

California retiree fund investing in China real estate

By Kenneth Rapoza, Forbes

How awful is China real estate? Apparently not bad enough. CalPERS, the pension fund for California state employees, pledged to invest around \$530 million in two new China real estate funds.

The funds are run by ARA Asset Management, an Asian firm that specializes in management of publicly traded real estate investment trusts as well as private real estate funds. "We believe foreign investment in the Chinese real estate market will continue to grow over time, notwithstanding near-term challenges and some price volatility along the way," Moses Song, CEO of ARA's principal investments division, told *China Daily* last week.

The California Public Employees' Retirement System, or CalPERS, has high performance standards for its managers, so ARA is "certainly expected to deliver results", he said.

China's National Bureau of Statistics said that of the 5.08 trillion yuan (\$800 billion) invested in Chinese real estate between January and July, only 22.8 billion yuan came from foreign investment funds, down 54.3 percent from the same period in 2011 as foreigners shun the China real estate bubble.

The monthly average of foreign-fund investment in Chinese real estate through this year's first seven months was 3.26 billion yuan compared to 6.78 billion yuan from Jan 1 to July 31, 2011, and 6.63 billion yuan during the same period of 2010.

Full classes forcing students to take more than 2 years at community college

By Carla Rivera, Los Angeles Times

Marianet Tirado returned to Los Angeles Trade Tech community college this fall, optimistic that she would get into the classes she needs to transfer to a four-year university.

Of the courses she wanted, only two had space left when she registered in May. She enrolled in those and “crashed” others. In one of those cases, she lucked out when the professor teaching a political science class admitted additional students. But she couldn’t get into a biology class because she was too far down on the waiting list.

If the math and English courses she needs aren’t offered next spring, she may have to push back her plans to apply to San Francisco State, UCLA or USC.

Her mother is puzzled that Tirado may spend three or four years at what is supposed to be a two-year college.

“Because that’s what we think community college is,” said Tirado, 24, a journalism major who lives in Watts. “It’s hard to explain to my mom that I’m trying to go to school but the courses are not there.”

This is the new reality for Tirado and about 2.4 million other students in the nation’s largest community college system. The system is the workhorse of California’s 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education, which promised affordability, quality and

access to all.

In reality, the state's two-year colleges are buckling under the stress of funding cuts, increased demand and a weak record of student success.

The situation can be seen on all 112 campuses – students on long waiting lists, those who take years to graduate or transfer and others so frustrated that they drop out. Most of them enter ill-prepared for college-level work. Eighty-five percent need remedial English, 73% remedial math. Only about a third of remedial students transfer to a four-year school or graduate with a community college associate's degree.

"We're at the breaking point," said Jack Scott, who served as chancellor of the California Community College system for three years until retiring this month.

"It's like a nice-looking car you've been driving for several years: It looks shiny, but the engine is falling apart," said Eloy Ortiz Oakley, president of Long Beach City College. "The wheels fell off the Master Plan 20 or 30 years ago. We're finally feeling the results because we have enormous needs for our educational system to produce qualified workers, and we're playing catch-up now."

The consequences of not meeting those demands are huge: About 80 percent of firefighters and law enforcement officers and 70 percent of nurses embarked on their careers in community college. By some estimates, California will need 2.3 million more community college degree and certificate holders by 2025 to meet the demands of employers.

President Obama has described community colleges as a major engine of job growth and set a goal of graduating an additional 5 million students by 2020. But in California, home to a quarter of the nation's community college students, those efforts are hampered by the state's budget crisis.

The colleges also play a vital role in the state's higher education system, preparing students to transfer to University of California and California State University campuses. About half of all Cal State graduates began at community colleges.

California's community colleges started early in the 20th century as offshoots of high schools. Gradually they became separate junior colleges with a state-appointed Board of Governors.

The idea was to offer free classes to high school graduates, people looking for job training and those who just wanted to take a music, art or language class on a neighborhood campus.

Classes were free until 1984. At \$46 per unit today, they remain among the least expensive in the nation. About 44 percent of all current community college students qualify for fee waivers based on income.

The system has experienced explosive growth, peaking at about 2.9 million students in 2008-09, while funding grew to about \$5.8 billion last year from \$200 million in 1965.

Community colleges have three main sources of revenue: state funds, property taxes and student fees. State aid accounts for 61 percent of the system's budget.

State funding has not kept pace with enrollment growth. Funding per full-time student has declined from a peak of \$6,400 in 2000 to about \$5,000 today. Course offerings have been slashed by almost a quarter since 2008, and enrollment has dropped by 485,000 students since then.

