June 5, 2020

The Honorable Phil Ting  The Honorable Kevin McCarty
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee Chair, Assembly Budget Committee Sub. 2
State Capitol, Room 6026 State Capitol, Room 2136

The Honorable Holly Mitchell  The Honorable Richard Roth
Chair, Senate Budget Committee Chair, Senate Budget Committee Sub. 1
State Capitol, Room 5019 State Capitol, Room 5114

Dear Chairs Ting, McCarty, Mitchell, and Roth:

I am writing to urge you to maintain funding for K-12 schools in the 2020-21 State Budget, and reject the Governor’s proposed cuts to education. In addition, we need to provide schools with the necessary funding to prepare for safe re-opening.

I support the Legislature’s rejection of the Governor’s proposed reduction of 10 percent of the Local Control Funding Formula and the 2.31 percent Cost of Living Adjustment. We cannot and should not cut funding to our schools. During this recession, it’s more important than ever that we maintain funding and continue to invest in our students.

The COVID-19 pandemic is further exacerbating existing inequities in our education system and cuts to education spending will make that far worse. In addition to preparing for significant cuts to their budgets, schools are also figuring out how to reopen while keeping students, staff and families safe. While schools are taking immense care to reopen safely, they will have to do so while worrying about the costs and where they will have to trim spending on already tight budgets. These budget decisions will have significant impacts on students and their futures.

Before this recession, California was ranked 39th in the country in education spending and falling billions of dollars short of funding needed to meet state goals for student achievement. We also had 45 percent of children living at or below 2 times the poverty level, and 58 percent of public school children were eligible for free and low-cost meals. As the 5th largest economy in the world, this was unacceptable. We also face significant achievement gaps in communities of color and disadvantaged communities. Cuts to education will only worsen these inequities and leave the impacts of this recession on our state’s students and their futures.
I am a firm believer in investing education and services as a critical component in delivering equity. We must stay committed to that value as we face the COVID-19 recession by maintaining funding to education, and exploring all existing and new revenue sources.

Sincerely,

KANSEN CHU
Assemblymember, 25th District

CC:  
Jason Sisney, Assembly Budget Director  
Chris Woods, Senate Budget Director  
Christian Griffith, Chief Consultant, Assembly Budget Committee  
Erin Gabel, Consultant for Assembly Budget Committee Sub. 2  
Elisa Wynne, Consultant for Senate Budget Committee Sub. 1