



June 3, 2013



President pro Tem Darrell Steinberg
The Honorable Mark Leno
The Honorable Bill Emmerson
The Honorable Kevin de Leon
The Honorable Loni Hancock

Assembly Speaker John A. Perez
The Honorable Bob Blumenfield
The Honorable Jeff Gorrell
The Honorable Holly Mitchell
The Honorable Nancy Skinner

Dear Members:



On behalf of the following organizations, we strongly support the Governor's proposal for a Local Control Funding Formula and we greatly appreciate the Legislature's thoughtful consideration of the proposal.

CHILDREN NOW

The inequities and disparities of the current system are well documented and should no longer be tolerated. We now have a historic opportunity to ensure all students have equal access to base funding and to invest in high need students in a rational, coherent way. Moreover, this approach improves transparency and accountability, while finally providing schools the flexibility to design programs to meet the needs of students – now and into the future.



We wholeheartedly support the Governor's LCFF proposal, and urge you to also include the following modifications to ensure that the template and the local control and accountability plans adopted by districts truly consider the holistic needs of the students and communities being served.



To ensure a thoughtful and deliberative process in the development of the local control and accountability plans, schools, districts and communities must have basic information in order to identify and address student needs. Therefore, we recommend the following be incorporated into the statute on the State Board adopted template, and into the local control and accountability plans adopted at each district and county office of education.





- School Climate – The California School Climate, Health and Learning Survey (Cal-SCHLS) should be a requisite component of the needs assessment and planning process for each district so that needs are readily identified and the program decisions and budget priorities can be aligned. These provide a critical gap analysis with respect to student needs in order to make local decisions. Current language only refers to “school conditions.”



United Way of the Bay Area

- Chronic Absence – This is a key early warning indicator and is predictive of success in later grades. Chronic absence rates, as defined by EC 60901 (c), should be monitored to ensure that student attendance, and the necessary supports to keep students in school, are carefully considered in the local control plan. Current language only refers to “school attendance rates.” (e.g. 5 schools in Oakland can have 95% school attendance rates, but chronic absence rates vary from the low single digits to the upper teens as it relates to the percentage of students who are chronically absent.)



- Suspension / Expulsion Rates – These are key dropout predictors and will help districts identify shortages with respect to special services, programs, counselors and training when making critical local budget decisions, but rates must be disaggregated, studied and also monitored for disproportionality. Current language only refers to “percentage of suspensions/expulsions.”

ALLIANCE FOR
Boys and Men of Color
Invest in the Health and Success
of California's Future



School Health Centers

We strongly believe the LCFF finally provides the local control needed to encourage school and community-based decisions that are best for education, but we also believe that these critical indicators are important to ensuring the best decisions are being made.

In the absence of state directed categorical funds, we believe these indicators will highlight critical needs with respect to school climate and student supports, and will ensure that the local control and accountability plans and the accompanying local budgets will more thoroughly align with those student needs.

We urge you to support the Local Control Funding Formula as proposed by the Governor with the modifications noted above.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Boys and Men of Color

Ruben Lizardo

Coordinator

California Alliance of African American Educators (CAAAE)

Debra Watkins

Founder, President/Executive Director

California Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs

Kathy-Jean Lavoie

Board Member

California School Health Centers Association

Serena Clayton

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Community Asset Development Re-defining Education (CADRE)

Maisie Chin

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Children Now

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Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce

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Ellen Pais

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Jennifer Peck

Executive Director

Pro-Youth/HEART

Laurie Isham

Chief Executive Officer

THINK Together

Randy Barth

Founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

United Way of the Bay Area

Eric McDonnell

Chief Operating Officer (COO)

cc: The Honorable Edmund G. Brown Jr.

Tom Torlakson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Karen Stapf Walters, Executive Director, State Board of Education

The Honorable Marty Block

The Honorable Carol Liu

The Honorable Susan Bonilla

The Honorable Joan Buchanan