The community college system is divided among 72 districts run by locally elected boards of trustees, which control their own budgets and the hiring and firing of staff.

Four affluent districts – Marin, Mira Costa, South Orange County and San Mateo County – collect so much revenue from

local property taxes and student fees that they don't qualify for most state aid. Still, with declining property taxes in recent years, they're not immune to cutbacks.

Many other college districts that depend on state aid are in more serious financial trouble. They have been forced to dig deeper into their reserves or borrow money. The 90,000-student City College of San Francisco appears to be in the worst situation and faces potential insolvency.

Campuses are cutting counseling and tutoring and dropping winter and summer sessions, trends that officials say could accelerate if voters reject a November ballot measure that would temporarily raise the state sales tax and the state income tax for high earners.

With a 3.6 gpa out of high school, Eduardo Vargas could have gone to a four-year university but chose East Los Angeles College because it was more affordable. During his first year, he was unable to register for any of the high-demand classes he needed for his business administration major.

This fall, he enrolled in honors classes – political science and statistics – because fewer students meet the requirements, so they're easier to get into. Even with an added speech class, he doesn't have the required 12 units to be considered full time.

"I look at the time frame it's going to take me to transfer to San Jose State and it's probably two more years," said Vargas, 19, of Monterey Park. "It's not that important anymore if I get a high-paying job. I just want to get my master's and be stable. Society needs an educated workforce, but it's going to have to invest more in education."

A study by the U.S. Census Bureau showed that, over the course of their careers, high school graduates earned an average of \$25,900 per year compared with \$33,000 for those with a community college degree and \$45,400 for those with a

bachelor's degree. (The figures are expressed in 1999 dollars.)

College leaders have begun to narrow the mission of two-year schools, focusing more on job training and preparing students to transfer.

To help move students more quickly through the system, the Legislature and Board of Governors recently approved measures that would set systemwide registration priorities, including preventing students from repeating courses to improve their grades and giving first choice to students who bolster their chances for success by participating in orientation and academic assessment programs. For the first time, students would have to maintain satisfactory grades to continue to qualify for fee waivers.

Keith Richardson, a 47-year-old former security guard, is trying to complete a degree in electrical construction and maintenance at L.A. Trade Tech. He hopes to graduate next spring so he can become a union electrician, but he's not sure he can get the classes he needs.

"I've got it all laid out and I just need a big break and the classes – and that's the hard part," Richardson said.

The vocational classes, taken by Richardson and more than 800,000 others statewide, are funded at the same level as other academic courses – even though they can cost twice as much to provide. Scott, the former chancellor, said these costlier classes should be funded at higher levels. Some campuses, he said, have even been reluctant to add technical or vocational classes because of the cost.

Last spring, Santa Monica College proposed a controversial two-tier tuition plan to allow students with means to pay higher fees for sought-after classes. Officials said those students would be able to move through the system more quickly, and the added revenue would help fund additional

classes for everyone else. But the college abandoned the idea after Scott warned it could violate state education laws.

Ultimately, community colleges must consider bold steps, such as shifting resources from less populated regions of the state to areas with larger numbers of young people and combining some smaller districts, said Scott Lay, president of the Community College League of California, a nonprofit association of the state's community college districts.

"I think we're finally at the point where the majority of districts ... have to realize that the landscape has changed," Lay said.

Tirado, meanwhile, took classes at both Trade Tech and East Los Angeles College last spring to fill out her schedule. This time around, she may need to find a biology class at another community college during the winter session – if she can find a campus still offering winter classes.

"Sometimes it's very discouraging to have to go through all of these obstacles to get an education," Tirado said. "But if we see it that way, we're not going to succeed."

Infrastructure crisis a growing concern in U.S.

By David Cay Johnston, Newsweek

The damage wrought by Hurricane Isaac, coming on the seventh anniversary of the flooding that decimated New Orleans and stunned a nation, serves as a not-so-subtle reminder of how much infrastructure matters to our safety and our economy.

This time the levees held, thanks in part to the \$14.5 billion a shamed federal government was forced to invest following the 2005 disaster. But for decades, America has scrimped on taking care of the public furniture, endangering people and weakening the economy as bridges rust, roads crumble, dams weaken, and water mains leak. The sudden collapse of an Interstate highway bridge in Minneapolis in 2007, killing 13, and the cracks that shut down the Sherman Minton Bridge connecting Indiana and Kentucky last year (it reopened in February) are warning signs of widespread, but hidden, dangers lurking all around us.

