



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

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PRE-K-12 EDUCATION

The economic growth of any region is directly related to the strength of its education system and its ability to retain and attract a ready workforce. Education can enhance the quality of life and produce extensive social benefits for society and its people. A substantial investment in education promotes productivity, creativity, and plays a crucial role in securing economic and social progress.

K-12 education leaders across the Sacramento region are urging Members of Congress and the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to adopt thoughtful legislation that complements our efforts to support the success of every child from cradle to career. The **highest priorities for 2022** fall into the following areas:

- Provide full and fair funding to support Special Education programs.
- Provide supplemental funding and supports for public pre-Kindergarten (pre-K) to 12 schools related to the health, economic and educational challenges of COVID-19.
- Grant a waiver to California to adopt higher income thresholds for working families to be eligible for Head Start.
- Provide the necessary resources to improve student support services, mental and behavior health, and school safety.
- Increase funding to modernize and repair schools to bring them into the 21st Century.
- Reauthorize DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and adopt guidance for safe and inclusive schools.

Business Nexus I Addressing the health, economic and educational challenges of COVID-19 in Pre-K-12 education

The COVID-19 pandemic support for Pre-K-12 schools across the country has appropriately provided what is necessary to address many of the profound impacts it will have for the next 24-36 months. We appreciate and recognize the historic investments by Congress, the past and current administrations to mitigate impacts to Pre-K-12 schools.

Requested Action

Support legislation that calls for the federal government to fully support schools impacted by COVID-19 and include any further targeted support for education technology and an expansion of capacity with the E-Rate program to serve public Pre-K-12 schools and communities.

Business Nexus | Fiscal Year 2022 Education Appropriations

Federal education funds are a critical resource for local education agencies to assist in ensuring academic success for all students. We are excited about many aspects of President Biden's FY 2022 Budget proposal, but more must be done.

Requested Action

Fully fund and expand funding for the following:

- Title I program for disadvantaged schools proposed by the administration for a \$20 billion increase in the coming year to triple overall Federal funding for the program.
- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the dramatic increase in funding proposed to meet the original commitment by Congressional leaders over a multi-year phase-in beginning with a \$2.7 billion increase next year.
- The Education Innovation and Research Competitive Grant, formally known as I3.
- The Student Support Academic Enrichment Grant, which enables states to submit funds to districts by formula as intended by Title IV of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).
- Child Nutrition Reauthorization Program through the Department of Agriculture that reduces childhood hunger and includes summer meals.
- Early childhood education programs, including Head Start, as well as setting state-appropriate income eligibility levels for those programs.
- A streamlined and more efficient School-Based Medicaid Administrative Activities (MAA) program reimbursement process.
- National Science Foundation (NSF) Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) academic programs that strengthen the pre-Kindergarten to college and career pipeline to increase economic prosperity, social and emotional wellbeing, and security.

Business Nexus | Full and Fair Funding for Special Education

Upon the initial implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the federal government committed to provide funding to cover 40% of the cost of special education services provided by local education agencies. However, the actual resources provided have fallen well short of that commitment. In 2017/18, the federal contributions to special education covered only 8% of the total cost to serve California's special needs students, while state and local contributions covered the remaining 92%. In California, the average annual cost to educate a special education student is well over \$19,000 per pupil. This amount continues to grow as the number of students with severe cognitive and developmental disabilities rises.

Requested Action

- While continuing to pursue full federal funding for special education, ensure maintenance of effort provisions for existing state support, to fully provide for special education services across California.
- Provide full special education funding for infants and preschool-aged children with disabilities.
- Provide funding for student mental health services for students with disabilities, and Alternative Dispute Resolution.

