

*The
Education
Coalition*

Working together to support and
improve California's public schools

**Association of California School
Administrators (ACSA)**
representing more than 16,000 school
administrators

**California Association Of School
Business Officials (CASBO)**
representing more than 4,000 school finance
and administrative managers

**California County
Superintendents Educational
Services Association (CCSESA)**
representing all 58 county superintendents
throughout California

**California Federation of
Teachers (CFE-AFL-CIO)**
representing nearly 90,000 education
employees

**California School Boards
Association (CSBA)**
representing nearly 1,000 K-12 school districts
and county offices of education throughout
California

**California School Employees
Association (CSEA)**
representing more than 230,000 classified
school employees

California State PTA
representing more than one million parents,
teachers, and students in California

**California Teachers Association
(CTA)**
representing over 325,000 educators

**Service Employees International
Union (SEIU)**
representing more than 50,000 school
employees in California

**Legislative Consultants
Peter Birdsall**
916.719.1315

January 21, 2010

The Honorable Darrell Steinberg
California State Senate
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Steinberg:

We are writing to express our very strong opposition to the Governor's cynical proposal to cut K-12 education funding by another \$400 per pupil, for a total of more than \$2.5 billion, while at the same time claiming that the budget protects education funding.

The cold, hard facts are that the proposed budget would reduce revenue limit funding, the general purpose support for schools, by \$1.5 billion (see page 60 of the Governor's Budget Summary). This represents a cut of about \$250 per student. The Governor also proposes cuts of \$200 million to child development programs, \$45 million to county offices of education, \$550 million from the K-3 Class Size Reduction program, and \$202 million from virtually all K-12 programs to reflect a negative cost-of-living adjustment.

Oppose the Proposed "Gas Tax Swap"

How does the Governor claim to "protect education funding", despite more than \$2.5 billion in proposed cuts?

First, the Governor proposes to eliminate the sales tax on gasoline and increase the excise tax on gasoline, changing the label on these revenues so they don't count as State General Fund revenues. This redefinition allows an "Additional Proposition 98 guarantee reduction of \$836 million" (page 27 of the Governor's Budget Summary). The Education Coalition opposes this proposal to redefine revenues in order to allow deeper cuts to public education.

Oppose Retroactively Redefining the Constitutional Guarantee

Second, the Governor proposes to revise legislation signed into law just last July in order to retroactively change the funding source in 2008-09 for \$1.3 billion in funding for schools. That manipulation allows the Governor to lower the Proposition 98 funding levels and portray Proposition 98 funding as being essentially level, despite the reality of proposing new deep cuts to education programs.

The Education Coalition opposes this proposal to renege on the commitment made to schools and retroactively redefine funding to schools for 2008-09. We do not believe the state can redefine its certification of a prior year Constitutional funding level. If that is allowable, what meaning is a Constitutional guarantee approved by the voters?

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From the perspective of schools and children, the entire premise of the July budget package was that education should take the necessary cuts, get those cuts behind them, and then be able to plan with some stability until the economy allows programs to begin being restored. That commitment of some stability, even at a greatly reduced level, was provided through the legislative certification of Proposition 98 that was enacted in July.

Schools made the budget cuts required in that legislation—it is not the schools that are renegeing on their part of solving the state's budget crisis. A "deal is a deal" and the students of California depend on the Governor and the Legislature to keep their word.

The fact is that the vast majority of the current state budget problems result from past budget "solutions" that the state has not been able to implement. However, the cuts to schools have been implemented. Every dollar in cuts to schools that has been approved by the Legislature and the Governor has been made. Why is it fair to now come back to solve the current problem by making more cuts to schools?

Examine Link to Federal Stimulus Funding

Part of the Governor's budget proposal is to back-fill federal stimulus dollars that are no longer available for certain programs. The budget contains no proposal to back-fill federal stimulus funding to K-12 education that are no longer available. How is that protecting education?

Even more troubling, the Governor's proposal would actually reduce K-12 education funding below the maintenance of effort (MOE) level he certified to the federal government in order to obtain federal funding. The Legislative Analyst's Office estimates that the Governor's proposal falls nearly \$600 million below the MOE requirement for 2010-11. Now the Governor proposes to wriggle out of the MOE by redefining state general fund revenues (see gas tax swap) and then saying California is maintaining the same percentage level of support from the general fund.

Oppose Policy Proposals Designed to Divert Attention From Deep Cuts to Services

The Governor's proposed budget includes several proposals designed to deflect attention from the proposed manipulation of funding and devastating cuts to services to school children. The Education Coalition is united in opposing the proposals concerning central district administration, contracting out, teacher seniority, substitute teachers and lay-off dates.

In another time the groups in the coalition would debate those issues actively, but these proposals come after \$17 billion in cuts to education, and in the context of a proposed budget that would renege on a commitment that is only six months old in order to impose additional cuts of \$400 per pupil.

Oppose Further Cuts to Education


The Governor's rhetoric is correct: it is time to protect education funding. Schools have already suffered \$17 billion in cuts through past budget actions. Important programs to provide career technical education and instructional materials have suffered cuts of 20%. School districts now receive only about 81 cents for every dollar state law says they should receive. Enough is enough.

California is in danger of failing an entire generation of children. For any legislator to seriously claim that education is a priority, it is vital to reject the Governor's proposed budget manipulations and proposed new cuts in funding to K-12 education. We strongly urge you to reject the Governor's budget proposals concerning K-12 education.

Sincerely,



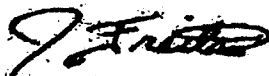
Adonai Mack, ACSA



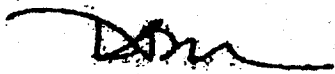
Dennis Meyers, CASBO



Mike Ricketts, CCSESA



Jeff Freitas, CFT



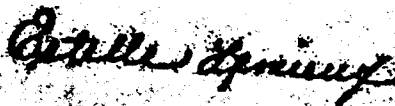
Debra Brown, CSBA



Steve Henderson, CSEA



Debbie Look, PTA



Estelle Lemieux, CTA



Michelle Castro, SEIU