Even greater threats can be found among the decrepit corporate-owned infrastructure, including high-pressure oil and natural-gas pipelines that can explode without warning, electric power poles long past their replacement dates, and a telecommunications system that is far less reliable today than it was two decades ago—despite customers paying more than a half-trillion dollars for upgrades.

America's infrastructure gets a grade of "D" from the American Society of Civil Engineers, which recommends that we spend \$2.2 trillion on repairs and maintenance.

A troubling event in the July heat foreshadowed what we can expect from continued malign neglect. The electric grid serving more than half of India abruptly failed—twice. Pumps that supply New Delhi with drinking water shut down. Some 300 trains stopped, stranding thousands of passengers. People in elevators found themselves in pitch-black windowless cages with steadily rising temperatures, while 200 miners were trapped underground. Those rich enough to afford air conditioning steamed at the loss of the defining technology of modern life.

The electric power outages affected 670 million Indians— every 10th person on the planet—but the event was treated in the news as a passing curiosity.

Yet what happened in India can, and will, strike America, because our utilities are in dangerous disrepair.

Who can forget the massive outage that nine years ago knocked out the entire Northeast and parts of Canada. With the events of 9/11 still fresh in their minds, Manhattanites stranded in darkened skyscrapers wondered if terrorists had struck again. But this disaster, which caused \$6 billion in damage and resulted in the deaths of six people, was homegrown.

Read the whole story

Schue: Streamline processes, business experience, elect a new generation

Publisher's note: *This is the third of five Q&A profiles of a South Lake Tahoe City Council candidate running in the Nov. 6 election.*

Name: Clinton Schue

Age: 35

How long have you lived in South Lake Tahoe?: My family has been in Tahoe for over 40 years. My grandparents owned a motel and I spent most of my childhood visiting on weekends, holidays and summers. I have been a permanent resident since 1992; 20 years.



Clinton Schue

Work/volunteer experience: I worked for COO West Coast Cable managing over 1,000 employees. I started my own business at age 25 – CJS Development. I have developed many homes in South Lake Tahoe. I since have owned and operated CJS Ventures Dba: Brothers Bar & Grill in South Lake Tahoe for five years. I am very familiar with development in Tahoe and understand the difficulties of running a seasonal Tahoe business.

Why are you running for City Council?: To ensure a thriving economy to pass down to our children.

What is your vision for South Lake Tahoe, the South Shore and the entire Lake Tahoe Basin?: I would like to see business growth, more jobs for generations to come and financial stability, while retaining the beauty of Tahoe.

What are the three best things about South Lake Tahoe?: To limit to just three is almost impossible. I love the seasons, the recreation and the community.

What three things would you like to change in South Lake Tahoe and how will you go about changing them?: I would like to see an increase in new businesses by offering different incentives to help spur employment for our city. I would also like to see a faster decision-making process implemented with all agencies by working with the public and agencies to see what we can do to streamline the processes.

What would you do to balance the budget?: I would like to implement incentive programs to bring new business, which will generate more revenue for the city. There are many ways the

city can generate more revenue without raising taxes.

What would you like to see in a recreation master plan?: I would like to see more recreation available for our children and adults by working with the city to plan more activities that can also generate income to the city.

Promoting recreation was touted two years as a means to stimulate the local economy. Nothing has been done in that time. What will you do so that same sentence can't be said two years from now?: I would create marketing and advertising campaigns to get more visitors to see what South Lake Tahoe has to offer.

What types of recreation do you enjoy in Lake Tahoe?: Boating, wakeboarding, skiing, snowboarding, snowmobiling, paddleboarding, hiking, walking, biking, dirt biking, golfing. Did I miss anything?

How will South Lake Tahoe be different in four years after the end of your term?: At the end of my term in four years I would like to see a rebounded economy with a surplus budget and a bunch of happy voters.

Being on the council requires working with four others. Give readers an example of how you work well others in difficult situations with differing opinions: In construction and the restaurant industry every day you are faced with new challenges in how you deal with many opinions and peoples differences. I have always been one to step back and analyze issues subjectively in order to diplomatically implement needed changes that work best for everyone.

What are your opinions about the following issues and/or entities?:

- **Loop road** – I'd like to see more of a study done on how it will impact our residents. I would like to review options on how not to relocate business and residents.

