

# Officials Praise Vocational Training Classes at Colton High to Push Passage of Props. 30, 38

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Posted: 10/04/2012 04:17:56 PM PDT

COLTON - Students in chef hats baked quiche. Other students examined microscopic life in pond water or sat in front of computers to learn Microsoft Word. State education administrators on a one-month tour of California schools hailed those classes at Colton High School on Thursday, while urging support of tax initiatives that they say will keep career technical training alive.

"We heard great things were going on at Colton High School, so we decided to come check it out," said Tom Torlakson, state superintendent of public instruction. Classes through Career and Technical Education, as well as the Regional Occupational Program, could be jeopardized due to already heavy cuts to education funding, officials say. Such programs have already sustained \$140million in cuts in recent years, and more than \$50million in the last state budget, officials said.

Jill Wynns, president of the California School Boards Association, said the classes offered at Colton High are actually an anomaly when compared to other schools. "Programs like this don't exist in other parts of the state," she said. "If you want to keep them, you have to vote yes on (Propositions) 30 and 38." Both are initiatives that would raise sales and income tax, but also benefit schools, officials said.

While students weren't as aware of the possible fate of vocational training classes, they realize the importance of learning a trade now. Brian Williams, 15, has been learning welding through the school's ROP program. It's something he says he can picture doing for a living. "If you want to do something in life, you have to like what you do," he said. Jonathan Le, who teaches such subjects as biology and integrated physical science at Colton High, said technical training is vitally important for students and the country. "We, as a country, have to compete on the global market," he said.

Students in Colton High's culinary class have career dreams of their own. Michael Gregg says he wants to open his own restaurant one day. Margarita Campos and Alex Gonzalez both have their eyes on more culinary education in college. "If they like your food, it makes them happy," Margarita said.

Torlakson's group visited schools in Los Angeles on Wednesday and plan to make stops in San Jose, Modesto, San Diego and other areas.