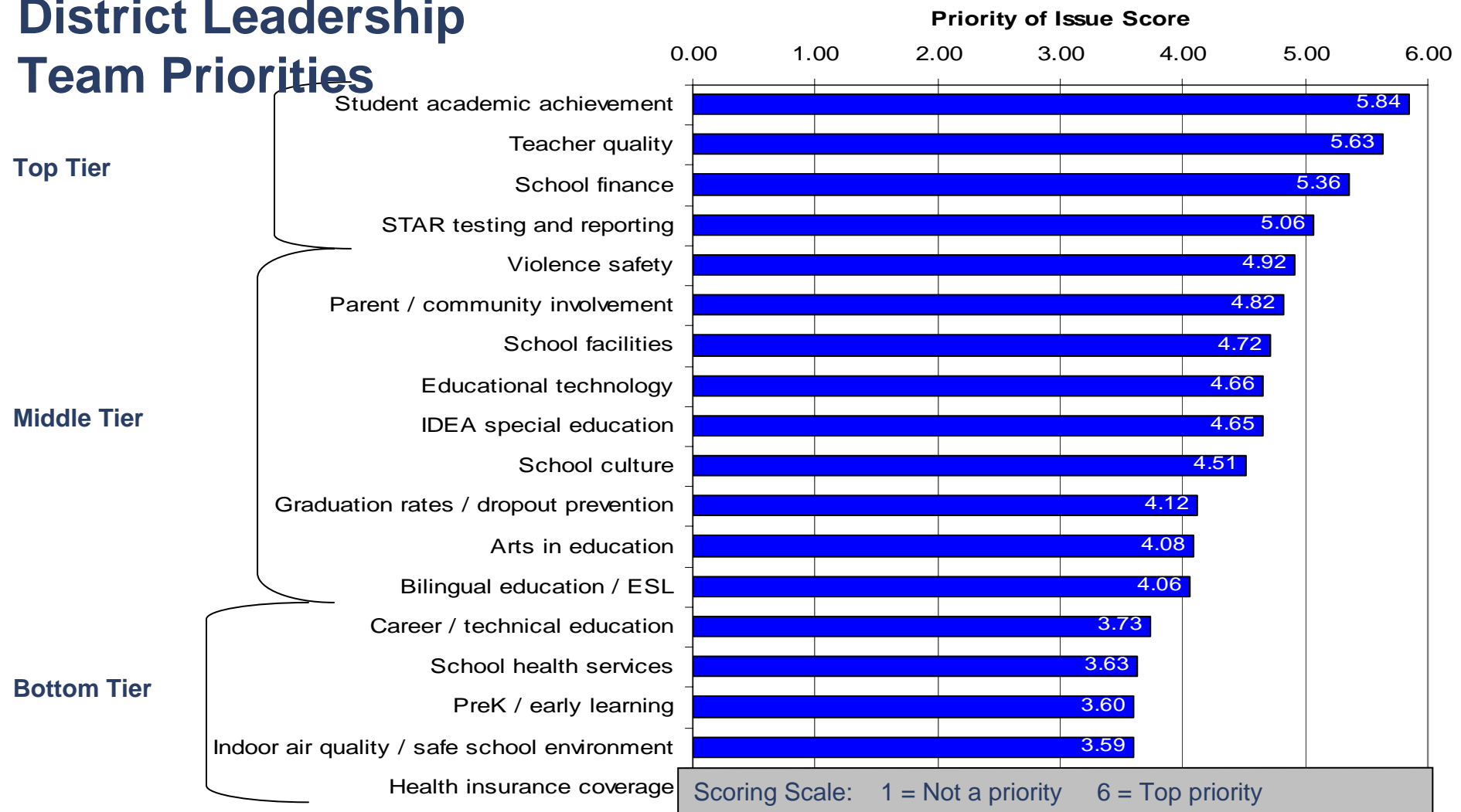
- Build relationships
- Collaborate with community partners on program planning, implementation and evaluation
- Ensure that the district/COE is publicizing and promoting district efforts



# **Effective presentations/engagement with school board members**

- 1. Preparation**
- 2. Educate and build awareness**
- 3. Provide context**
- 4. Make it actionable**

# District Leadership Team Priorities



# Resources for District/COE Support

1. SRTS Policy Brief
2. BP/AR 5142.2—SRTS Program
3. Building Healthy Communities: A School Leaders Guide to Collaboration and Community Engagement
4. Active Bodies, Active Minds

# Contact Information

**Betsy McNeil**  
**California School Boards Association**  
**(916) 669-3359 | [bmcneil@csba.org](mailto:bmcneil@csba.org)**  
**[www.csba.org](http://www.csba.org)**