- **Hole at Stateline** – I would like to see a convention center come to town.
- **Tahoe Valley Plan** – I would like to see more public input.
- **Giving money to any chamber or tourism bureau** – Important to business and tourism.
- **Benefits, including pensions, for city staff** – I believe they are entitled.
- **Tahoe Regional Planning Agency** – Needs more voter interaction on regulations that effect homeowners and business owners in our community.
- **Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board** –
- **South Shore Vision Plan** – Need more public input.
- **Lake Tahoe Airport** – I would like to see more use of our airport.

Why should voters vote for you over someone else?: I am an active member of the business community. I see the problems we face on a day-to-day basis and we need new leadership. It is time for a change.

Is there a person or business you would not take a campaign contribution from?: Not that I can think of.

Tell readers something about yourself that they may not already know: I was asked by several of my peers who are local and business owners to run for City Council because they believe that our generation needs to start making change and they think I am the right candidate for it. I have been told that I am a person that gets things done.

Carter Springs Fire 30% contained

Nearly 3,500 acres have burned in Carter Springs Fire in Douglas County.

The fire is burning mostly unburned areas within the fire perimeter, predominately on Bureau of Land Management property in the southern Pine Nut Mountains.

No structures have been lost. Power lines down at the fire scene, but they are de-energized, which is impacting some local rural residences.

The fire that started Sept. 21 is about 30 percent contained and is expected to be fully contained by Sept. 25.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Glen Plake roughed up in Nepal avalanche that killed 11

By Steve Casimiro

A massive avalanche struck Manaslu, the world's eighth-highest

mountain, in Nepal shortly before 5am this morning, sweeping through teams of climbers and skiers camped at 7000 meters, including South Shore's Glen Plake and Greg Hill, both of whom survived. Eleven people have been confirmed dead and as many as six are still missing, among them Plake's teammates Rémy Lécluse and Greg Costa. Reports that Eric Hjorleifson was on Manaslu were untrue; the skier currently is in Canada.

Hill reported on his Facebook page, "A huge avalanche swept through camp 3 at 4:45am on Manaslu, catching lots of people in their sleeping bags, many dead, and injured. Luckily our team is fine, and helped with the rescue, Glen Plake is also fine but my heart goes out to all the others..."

International Mountain Guides has a crew on the mountain and reported that the slide was caused by a serac fall, which was confirmed by Italian mountaineer Silvio Mondinelli.

"IMG Manaslu leader Mike Hamill reports that about 4:30am (local time) a serac fell triggering a slide that hit Camp 3. The IMG team is at Camp 2 and they are all safe and sound. Mike and several other guides are now responding to Camp 3 to assist. We'll be waiting for more info."

Garrett Madison, a guide with Alpine Ascents International, told Outside, "We counted 11 total deceased or missing," wrote Madison. "We were able to assist the French and German survivors some who were in pretty bad shape. We made a heli-pad and coordinated a rescue and evac'd about 15 people, and a few bodies. A lot of gear and a few bodies are still up there as the clouds moved in mid-day."

Plake was swept nearly a thousand feet in his tent, was banged up and lost teeth, but was otherwise OK.

Read the story

3 more online gaming licenses approved in Nevada

By Steve Green, Las Vegas Sun

The Nevada Gaming Commission last week approved licenses for three more companies to participate in the state's new online intrastate poker industry.

Licenses were issued for slot machine maker WMS Industries Inc. of Waukegan, Ill., as an interactive gaming system manufacturer and service provider, and for casino operator American Casino & Entertainment Properties LLC (ACEP), Las Vegas, as an interactive gaming operator.

ACEP owns the Stratosphere and two Arizona Charlie's casinos in Las Vegas and the Aquarius in Laughlin.

It has a players' club for its bricks-and-mortar casino customers called ace PLAY, meaning it already has a database of players it can market poker to.

ACEP also sees social gaming and online poker as platforms to drive business to its land casinos.

A third license was approved for PokerTrip Enterprises Inc. of Las Vegas to act in a limited capacity as an online poker marketer.

This was the first license to be issued in that category.

The State Gaming Control Board earlier this month recommended approval for all three applicants.

The board and commission earlier this summer approved online

poker licenses for South Point Poker LLC, Global Cash Access Holdings Inc., Bally Technologies Inc. and Shuffle Master Inc., all of Las Vegas, and IGT and Monarch Interactive Inc., both of Reno.

Technical testing is under way and must be completed before any of the real-money poker sites goes live.

Startling drop in life span for less educated whites in U.S.

