



California County Superintendents Educational Services Association

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May 20, 2010

TO: County Superintendents

FROM: Michael Ricketts, Deputy Executive Director

CC: Steering Committee Chairs
Chief Business Officials

RE: **1. School Finance Lawsuit Filed**
2. ACTION ALERT: Federal “Jobs for Educators” Bills Get New Life

1. School Finance Lawsuit Filed

This morning a lawsuit was filed in Alameda County Superior Court against the State of California requesting that the current education finance system be declared unconstitutional and that the state be required to establish a school finance system that provides all students an equal opportunity to meet the academic goals set by the State. The case, *Robles-Wong, et al. v. State of California*, asks the court to compel the State to align its school finance system—its funding policies and mechanisms—with the educational program that the State has put in place.

Plaintiffs assert that to do this, the state must do all of the following:

- Scrap its existing finance system;
- Determine how much it actually costs to fund public education to meet the state’s own program requirements and the needs of California’s school children; and
- Develop and implement a new finance system consistent with Constitutional requirements.

The Governor’s Secretary for Education, Bonnie Reiss, responded to the lawsuit with the following statement:

"The Governor will oppose this lawsuit and believes the state will prevail. The funding of public education in California has long been and continues to be a top priority of California, even in bad economic and budget times. We will continue to fight to keep education a budget priority as well as fight for the other reforms essential to ensuring a great education for all our students regardless of where they live or their race or economic background."

The suit was filed by a broad coalition, including more than 60 individual students and their families, nine school districts from throughout the State, the California School Boards Association (CSBA), California State PTA, and the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA). Attached you will find talking points and a fact sheet prepared by the plaintiffs providing additional information.

2. ACTION ALERT: Federal “Jobs for Educators” Bills Get New Life

Bob Canavan, CCSESA’s advocate in Washington, D.C., provided us with the following update about the federal effort to establish an Education Jobs Fund appropriation for states to help support retention of educator positions in our schools. After reading our excerpt from Bob’s update below, please consider taking immediate action to provide support with letters to your Senator and Congressional representatives.

“When the CCSESA delegation was in Washington in April they met with the White House, the Department of Education, the Speaker’s Office and members of the California Congressional delegation to discuss the



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California budget situation and to urge the passage of Education Jobs Fund bills. The Education Jobs Fund includes \$23 billion to help States support an estimated 250,000 education jobs nationally over the next two years. The funds will be allocated by States to school districts and public institutions of higher education to retain or create jobs to provide educational services. California's estimated share of the House Education Jobs Fund is \$2.3 billion, which would provide federal assistance to local school districts in alleviating some of the dire cuts to education personnel and programs that are pending.

“Pressure is now increasing for action in the Senate and House on the Education Jobs Fund. Both the House and Senate are preparing to vote on an emergency supplemental appropriations bill to fund the Afghanistan War and emergency relief efforts. Senator Tom Harkin supported by Senator Boxer and 25 other Senators is leading an effort in the Senate to add the Education Jobs Fund to the emergency appropriations bill. House Appropriations Committee Chair David Obey is considering including the Education Jobs Fund when the House Appropriations committee starts working on the emergency supplemental May 24. The Administration supports the Education Jobs Fund. Secretary of Education Duncan urged quick Congressional action since state officials are writing their budgets for next year.

“As of now the Emergency Disaster/War Supplemental is expected to go to the Senate floor next week. Senator Harkin is expected to offer the Education Jobs Fund as a floor amendment. The House Appropriations Committee is expected to take up the Supplemental next week and the effort is to incorporate the Education Jobs Fund into the bill at the Committee level.”

Attached is a letter Congressmen Hinchey and Etheridge, as well as other members, are circulating to support inclusion of the Education Jobs Fund appropriation in the House supplemental (*Help Save Education Jobs_Hinchey.*) Please use this letter as a model to express your support for the House effort. They are asking organizations to send letters as soon as possible to be on record.

In addition, the Senate is expected to take up their supplemental bill next week with Senator Harkin likely to offer as an amendment the *Keep Our Educators Working Act* with the Education Jobs Fund. We are including a sample letter that you may use as a basis to convey your support to Senator Feinstein (*Feinstein_Harkin_Support.*) Senator Feinstein, in particular, appears to be on the fence with this issue and would appreciate knowing your position.

Although Senator Boxer is a co-sponsor and in support of the measure, she also needs to show the importance of this issue to California. This letter can be adapted for Senator Boxer by changing the first line of the Feinstein sample letter to acknowledge Senator Boxer's co-sponsorship and making other appropriate edits. As always, we encourage you to use the attached letters as examples that you can then personalize with information specific to your county.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please call me at (916) 446-3095 or e-mail mricketts@ccsesa.org. The full text of Bob Canavan's federal update is also attached for your information (*May_Education_Jobs_fund_Update.*) For questions regarding federal issues please contact Bob at kelcan@navpoint.com or telephone (202) 462-5911.

Attachments:

CSFFactSheet_FINAL_051910
CSFKeyMessagesTalkingPoints_FINAL_051910 2
Help Save Education Jobs_Hinchey
Feinstein_Harkin_Support
May_Education_Jobs_fund_Update