

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Governor of the State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

May 3, 2016

Dear Governor Brown,

As organizations committed to civil rights, equity, and social justice, we are concerned about your recent statements regarding the achievement gap in the CALmatters article. We are troubled by the suggestion that achievement and opportunity gaps are acceptable, and exist because of individual differences and meritocracy. Therefore, we write today asking you to continue the commitment to equity we all saw you powerfully demonstrate as you championed the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF).

Many of us supported LCFF because we agreed with you that it was “truly revolutionary”*. You led the LCFF charge by reminding us that if we fail at educating our children, “we will sow growing social chaos and inequality that no law can rectify.”** Clearly, the core of LCFF is to improve outcomes for our most high-need students. We believe LCFF’s promise is to help close opportunity and achievement gaps for students who have been left behind for far too long.

There are 1.5 million Black and Latino students in California not meeting standards in English or Math. Only 6% of English Learners in middle school are meeting standards in Math and fewer than 1 out of 3 low-income high school graduates complete A-G requirements. Our state’s English Learners, students with disabilities, youth in foster care, and Black, Latino, Southeast Asian, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students, and low-income students deserve the state’s full support and focus on ensuring their academic success.

We urge you to support a strong, coherent, equity-based accountability system. Well-designed accountability systems support the hard work of educators and parents, while also providing a much-needed source of urgency, supports, and interventions to keep our schools on track for success.

Also, as you consider who to appoint to the open State Board of Education seat, we hope you nominate an individual who can provide invaluable leadership on how we identify, learn from, advocate for, and replicate best practices on closing these gaps at the local level. We also respectfully request an opportunity to meet with you to discuss other ways to work together to continue the vital work of not just narrowing, but closing achievement and opportunity gaps.

Governor, in recent years you’ve paired fiscal responsibility with an understanding of the necessity of solid infrastructure. While well-paved roads are important, the road to California’s future depends on the 6 million students in the state today and the millions more that will go through our schools over the next few decades. These are the students that will become the leaders tackling California’s most pressing challenges. These are the students who will become

* Governor Brown’s comments during the signing of LCFF legislation

** Governor Brown’s State of the State address, 2013

the scientists working on the drought, the engineers working on high speed rail, and the community leaders holding even more responsibility in the era of subsidiarity. California's continued prosperity hinges on how well we educate our students. As you've clearly stated, the risks of not doing so are far too great.

Sincerely,



Advancement Project



Alliance for Boys and Men of Color



Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment



Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Asian Law Caucus



Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Los Angeles



The Association of African American Educators of San Diego County



Building Blocks for Kids – Richmond Collaborative



The BlackBoard of West Contra Costa



Black Parallel School Board



BLU Educational Foundation



California Alliance of African American Educators



California Association for Bilingual Education



California Latino School Boards Association



Californians for Justice



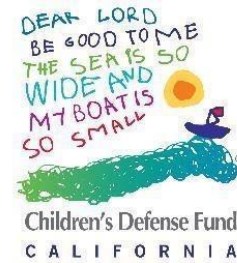
Californians Together



Central California Environmental Justice Network



CAFÉ - Chicano Latino State Employees Association



Children's Defense Fund - California



Community Coalition



Community Development Technologies



Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice



Congregations Organized for Prophetic Engagement



Democrats for Education Reform - California



Educators for Excellence - California



The Education Trust-West



EdVoice



Faith in Action Kern County



Families In Schools



Fathers & Families of San Joaquin



Future is Now Schools



GEMAS Consulting



GO Public Schools



GO Public Schools Oakland



GO Public Schools West Contra Costa



Green Dot Public Schools



The Greenlining Institute



Growing Up in Santa Cruz



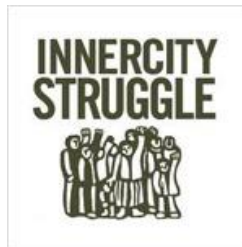
Heart of Los Angeles



Kids in Common, a Program of Planned Parenthood Mar Monte



Inland Congregations United for Change



InnerCity Struggle



Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area



Life Center Church



Los Angeles Urban League



LULAC of the Inland Empire



Parent Revolution



Parents Advocate League



Partnership for Children & Youth



Parent Institute for Quality Education



Public Counsel



Reading and Beyond



Roberts Family Development Center



Students First



Students for Education Reform



Students Matter



United Way of Greater Los Angeles



Urban League San Diego County

Urban League of San Diego County



The Village Nation



Youth Together