By Sabrina Tavernise, New York Times

For generations of Americans, it was a given that children would live longer than their parents. But there is mounting evidence that this trend has reversed itself for the country's least educated whites, an increasingly troubled group whose life expectancy has fallen by four years since 1990.

Researchers have long documented that the most educated Americans were making the biggest gains in life expectancy, but now they say mortality data show that life spans for some of the least educated Americans are actually contracting. Four studies in recent years identified modest declines, but a new one that looks separately at Americans lacking a high school diploma found disturbingly sharp drops in life expectancy for whites in this group. Experts not involved in the new research said its findings were persuasive.

The reasons for the decline remain unclear, but researchers offered possible explanations, including a spike in

prescription drug overdoses among young whites, higher rates of smoking among less educated white women, rising obesity and a steady increase in the number of the least educated Americans who lack health insurance.

The steepest declines were for white women without a high school diploma, who lost five years of life

expectancy between 1990 and 2008, said S. Jay Olshansky, a public health professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago and the lead investigator on the study, published last month in Health Affairs.

By 2008, life expectancy for black women without a high school diploma had surpassed that of white women of the same education level, the study found.

Life expectancy for white men lacking a high school diploma fell by three years. Life expectancy for both blacks and Latinos of the same education level rose, the data showed. But blacks overall do not live as long as whites, while Latinos live longer than both whites and blacks.

"We're used to looking at groups and complaining that their mortality rates haven't improved fast enough, but to actually go backward is deeply troubling," said John G. Haaga, head of the Population and Social Processes Branch of the National Institute on Aging, who was not involved in the new study.

The five-year decline for white women rivals the seven-year drop for Russian men in the years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, said Michael Marmot, director of the Institute of Health Equity in London.

The decline among the least educated non-Latino whites, who make up a shrinking share of the population, widened an already troubling gap. The latest estimate shows life expectancy for white women without a high school diploma was 73.5 years, compared with 83.9 years for white women with a

college degree or more.

For white men, the gap was even bigger: 67.5 years for the least educated white men compared with 80.4 for those with a college degree or better.

The dropping life expectancies have helped weigh down the United States in international rankings, particularly for women. In 2010, American women fell to 41st place, down from 14th place in 1985, in U.N. rankings.

Among developed countries, American women sank from the middle of the pack in 1970 to last place in 2010, according to the Human Mortality Database.

The slump is so vexing that it became the subject of an inquiry by the National Academy of Sciences, which published a report on it last year.

“There’s this enormous issue of why,” said David Cutler, an economics professor at Harvard who was an author of a 2008 paper that found modest declines in life expectancy for less educated white women from 1981 to 2000. “It’s very puzzling, and we don’t have a great explanation.”

And it is yet another sign of distress in one of the country’s most vulnerable groups during a period when major social changes are transforming life for less educated whites. Childbirth outside marriage has soared, increasing pressures on women who are more likely to be single parents. Those who do marry tend to choose mates with similar education levels, concentrating the disadvantage.

Inklings of this decline have been accumulating since 2008. Cutler’s paper, published in Health Affairs, found a decline in life expectancy of about a year for less educated white women from 1990 to 2000. Three other studies, by Ahmedin Jemal, a researcher at the American Cancer Society; Jennifer Karas Montez, a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health and

Society Scholar at Harvard; and Richard Miech, a professor at the University of Colorado, Denver, found increases in mortality rates (the ratio of deaths to a population) for the least educated Americans.

Olshansky's study, financed by the MacArthur Foundation Research Network on an Aging Society, found by far the biggest decline in life expectancy for the least educated non-Latino whites, in large part because he isolated those without a high school diploma, a group usually combined with high school graduates. Non-Latino whites currently make up 63 percent of the population of the United States.

Researchers said they were baffled by the magnitude of the drop. Some cautioned that the results could be overstated because Americans without a high school diploma – about 12 percent of the population, down from about 22 percent in 1990, according to the Census Bureau – were a shrinking group that was now more likely to be disadvantaged in ways besides education, compared with past generations.

Olshansky agreed that the group was now smaller but said the magnitude of the drop in life expectancy was still a measure of deterioration.

"The good news is that there are fewer people in this group," he said. "The bad news is that those who are in it are dying more quickly."

Researchers, including some involved in the earlier studies that found more modest declines in life expectancy, said that Olshansky's methodology was sound and that the findings reinforced evidence of a troubling pattern.

"Something is going on in the lives of disadvantaged white women that is leading to some really alarming trends in life expectancy," said Montez of Harvard.

