



David W. Gordon
Superintendent

May 15, 2020

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Assembly Member Kevin McCarty
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Senator Dr. Richard Pan
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Assembly Member Kevin Kiley
8799 Auburn Folsom Road
Granite Bay, CA 95746

Assembly Member Ken Cooley
2729 Prospect Park Drive, Suite 130
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

RE: Response to the Governor's 2020-2021 May Revise

(916) 228-2500

www.scoe.net

Dear Senator Dodd, Senator Pan, Assembly Member Cooper, Assembly Member Kiley, Assembly Member McCarty, and Assembly Member Cooley:

On behalf of the 13 school districts and 240,000 students in Sacramento County, we wanted to share with you our comments on the Governor's 2020-2021 May Revise. At the outset of the COVID-19 emergency declaration, schools across the state quickly closed school buildings and shifted learning to an online environment in response to the unprecedented 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.

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We have a moral obligation to our students and the community to only open our schools 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 should not want to 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 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.

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 health
- Added counselors to help students recover from the trauma of the current crisis
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) 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 busses
- Increased school nutrition and meal costs

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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,



David W. Gordon
Sacramento County Superintendent of Schools

DWG/cjm

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, Dept. of Finance
Jennifer Johnson, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Governor's Office
Stephanie Gregson, Chief Deputy Superintendent, California Dept. of Education
Troy Miller, Superintendent, AUSD
Scott A. Loehr, Superintendent, CJUSD
Christopher R. Hoffman, Superintendent, EGUSD
Dr. Michael D. Borgaard, Superintendent, EJSD
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Dr. Karen Schauer, Superintendent, GJUUSD
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Katherine Wright, Superintendent, RDUSD
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Jorge A. Aguilar, Superintendent, SCUSD
Kent Kern, Superintendent, SJUSD
Dr. Steve Martinez, Superintendent, TRUSD