May 19, 2020

The Honorable Toni Atkins  
Senate President Pro Tempore  
State Capitol, Room 219  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez  
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee  
State Capitol, Room 2114  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Tasha Boerner Horvath  
California State Assembly Member  
State Capitol, Room 4130  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Patricia Bates  
California State Senator  
State Capitol, Room 3048  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Shirley Weber  
California State Assembly Member  
State Capitol, Room 3123  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Marie Waldron  
California State Assembly Member  
State Capitol, Room 3104  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Brian Jones  
California State Senator  
State Capitol, Room 4088  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Todd Gloria  
California State Assembly Member  
State Capitol, Room 2176  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Randy Voepel  
California State Assembly Member  
State Capitol, Room 4009  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Ben Hueso  
California State Senator  
State Capitol, Room 4035  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Brian Maienschein  
California State Assembly Member  
State Capitol, Room 2170  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE:** Response to the Governor’s 2020-21 May Revise
Dear Senators and Assembly Members,

Over two months ago, schools across California quickly closed campuses and shifted learning to an online environment in response to the coronavirus pandemic. We undertook this shift to protect the health and safety of our students, staff, and the communities we serve and to contribute to the flattening of the curve. In the same way, we urge that the health and safety of our students, staff, and communities remain a top priority. Reopening our schools for in-classroom instruction will require more—not less—resources to ensure and sustain proper implementation of public health guidance. We are asking the Legislature to consider the long-lasting impacts of deep cuts in education to the future of our children, our communities, and the economy. We must stand together in the effort to prompt action from our nation’s leaders in Washington, DC to address the catastrophic economic impacts of COVID-19 for states and schools, but we must also have a plan to protect the most crucial variable for economic recovery—the viability of our public schools. We urge the Legislature to focus carefully on finding alternatives to the deepest cuts to public education we have ever seen in a single year. The cuts outlined in the Governor’s May Revision will completely undermine the ability we have to reopen schools regardless of prospective state approvals and clearance from local public health officials.

We have a moral obligation to our students and the community to open our schools only if we can provide meaningful educational opportunities in a safe environment. While there are important bright spots in this budget that deserve to be acknowledged, they are overshadowed by the most profound cuts our schools have ever seen. Since closing, our school districts have experienced increased costs and fiscal pressures in a variety of areas including:

- New costs related to the shift to online distance learning
- New costs to address learning loss with summer learning and an early reopening
- Cuts to school districts that hamper our ability to sustain our operations

The challenge of reopening and the proposed budget have now become linked because financial resources are essential to our capacity to make it all work. We think you would agree that as much as we all want to reopen, we cannot risk the health and safety of our students and staff by returning prematurely and without sufficient resources from the state and federal governments to accommodate their physical needs. Since the start of the coronavirus crisis, schools have responded heroically to the needs of our communities. All of these things require districts to incur new and significant expenses.

The idea that schools can continue to operate safely in the fall with a budget that has been slashed by the state simply does not reflect the current reality. Our schools are shouldering new responsibilities which we do not take lightly but require the full support and funding to guarantee the health and safety of our students.
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Among the additional costs that in-classroom instruction schools will face are the following:

- Social distancing requirements that could result in severely reduced class sizes at a ratio of 12:1 versus current class sizes that can well exceed 30:1
- Need for additional classrooms and the teachers to staff them
- Added nurses to be able to monitor student and staff health
- Added counselors to help students recover from the trauma of the current crisis
- Personal protective equipment to allow staff to work safely
- Increased cleaning costs to allow for complete disinfection of school sites
- Increased transportation costs due to the need for social distancing on school buses
- Increased school nutrition and meal costs

This is the time to find a way to do the extraordinary things necessary to deliver on the promise of a great education for every child enrolled in a public school. Moving forward in this pandemic will require partnership and collaboration to reopen the economy in a way that ensures the health and safety of California’s students.

Sincerely,

Dr. Paul Gothold
San Diego County Superintendent of Schools

Erica Balakian
Lemon Grove School District

Kristin Baranski
Santee School District

Dr. Leighangela Brady
National School District

Jodee Brentlinger
Solana Beach School District

Mark Burroughs
San Pasqual Union School District

Liz Bystedt
Jamul-Dulzura Union School District

Dr. Benjamin Churchill
Carlsbad Unified School District
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Dr. Matt Doyle
Vista Unified School District

Dr. Francisco Escobedo
Chula Vista Elementary School District

David Feliciano
La Mesa-Spring Valley School District

Dr. Carmen Garcia
San Marcos Unified School District

Ilsa Garza-Gonzalez
Fallbrook Union High School District

Dr. Tim Glover
Grossmont Union High School District

Theresa Grace
Ramona Unified School District

Dr. Andree Grey
Encinitas Union School District

Dr. Robert Haley
San Dieguito Union High School District

Dr. Patrick Hefflin
Julian Union High School District

Dr. Luis Ibarra
Escondido Union School District

Dr. Karen Janney
Sweetwater Union High School District

Dr. Andy Johnsen
Lakeside Union School District

Bradley Johnson
Dehesa School District

David Jones
Bonsall Unified School District
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Dr. Marian Kim-Phelps
Poway Unified School District

Dr. Maritza Koeppen
Vallecitos School District

Dr. David MacLeod
Warner Unified School District

Cindy Marten
San Diego Unified School District

Dr. Holly McClurg
Del Mar Union School District

Ron McCowan
Valley Center-Pauma Unified School District

Dr. Katie McNamara
South Bay Union School District

Dr. David Miyashiro
Cajon Valley Union School District

Karl Mueller
Coronado Unified School District

Dr. Richard Newman
Alpine Union School District

Dr. Gina Potter
San Ysidro School District

Dr. Candace Singh
Fallbrook Union Elementary School District

Dr. Anne Staffieri
Escondido Union High School District

Donna Tripi
Rancho Santa Fe School District

Jill Vinson
Cardiff School District
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Dr. Julie Vitale
Oceanside Unified School District

Julie Weaver
Spencer Valley School District

CC: Honorable Tony Thurmond, Superintendent of Public Instruction
   Linda Darling-Hammond, President, State Board of Education
   Karen Stapf Walters, Executive Director, State Board of Education
   Ben Chida, Chief Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Governor’s Office
   Keely Martin Bosler, Director of Finance
   Jeff Bell, Education Program Budget Manager, Department of Finance
   Jessica Holmes, Assistant Education Program Budget Manager, Department of Finance
   Jennifer Johnson, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Governor’s Office
   Stephanie Gregson, Chief Deputy Superintendent, California Department of Education
   Lisa Constancio, Deputy Superintendent, California Department of Education