



**CCSESA**

## California County Superintendents Educational Services Association

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March 12, 2020

The Honorable Richard Roth, Chair

Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee 1 on Education

State Capitol, Room 2080

Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Kevin McCarty, Chair

Assembly Budget Subcommittee 2 on Education Finance

State Capitol, Room 2136

Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Roth and Assembly Member McCarty:

On behalf of the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA) which represents the county superintendents from each of California's fifty-eight counties, we are writing to provide our position on several of the proposals included in the Governor's January budget release.

CCSESA supports the framework of the Governor's 2020-21 Budget proposal to provide \$83.2 billion in K-14 funding, including an additional \$3.9 billion above the 2019 Budget Act, as required by the Proposition 98 minimum guarantee. While this funding is greatly appreciated and a step in the right direction, this still does not solve the problem of our state's historically underfunded public education system.

The 2019 Education Week's Quality Counts survey showed California ranked 39th in adjusted per-pupil expenditures for K-12 education. According to the survey, California's per-student spending of \$10,281 is \$2,475 below the national average of \$12,756. Further, California is \$7,153 [41%] below the average spending of the top ten states for K-12 education spending. Given that one of the goals of the constitutional initiative, Proposition 98, is to close the gap in per pupil expenditures to the average of the top ten states, California still has a long way to go in school finance.

One reason California is unable to make significant strides in funding is the lack of state revenues directed for educational purposes. It is important that both the Administration and Legislature enact measures to address the needs of our students and public education system.

CCSESA recommends providing additional LCFF funds in the budget. School districts, county offices of education, and charter schools need additional resources to address increasing costs. Not only would an additional increase afford local education entities a greater ability to address rising fixed costs, it would demonstrate a commitment to the LCFF framework which is based on priorities that are set and start at the local level.



## **Special Education**

CCSESA strongly supports the Governor's commitment to increase ongoing funding for special education. The Governor's budget proposal includes continuation of last year's investment of \$645 million in special education, with all of that funding proposed to be ongoing and allocated to increase the base funding for special education. For 2020-21, the Governor is proposing an additional \$250 million to be allocated based on the number of children age 3 to 5 years with exceptional needs. This brings the total funding level to approximately \$895 million.

CCSESA would suggest that the budget also include additional funding to support students with relatively severe disabilities. The Legislative Analyst's Office estimates that two-thirds of recent increases in special education expenditures are due to an increase in the incidence of students with relatively severe disabilities, particularly autism. Students with autism typically require intensive support from paraprofessionals, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, and adaptive physical education specialists, among other specialists.

## **One-Time Discretionary Funding**

In prior years, the budget provided one-time discretionary funding to local education agencies (LEAs) to support critical investments including content standards implementation, technology, professional development, induction programs for beginning teachers and deferred maintenance. While the budget provided guidance on areas of preferred spending, this funding was discretionary and could be used to fund local priorities. The Governor's January budget proposal includes approximately \$1.9 billion in one-time funding including \$900 million for school workforce issues and \$600 million to address the achievement gap.

We recommend that the legislature take a similar approach as in previous years and allocate a significant portion of one-time funding to provide LEAs discretionary funding to address local priorities. Among the one-time funding proposals, we support funding for the classified school employee teacher training program and the increase in state reimbursement for child nutrition.

## **Reduce LEAs Pension Costs**

Last year's infusion of one-time non-Proposition 98 funds to reduce pension costs at CalSTRS/CalPERS provided an important relief to school districts and employees. Since employer rates will continue to increase, we urge additional non-Proposition 98 funds be dedicated in the May Revision to further reduce school districts' short-term and long-term pension costs.

## **AB 1200 and Districts in Fiscal Distress**

A top priority of the county superintendents of schools is to work with each school district to help maintain a sound financial condition. The Governor has proposed trailer bill language that would require school districts to allow ten days for county superintendents to comment on proposed collective bargaining agreements and ten days for the state superintendent to comment on county offices that are single school districts. We share the Administration and Legislature's concern about school districts in financial distress and the risk that some of them may become insolvent. However, we must oppose the language to have county offices review and comment on collective bargaining agreements for any district in the state.



### **Inappropriate Use of Proposition 98 Funding**

The Governor's proposal would expand the role of California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) from an agency working in collaboration with county offices of education to effectively becoming a state administrative agency awarding grants to LEAs, including county offices. The budget proposes \$30 million for the CCEE to administer Opportunity Grants, and \$250,000 for CCEE to oversee a computer science resource lead. CCSESA shares the serious concern of the Education Coalition regarding the use of Proposition 98 funds for state administration purposes and therefore opposes these proposals.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (916) 400-0437.

Sincerely,

Steve Henderson  
Director of Advocacy and Public Affairs

cc: The Honorable Mike Morrell  
The Honorable Connie M. Leyva  
The Honorable William P. Brough  
The Honorable James Gallagher  
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Erin Gabel, Consultant, PK-12 Public Education, Assembly Budget Committee  
Elisa Wynne, Deputy Staff Director, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee  
Jennifer L. Johnson, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom  
Jeff Bell, Program Budget Manager – Education, Department of Finance