

The Education Coalition

March 13, 2020

Working together to support and
improve California's public schools

Memorandum

TO: CA State Policymakers

FM: The Education Coalition

RE: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Impact on K-12 Education

Association of California School Administrators (ACSA)

representing more than 17,000 school
administrators

California Association of School Business Officials (CASBO)

representing more than 23,000 school
business officials

California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA)

representing all 58 county superintendents
throughout California

California Federation of Teachers (CFT-AFL-CIO)

representing nearly 120,000
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 250,000
classified school employees

California State PTA

representing 700,000 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 Consultant:

Dale Shimasaki

916.441.3909

The Education Coalition is comprised of the nine statewide K-12 education associations to provide consensus positions protecting the integrity of Proposition 98 and funding in the budget for K-12 public education.

The nine statewide organizations include:

- Association of California School Administrators [ACSA]
- California Association of School Business Officials [CASBO]
- California County Superintendents Educational Services Association [CCSESA]
- California Federation of Teachers [CFT]
- California School Boards Association [CSBA]
- California School Employees Association [CSEA]
- California State Parent Teachers Association [PTA]
- California Teachers Association [CTA]
- Service Employees International Union [SEIU]

Each year, the Education Coalition issues budget position papers and meets with legislative members of the budget and policy committees to share our consensus position on the major budget proposals in education in the state budget.

Attached is the Education Coalition's first position paper commenting on concerns regarding the impact of COVID-19. For further information contact Dale Shimasaki, the Consultant to the Education Coalition at 916-441-390

Issues Related to the Coronavirus and Its Impact on K-12 Schools

During a time of crisis, the Education Coalition has always recognized that our first priority is the health and safety of our students and staff. We began the year reeling from the aftermath of the impact of wildfires and power outages, facing new financial challenges in an already-unstable fiscal environment. As noted in our February budget letter, our K-12 public education system is experiencing mandated expenditures that are outpacing the cost of living adjustment, with higher costs of operations and services. We're faced with increasing costs in special education services, increasing pension obligations, and implementing new legislative mandates.

The Education Coalition urges state leaders to recognize the impact that COVID-19 is having and will have on K-12 public schools, students and staff. We write to express our concerns regarding the following issues related to COVID-19 and its impact on K-12 education:

- **Loss of Instructional Days/Hold Harmless:** Since Governor Newsom declared a state of emergency to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus, school districts are experiencing decreases in attendance due to parents keeping their children out of school as a precautionary measure. Some districts have already closed one or more campuses. While it will take some time to determine the overall impact to local educational agencies' (LEA's) average daily attendance (ADA), there will be an impact on the quality of educational attainment during these stressful times as well as a need to mitigate the fiscal and programmatic impact of significant decline to ADA and we may need flexibility from the state (i.e. waivers). Educators and staff are preparing for the possibility of relying on independent studies and online learning, which may be limited to only some school districts, but we ask for flexibility as these are uncertain times.
- **Meal Service During School Closures:** Many students rely on receiving meals at their schools. During school closures, our most vulnerable students may not have access to adequate food sources. The US Department of Agriculture approved a request to allow meal services during school closures related to the COVID-19 outbreak. Although this is a positive development, many child nutrition programs are already operating at a deficit, with limited staff. Additional resources will be necessary to offset the costs of the programs, additional staffing, and precautionary measures to ensure students and staff are not unnecessarily exposed to the virus.
- **State Testing:** As we begin the state testing period, some school districts will need flexibility in adjusting the testing window. Therefore, the Coalition urges the state to monitor and take action should the overall performance on state tests demonstrate significant decreases in outcomes. We are concerned that students will not attain the necessary instructional time and may have difficulty overcoming mental health challenges and stress factors related to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the state should also consider suspending the state test this year.

- **Custodial Services:** Recognizing that school districts must provide safe and healthy learning environments is creating new financial strain as LEAs purchase additional cleaning supplies and increase the workload on a diminished custodial staff, potentially increasing their exposure to the virus. LEAs need assistance to cover the costs of additional cleaning equipment/supplies, custodial staff hours, and protective equipment to ensure that custodians are not unnecessarily exposed to the virus.
- **Dashboard:** The State Board of Education should analyze the potential impact this crisis will have on the state and local indicators displayed in the California School Dashboard and develop recommendations to assess the 2019-20 school year.
- **Preventative Measures and Communication:** State and local officials must continue to coordinate with school districts and county offices of education to ensure consistent messages are provided to students, families, and staff. The Coalition also recognizes the need to support preventative measures such as effective health and safety practices for students and staff.
- **School Nurses and Counselors:** During a time of crisis, students and staff are affected and experience significant stress and trauma. The Coalition recognizes the services school nurses and counselors provide to support students' overall well-being. The state is facing a severe shortage of school nurses and counselors, which requires these staff to be responsible for multiple school sites and students. Additional support will be necessary to ensure nurses and counselors can provide the support and services to keep students healthy and safe.

We appreciate the Administration's and legislative leaders' efforts to prevent a massive outbreak of COVID-19. The Education Coalition's goal is to ensure that schools have the necessary support and recognition as we meet the needs of our students and make sound decisions with the focus on the well-being of students and staff. The Education Coalition is committed to working with the Governor and legislature to ensure that our students and employees are safe during this pandemic.

Sincerely,

*The
Education
Coalition*

**EDUCATION COALITION POSITION PAPER:
2020-21 STATE BUDGET**



Edgar Zazueta, ACSA
Senior Director, State Governmental Relations



AFL-CIO

Jai Sookprasert, CSEA
Assistant Director of Governmental Relations



Elizabeth Esquivel, CASBO
Senior Director for Policy and Governance



Katie Hardeman, CTA
Legislative Advocate



Steve Henderson, CCSESA
Director, Advocacy & Public Affairs



Carol Kocivar, CAPTA
Legislative Advocate



Ron Rapp, CFT
Legislative Director



Erika Hoffman, CSBA
Legislative Advocate



Kimberly Rosenberger, SEIU
Government Relations Advocate