



# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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See added contact at end.

## **Virtual Field Trip from State Capitol to Citrus Heights and Los Angeles, Without Leaving Town**

### **In Age of Tight Budgets, Videoconferencing Aids Education**

California State Parks and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell will be in Los Angeles and Sacramento classrooms next Tuesday, all without ever leaving the State Capitol.

Using California's K-12 High-Speed Network and the power of two-way interactive videoconferencing, Superintendent O'Connell will engage students in conversations that help teach academic content standards in the context of state parks. At a time when all public agencies are laboring under budget reductions, videoconferencing provides a virtual field trip to the historic State Capitol for schools that cannot afford the cost of an actual trip.

At 8:30 on March 11, Superintendent O'Connell will be in the Historic Governor's Office at the State Capitol. He will videoconference with a third grade class from Kingswood Elementary School in the San Juan Unified School District. Following this session, the Superintendent will then videoconference with an eighth grade government class from South Gate Middle School in Los Angeles Unified School District.

These videoconferences are part of the Parks Online Resources for Teachers and Students (PORTS) program administered by California State Parks. PORTS seeks to help bridge California's educational achievement gap by bringing the resources of California State Parks to students throughout the state. For many schools across the state, virtual field trips to historic sites or wilderness and natural areas, can provide what would otherwise be impossible in an expensive field trip.

Through the unique use of videoconferencing technology, the program brings park rangers and public officials from locations in the California State Park system right into classrooms anywhere in the state. Programs are presented from the middle of an isolated desert park, tide pools in a state beach, an historic gold rush park, the State Capitol Museum,

and even from the middle of a breeding colony of elephant seals. All programs are carried over California's K-12 High-Speed Network (HSN).

For more information about the PORTS program go to <http://www.ports.parks.ca.gov>.

For more information on Superintendent O'Connell's efforts to bridge the educational achievement gap go to <http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/ag/> .

For more information on the California K-12 High-Speed Network (HSN) go to <http://www.k12hsn.org/>

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