



FLOOR ALERT June 24, 2020

Education Budget Trailer Bill (SB 98 or AB 77) makes progress toward protecting students' equitable access, *but more is needed* to ensure that all students receive a quality education

As a coalition of civil rights, parent, community and student groups, we are deeply concerned about the social and emotional impact of the pandemic and recent learning loss, particularly for the students hardest hit by the crisis: low-income students, students of color, and English learners (ELs). We are committed to preventing further learning loss in the upcoming school year, and therefore we seek the support of state policymakers to ensure that students receive direct instruction even if it is through distance learning or a hybrid.

We appreciate the positive steps taken in the latest version of the budget. In particular, we support:

- **No cuts to the Local Control Funding Formula**
- Significant investment of funding targeting learning loss and COVID-19 related costs, including **\$2.9 billion allocated to target districts using an equity formula** recommended by this coalition
- **Requirements of learning continuity and attendance plans** that will require districts to address some important components (academic and other supports; EL's language development; special needs requirements), and has the minimum LCAP level of stakeholder engagement in the plan development

Nevertheless, more is needed to ensure students don't fall further behind in the upcoming year. One of many recent studies about the expected learning loss by the management consulting group, [McKinsey and Company](#), delivered a stark warning about the economic impact of learning

loss that may result from COVID-19, especially if districts rely on distance learning that varies significantly in quality. The report projects a 7-11 month learning loss for students who receive low-quality remote learning experiences – and anticipates that nearly half of low-income, Black, and Hispanic students will receive that. **California must avoid the further learning loss in 2020-21 especially for our targeted student groups.**

In a recent survey conducted by Californians Together, of approximately 600 educators, 78% reported teachers provided face-to-face instruction for 3 hours or less a week and 34% indicated teachers provided face-to-face instruction of 0-1 hours weekly. Whether through distance learning or a hybrid delivery approach, the state should set a standard for how much live face-to-face instruction is required.

The proposed Education Trailer Bill falls short in providing safeguards for our most vulnerable students. In particular, we recommend:

- **Include explicit assurances that students will receive a certain frequency of direct instruction.** The current requirements do not articulate the baseline requirement for instruction and instead open the door for most instructional minutes to be filled through “assignments”. Live synchronous instruction should be the priority, especially for vulnerable students, including ELs and special need students. Dr. Linda Darling Hammond, President of the State Board of Education, at the Assembly Education Hearing on June 16, 2020, suggested requiring one hour a day as a standard. That is a beginning; but it does not go far enough, especially for vulnerable students, if we are to prevent additional learning loss and make up for losses that have occurred. We urge the Legislature to **designate at least 3 hours a day of live face-to-face instruction** (whether in-person or through a virtual setting) as a minimum requirement.
- **Provide a mechanism for the CDE, CCEE, and county offices to identify or provide supports to correct egregious LEA underperformance in distance learning.**
- **Close the LCFF loophole** allowing districts to continue diverting Supplemental and Concentration grant funds from benefiting targeted students. Despite unanimous support in the Assembly [via AB 1835 (Weber)] and support in the Senate to close the loophole, this important provision was not included in the trailer bill.
- **Provide parents and students an avenue to seek help if students are not receiving the education that they deserve.** The Budget must ensure that students and families can obtain such fundamental benefits as **timely** special education assessments, access to school records, and relief through the Uniform Complaint Process regardless of whether the school is physically closed and providing distance learning, providing in-person instruction, or some hybrid.

California must reaffirm its commitment to students and make certain they are not denied their constitutional right to a quality public education.

For additional information please contact Shelly Spiegel-Coleman, Californians Together at shelly@californiantogether.org, Liz Guillen, Public Advocates at lguillen@publicadvocates.org, or Robert Manwaring, Children Now at rmanwaring@childrennow.org.