June 6, 2022

Governor Gavin Newsom Senator Toni G. Atkins

Governor’s Office President pro Tempore

State Capitol, First Floor California State Senate

Sacramento, CA 95814 Sacramento, CA 95814

Assembly Member Anthony Rendon

Speaker of the Assembly

California State Assembly

Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: Opposition to the Legislative Budget — Transportation Proposal**

We write to express our serious concerns and opposition to the Legislature’s transportation budget proposal. The proposal would mandate offering all TK-6 low income students home to school transportation by 2027-2028, without any guarantee of funding.

The home-to-school transportation program is woefully underfunded and has not received a funding increase for 10 years. Districts are required to transport students with disabilities, but receive cents on the dollar as reimbursement for their expenses.

While we understand the intent behind providing transportation to more students, this major expansion will cost billions of dollars. For the small population of students currently receiving home to school transportation, districts are paying an estimated $1.2 billion out of their general funds. The proposed expansion will exponentially increase the population receiving transportation and will result in many billions of dollars being diverted from the classroom and core instructional needs for all students.

Further, districts across the state are facing dire shortages of buses and drivers. Rather than increasing the workforce, this proposal exacerbates the current hiring crisis by creating additional hurdles to becoming a school bus driver. The proposal also eliminates the ability of districts to offer transportation services for a fee. To compensate for the current underfunded system, many transportation programs are paid for by fees. Current law prohibits low-income students from being charged any fees, but many middle and upper income families can afford nominal fees to support the service. If adopted, this proposal will close those programs that many parents rely on.

We appreciate the Legislature’s acknowledgment of the importance of home to school transportation. However, districts simply do not have the human capital, vehicle capacity, or funds to fulfill a mandate of this magnitude. For these reasons, we respectfully request you to oppose the Legislature’s transportation budget proposal.

Sincerely,