



June 18, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Toni G. Atkins
President pro Tempore, State Senate
State Capitol, Room 205
Sacramento, CA 95819

The Honorable Anthony Rendon
Speaker, State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 219
Sacramento, CA 95819

Subject: Opposition to Limiting Local Decisions on School Personnel

Dear Governor Newsom, President pro Tempore Atkins, and Speaker Rendon:

On behalf of the 6.2 million students we serve in over a thousand local education agencies, we ask the Governor and legislators to not limit the ability of school districts to properly budget and manage personnel during these unprecedented times.

This fall, students will be returning to school while facing extraordinary challenges to their education. As the state budget is being finalized, we understand some organizations are demanding that legislators and the Governor constrain the ability for school districts to manage personnel decisions locally, including the elimination or suspension of layoff options that exist in current law.

Schools are being asked to undergo a radical transformation in education delivery. This transformation requires flexibility and funding in every element of school operations, including personnel, which typically accounts for 80 to 90 percent of a school district's budget. Distance learning, in-person instruction, and hybrid models require local flexibility.

Multiple federal, state, and local agencies are requesting that educators comply with new guidelines on school operations in the coming academic year. The

focus on safety will necessitate the ability to redirect resources to ensure proper protocols are instituted. School districts will need greater authority over their budgets and personnel decisions in order to make the best decisions for students based on local needs.

It is critical to take into account the fiscal factors that have been constraining school districts' budgets prior to COVID-19, leading to reductions in both personnel and services: (1) declining enrollment impacting over 60 percent of school districts; (2) rising fixed costs, such as health care and utilities; and (3) newly enacted laws without corresponding state funding support. As it stands today, a "no-cuts" state budget will lead to many districts not being able to absorb the blow of constrained authority over the biggest line item in their budgets: personnel. The unfortunate reality is that without the ability to bargain locally, student educational and enrichment programs will suffer.

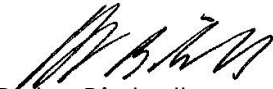
We are asking the Governor and legislators to help districts meet this moment for our students. Do not constrain the ability for school districts to work with our local bargaining units and properly budget and manage personnel during this time of enormous transformation. Removing this mechanism to fiscally manage school districts' budgets will severely handicap every LEA's ability to maintain fiscal solvency, while balancing the expectations to safely reopen school sites.



Dr. Wesley Smith
Executive Director
Association of California School
Administrators



Molly McGee Hewitt
Executive Director
California Association of School
Business Officials



Peter Birdsall
Executive Director
California County Superintendents
Educational Services Association



Vernon Billy
Executive Director
California School Boards Association



Tim Taylor
Executive Director
Small School Districts' Association



Andrea Ball
Legislative Advocate
California Association of Suburban
School Districts

CC: Members, California State Legislature
Chris Woods, Budget Director, Senate President pro Tempore Toni G. Atkins
Jason Sisney, Budget Director, Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon
Keely Martin Bosler, Director, California Department of Finance
Karen Stapf Walters, Executive Director, California State Board of Education