



BLACK IN SCHOOL



February 24, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Skinner
Chair, Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review
California State Senate
Sacramento, California 95814

The Honorable Phillip Y. Ting
Chair, Committee on Budget
California State Assembly
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: 2023-2024 State Budget: Department of Education: Equity Multiplier

Dear Senator Skinner & Assemblyman Ting:

We write to respectfully put forth an alternative spending option relative to the \$300 million ongoing annual General Fund allocation proposed in the Governor’s annual budget characterized as the “LCFF Equity Multiplier”.

Last year, our coalition sponsored AB 2774 (Weber) which would have added a new subgroup – lowest-performing subgroup - to the “unduplicated pupil count” under the LCFF. A race neutral-bill, this legislation would have resulted in allocating \$533 million to the lowest-performing subgroup, who are Black students and are currently performing well below statewide averages. Most recent California Department of Education data show that the lowest-performing subgroup has further slipped in academic performance with 70% of these students not at grade level in English Language Arts and 84% below grade level in Math.

AB 2774 was ultimately shelved due to an understanding that the funding request would be addressed in this year's budget. As such, the Governor's 2023-2024 Budget proposes \$300 million annual, ongoing, Prop 98 funds to address "LCFF equity provisions which have not resulted in focused strategies and efforts to address the needs of African-American students in districts and schools statewide". To address this gap, the Administration proposes to identify students in need by "allocating dollars to LEA's with schools serving high concentrations of students eligible for free meals," otherwise known as "low income" students.

An independent analysis conducted by EdSource, a trusted education-focused publication, stated "Newsom's plan would target the lowest-income schools that educate about 5% of all students and only 6% of Black students."¹ Under the Governor's proposal only 5% of the \$300 million Equity Multiplier funds will go to Black students, just \$16 million. The Governor's use of income rather than academic performance directs resources away from 81,000 Black students who don't currently benefit from supplemental and concentration grants under the LCFF because they are not low income, English learners or foster youth. This is a perverse outcome for a policy that is intended to result "in focused strategies and efforts to address the needs of African-American students in districts and schools statewide".

Governor Newsom's proposal doubles down on funding for a set of schools already receiving supplemental and concentration grants under the LCFF and federal Title I funding.

To address this disparity in funding amounts and to meet both the underlying goals of AB 2774 and the Governor's own stated goal, we propose the following alternative which 1) Uses the Governor's preferred metric for student performance — the California School Dashboard and 2) Focuses funding on student groups with the lowest performance levels:

Fund any student group that receives performance levels worse than the state on two or more state indicators on the California School Dashboard. Only pupils in those student groups who do not receive other state or federal supplemental funding will receive this Equity Multiplier funding. Pupils funded pursuant to this section shall be deemed to be unduplicated pupils for the purposes of Ed Code section 42230.07 and any other statutes for which resources are allocated based on unduplicated pupil counts.

The result of this funding alternative is that the state's lowest-performing student groups are the focus of the Equity Multiplier.

- The Black student group would receive 90% of funding because they perform worse than the state on three state indicators on the California School Dashboard: Math, suspension rates and graduation rates.
- The Native American student group would receive 10% of funding because they perform worse than the state on two state indicators on the California School Dashboard including suspension rates and graduation rates.

¹ Critics say Newsom's proposal for low-performing students fails most Black students

<https://edsources.org/2023/critics-say-newsoms-proposal-for-low-performing-students-fails-black-students/684148>

Our coalition's alternative funding proposal continues to advocate for funding students who do not currently receive supplemental or concentration funding – a contrast to the Administration's proposal.

The academic achievement gap continues to paralyze California's education system. Students who have received LCFF funding have shown progress and improved outcomes due to concentrated resources aimed at their improvement. The students this funding alternative considers have suffered for far too long without the additional support afforded to other populations.

Now is the time to fix this inequity and ensure that all students who need additional resources to succeed academically are given this opportunity.

Therefore, we strongly urge your support for this alternative proposal as an investment toward closing the academic achievement gap and supporting students in California who are struggling the most. This request is a strong step toward improving education outcomes throughout the state.

Sincerely,
Black In School Coalition

Member Organizations Listed in Alphabetical Order

- A Black Education Network
- African American Community Empowerment Council (AACEC)
- Alpha Community Education Initiative
- BAPAC San Diego
- Black Students of California United
- BLU Educational Foundation
- Center for Powerful Public Schools
- Children Now
- Elite Public Schools
- Fortune School of Education
- NAACP San Bernardino
- NAACP California Hawaii State Conference
- National Action Network, Sacramento
- National Action Network, Western Region
- National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Sacramento
- She Power

cc: The Honorable John Laird, Chair, Budget Subcommittee #1 on Education
 The Honorable Kevin McCarty, Budget Subcommittee #2 on Education Finance
 The Honorable Josh Newman, Chair, Senate Education Committee
 The Honorable Al Muratsuchi, Chair, Assembly Committee on Education
 The Honorable Toni Atkins, President Pro Tempore of the California State Senate
 The Honorable Anthony Rendon, Speaker of the California State Assembly
 The Honorable Tony Thurmond, California State Superintendent of Public Instruction
 Nichole Muñoz-Murillo, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor
 Members, Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee
 Members, Assembly Committee on Budget
 Members, California Legislative Black Caucus
 Erin Gabel, Consultant, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #2 on Education Finance