Honorable Board of Trustees
of the San Francisco Community College District

Subject: Resolution 980430 - S2
Opposition to Proposition 227, the Unz Initiative, on the June, 1998 Statewide Ballot

President and Members:

WHEREAS: Local governing boards are empowered in Education Code Section 70902 as a legislative enactment of Section 14 of Article IX of the California Constitution to initiate and carry on any activity, or otherwise act in any manner which is not in conflict or inconsistent with any law, or the purposes for which community college districts are established; and

WHEREAS: Education Code Section 72121 and Chapter 9 (commencing at Section 54050), Division 2 of Title 5 of the Government Code, require local governing boards to take actions which affect the district at public meeting, where deliberations are available to anyone, and all opinions can be freely aired; and

WHEREAS: It is a responsibility of the local government board to acquire and analyze information about measures which affect the district; and

WHEREAS: The Unz Initiative attacks local control by taking away from local school districts, teachers and parents the right to determine the most effective ways to teach their own children; and

WHEREAS: The Unz Initiative, also know as the “English for the Children” initiative, mandates that children with limited English be put in one classroom - regardless of differences in age, cultural background and academic abilities - to be taught by the teacher who will be prohibited under the threat of legal action from speaking to them in their own language; and

WHEREAS: After only one year in such classes students would be placed in regular classes with native English speakers; and

WHEREAS: One year of English immersion is not enough to give many nonnative speakers the fluency they need to study alongside native English speakers; and

WHEREAS: The Unz Initiative would deny parents the choice between bilingual programs and English immersion creating a one-year, one size-fit-all program; and
WHEREAS: English is not the native language of almost 1/3 of the K-12 students in San Francisco public schools and of those enrolled in bilingual classes, 40% are Chinese and 35% are Latino. And the Unz Initiative would cause irreparable harm to those current programs; and

WHEREAS: Many students in the K-12 system will eventually enroll at City College of San Francisco; and

WHEREAS: Such students who have been deprived of appropriate English instruction at the K-12 level will be severely hampered in their studies at City College of San Francisco; and

WHEREAS: The Board of Trustees of the San Francisco Community College District has thoroughly reviewed information on Proposition 227 and has provided for full and open discussion of the issue at this regularly scheduled meeting of the Board.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the Board of Trustees of the San Francisco Community College District concludes that the passage of Proposition 227 would have a detrimental impact on the District and on the educational opportunities of the students it serves.

Recommended for Adoption:

Lawrence Wong
Andrea Shorter
Rodel Rodis