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Statement by Russlynn Ali, Director of the Education Trust-West, on the passage of SB 687

September 28, 2005

Today, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed into law Senate Bill 687. This important piece of legislation, authored by Senator Joseph Simitian (D-Palo Alto), will require California public school districts to report the actual salaries of teachers at individual schools instead of masking teacher spending by reporting district-wide average salaries. Reporting average salaries for entire districts instead of individual schools creates the illusion of a fair distribution of per-pupil spending, when in reality the distribution of dollars has been anything but fair and equitable.

Before SB 687, California school districts routinely misled parents and the public about how much they truly spend on what research tells us matters most in student achievement: the quality of their teachers.

As Education Trust-West documented in our recent *Hidden Teacher-Spending Gaps* reports, students who attend the highest-poverty and highest-minority schools throughout California are consistently shortchanged when it comes to dollars spent on teachers. S.B. 687 marks an historic first step toward transparency on education spending.

By signing this bi-partisan legislation today, the Governor has displayed a willingness to put rhetoric into action when it comes to education funding. With this law California can lead the nation in reporting the truth about actual dollars spent at individual schools. Then, hopefully, our policymakers and decision makers will take the steps necessary to close the pressing teacher-spending gap.

For the Hidden Gap reports and other information, see www.hiddengap.org.

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