Business Nexus | Increase Infrastructure Funding for School Construction and Repair

The federal government has not made a significant investment in school facilities since the Great Depression and yet schools represent the second-largest infrastructure costs in this country behind highways. According to the *2021 State of Our School* report, U.S. is underinvesting in school facilities by \$85 billion each year, up an inflation-adjusted \$25 billion a year since 2016. The initial “Build Back Better” infrastructure proposal included \$100 billion for school construction and modernization, but the funding was stripped. High-poverty communities don’t have the tax base needed to raise local revenue locally to address these issues. Schools in many of our country’s disadvantaged communities are in deplorable and even dangerous condition. Right now, this country is asking schools to do more than ever before; to serve as centers for food distribution, COVID-19 testing and vaccination, childcare and much more. The infrastructure of our country’s Pre K-12 system must be a priority.

Requested Action

Re-establish the \$100 billion for school construction and modernization for school facility infrastructure in the “Build Back Better” proposal because investments in the physical infrastructure are essential to support all aspects of student learning, teaching, community building and civic development which are critical elements of a continued economic growth and success.

Business Nexus | Student Support, Mental and Behavioral Health Services, and School Safety

COVID-19 has exacerbated an already complex environment of change where reactions to trauma, rapidly advancing technology, academic competition, and other changes in social structures have generated greater levels of stress and pressure on today’s students. There is a greater burden on institutions to support students in coping with stress and encourage a state of well-being through a prevention and early intervention approach. Very few California students have access to any mental health services and when health and mental health services are provided on school campuses, students are much more likely to receive them.

Requested Action

- Focus funding on expanding mental and behavioral health services for all students, especially for students in crisis which interferes with their learning and behavior.

- Support programs that enhance a student's self-resilience and enable a student to cope with stress and pressure in a manner that builds protective factors and skills.
- Funding to advance efforts for safe and supportive social and emotional learning environments for student access to community resources, and support to be successful both inside and outside of the classroom.
- Simplify the Medicaid claims process for schools.
- Incentivize the provision of mental health services on school campuses.
- Reduce barriers to the integration of education and health care services.

Business Nexus | DACA (Deferred Action on Childhood Arrivals) Reauthorization

All students, regardless of citizenship status, have a constitutionally protected right to attend a public school (*Plyler vs. Doe*). There are approximately 250,000 undocumented children enrolled in California public schools. There are 10,000 teachers and other school personnel that are DACA recipients. Approximately 40,000 DACA recipients are currently enrolled in a California institution of higher learning. DACA recipients contribute more than \$11.6 billion to the California economy each year.

Requested Action

- Secure bipartisan action to pass legislation that provides a path to citizenship to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) participants and other Dreamers.
- Develop guidance for safe and inclusive schools.

Business Nexus | Computer Science Career Education

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports 45% of all jobs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics are now in computer science and information technology. However, historically computer science has been inaccessible to the majority of K-12 students. A workforce with valuable thinking skills developed through good Computer Science programming is critical to assuring the economic growth and well-being of our community. Increased funding for Computer Science education is necessary if our country is to meet its workforce needs.

Requested Action

- Increase funding to integrate computer science into all high school industry sector career pathways.
- Encourage businesses to search for high school talent with funding to incentivize businesses to provide computer science internships for high school students.
- Fund small schools that provide services such as training in the fields of computer science and advanced manufacturing for expelled and incarcerated youth.

Business Nexus | Head Start for Working California Families

California's minimum wage is \$15/hour as of 2021, making nearly all working families ineligible for Head Start. For example, one full time parent making minimum wage with one child is \$17,910 OVER

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the eligibility limit for Head Start Services. One full-time parent making minimum wage and one unemployed parent with two kids is \$2,250 over the income eligibility limit.

In 2021, the only families that will be eligible for Head Start are the following:

- one part-time employed parent with three kids
- one full-time parent with four kids
- two part-time parents with five kids
- one full-time parent and one unemployed parent with three kids

By raising the Head Start income threshold by \$5,000, 15,000 additional kids will qualify, and an additional 20,000 kids would qualify if the income threshold was increased by \$10,000.

Requested Action

- Grant California a waiver to adjust the income threshold of Head Start so that additional families have access to high-quality early learning.