Researchers offered theories for the drop in life expectancy

but cautioned that none could fully explain it.

Overdoses from prescription drugs have spiked since 1990, disproportionately affecting whites, particularly women. Miech, of the University of Colorado, noted the rise in a 2011 paper in the American Sociological Review, arguing that it was among the biggest changes for whites in recent decades.

Montez, who studies women's health, said that smoking was a big part of declines in life expectancy for less educated women. Smoking rates have increased among women without a high school diploma, both white and black, she said.

This group also has less access to health care than before. The share of working-age adults with less than a high school diploma who did not have health insurance rose to 43 percent in 2006, up from 35 percent in 1993, according to Jemal at the American Cancer Society.

The shift should be seen against the backdrop of sweeping changes in the American economy and in women's lives, said Lisa Berkman, director of the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies. The overwhelming majority of women now work, while fertility has remained higher than in European countries. For women in low-wage jobs, which are often less flexible, this could take a toll on health.

It may be smart to hold back

third-graders who can't read well

By Kayla Webley, Time

If you want kids to succeed in school, look no further than the third grade. So says a body of research showing that if kids haven't mastered reading by then, their ability to keep up in other subjects starts to decline.

That has led 32 states to adopt policies specifically targeting third-grade reading skills. In 2012, 13 states have passed laws that aim to identify struggling readers and intervene before they reach fourth grade; 14 have gone so far as to require schools to hold back third-graders who don't score high enough on the state reading test.

Legislators advocating intervention have seized on studies like the one published last year by Donald Hernandez, a sociology professor at the City University of New York, that analyzed the reading scores and graduation rates of nearly 4,000 students born from 1979 to 1989 and found that 1 in 6 who couldn't read at grade level by third grade didn't finish high school by age 19—four times the rate of proficient readers.

Better to keep them back when they're young, advocates argue, to help them catch up.

But doing so is a pricey proposition: the U.S. already spends an estimated \$12 billion a year on K-12 students who are repeating a grade. And the new laws requiring thousands of kids to sit through third grade a second time go against a half-century of education policy. Schools have long argued that "social promotion" — pushing students on the bubble up to the next grade — is better than subjecting them to bullying from their peers and other potentially detrimental effects

that often coincide with repeating a grade.

Numerous studies have shown that students who are held back have less confidence and less attachment to school, which makes them more likely to drop out.

It's hard to know whether academic deficits are the cause of kids' social problems or the result of them. In August the Brookings Institution shed new light on this debate when it released a report that attempts to isolate the impact of a child's being held back from other factors, including poverty and parental involvement.

The study's author, Professor Martin West of Harvard's Graduate School of Education, looked at the outcomes of thousands of students in Florida, which since 2003 has been holding back third-graders who fail the state reading test and providing them with extensive remediation. (In the policy's first year, 21,799 students had to repeat third grade, up from 4,819 the previous year.)

West studied two very similar groups of kids—one group scored exactly at the cutoff on Florida's third-grade reading test, and the other scored just one point above—and found that by the time they were in eighth grade, students who repeated third grade scored higher on reading and math tests than their peers who had been promoted to fourth grade without a hitch.

It's worth noting, however, that Florida doesn't simply make children repeat third grade. Students who are held back are to be assigned to a high-performing teacher and get 90 minutes of research-based reading instruction each day, and the state has started to give struggling readers more help as early as kindergarten.

In other words, there's not some magical aspect to third grade.

“That shift from learning to read to reading to learn is much

more of a gradual transition than a sudden event,” West says. These policies, he adds, “are meant to serve as an accountability device to ensure that all students receive sound instruction in reading in the early grades.”

It’s hard to argue with that.

Truckee CHP officer accused of sex acts with minor

By AP

TRUCKEE – The California Highway Patrol has arrested one of its own on suspicion of engaging in sexual acts with a minor.

Truckee CHP Officer Robert Holland was arrested at his Loyalton home Tuesday afternoon after other officers searched his home. They also seized his phone and computer.

CHP Cmdr. Timothy Malone says the 46-year-old Holland resigned the next day after 15 years on the force.

The arrest followed allegations brought to the agency’s attention. While the CHP typically doesn’t investigate sex crimes, Malone says the Sierra County sheriff asked his division to lead the investigation.

Police did not release the minor’s age or gender. Malone says the alleged sexual acts happened while the officer was off-duty.

Holland was being held in Nevada County Jail on \$500,000 bail.