



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 10, 2020

CONTACT: Robin Swanson (916) 204-6890 robin@swansoncomm.net

EDUCATION COALITION CALLS ON GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATIVE LEADERS TO CLOSE \$20 BILLION PROJECTED SHORTFALL FOR SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS

“Back to School” Preparations During Global COVID-19 Pandemic Require Additional Revenue Streams to Close Equity Gaps Among Students

SACRAMENTO— Today the Education Coalition called on legislative leaders to prioritize education funding and identify additional revenue to close a projected \$20 billion* education state budget shortfall during the global pandemic and beyond. The coalition is comprised of the nine statewide K-12 education associations that work closely to advocate for the 8.4 million students in California’s public schools.

The \$20 billion shortfall for schools includes \$12.5 billion in deferred costs to K-14 schools and community colleges, \$1.4 billion in foregone COLA for the 2020-21 school year and a \$6.3 billion reduction in Prop 98 Minimum School Funding Guarantee revenues.

***2021-22 Education Budget Shortfall**

	K-12	CCC	Total
Deferrals	\$11 billion	\$1.5 billion	\$12.5 billion
Foregone COLA (20-21)	\$1.2 billion	\$167 million	\$1.4 billion
Projected Prop 98 Reduction	\$5.6 billion	\$693 million	\$6.3 billion
Total:	\$17.8 billion	\$2.4 billion	\$20.2 billion

Specifically, Education Coalition leaders are urging the Legislature and Governor to adopt additional revenue streams, such as suspending or eliminating tax expenditures (which includes credits, deductions, exemptions, and exclusions), imposing additional taxes on high income individuals, or corporate tax changes. The Education Coalition looks forward to working with the Legislature and the Administration in identifying and securing these revenues.

“We can’t continue to kick the can down the road when it comes to funding our schools and students. We are in the midst of historic and severe health, economic and racial crises and all eyes are on state lawmakers to provide leadership and address before it’s too late. Most of our schools are unable to physically reopen safely and it’s only going to get worse next year if we don’t take action now,” said **E Toby Boyd, President of the California Teachers Association (CTA)**. “Our most vulnerable students and communities pay the highest price when schools don’t have a stable, reliable funding stream from year-to-year. The time is now for lawmakers to put

people before politics and boldly adopt increased taxes on California's wealthiest billionaires whose portfolios increased exponentially in value while our communities struggle to keep the lights on and put food on their families' tables."

Having worked during closures and the summer, all school employees are currently preparing for the new school year to ensure their students have the tools they need for distance learning and when they return to school, such as learning devices and internet access – a daunting task as 30 percent of students have access to neither.

"Classified employees have worked throughout the summer to deliver meals to an unprecedented number of families in need, to provide internet access to close the gaps among our students, and to sanitize and maintain schools in preparation for eventual in-person instruction" said **Ben Valdepeña, President of the California School Employees Association (CSEA)**. "Our members, from attendance clerks to para educators, are essential to ensuring students have access to quality education, especially under the current circumstances. We are grateful that the legislature and governor spared public education from cuts for this coming year, but we must now address the looming fiscal cliff schools will face if federal relief falters and when deferred payments come due."

The Education Coalition continues to make safety a priority as schools develop plans for the fall and beyond. Some other back-to-school preparations include:

- Securing, preparing and delivering tens of thousands of laptops or tablets, and internet hot-spots to students and teachers.
- Deep cleaning every school classroom, desk, bathroom and shared space.
- Providing hand sanitizer and disinfectant spray in every classroom to eventually re-open.
- Providing hundreds of thousands of disposable masks, gloves and other PPE for students, teachers, bus drivers and in-school staff.
- Ensuring appropriate staffing levels and training to meet the individual needs of each student, especially students with disabilities.

Education Coalition leaders are continuing to fight for the resources necessary to re-open schools safely and to ensure equity for all students:

"Schools are doing more to keep students, staff, and the community safe," said **Tatia Davenport, CEO and Executive Director of the California Association of School Business Officials**. "It's simple math that this requires a higher level of state funding. In addition, school districts are going to need to plan for a very uncertain future, and we can't prepare for the needs of our students while being constrained by a looming \$20 billion deficit."

"California's students, teachers, staff and communities are counting on state leaders to work quickly to prioritize the funding our schools need to re-open safely," said **Jeff Freitas, president of the California Federation of Teachers**. "While Californians have been sheltering in place, restricting their activities, and making sure essential work is performed, the state's billionaires have continued to accumulate extraordinary wealth. Since March, 11 California millionaires became billionaires and the net worth of the wealthiest 25 Californians increased by \$160 billion – more than double the entire Prop. 98 expenditure last year. Meanwhile, thousands of students still lack access to technology needed for distance learning. It's time legislators ask those profiting off of this pandemic to invest in our state's recovery and support our students."

"The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly amplified inequities in our society and in our education system. Black and brown students, English learners and students with special needs will pay the price if California's leaders don't show courage now and raise revenue," said **Max Arias, Executive Director, SEIU Local 99**. "Five months into this pandemic, one in five students still hasn't had an opportunity to plug into distance learning, and

many more are going without the support they need to succeed until schools reopen safely. We are calling for the legislature to tax the wealthy this session to prevent this crisis from becoming a long-term educational catastrophe."

The Education Coalition, working together to support and improve California's public schools:

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 310,000 educators, Service Employees International Union (SEIU) representing more than 50,000 school employees in California.

###