



Sample Op-ed/Newsletter Column for LEAs

Fighting for Students, Rallying for Public Schools

Every student should graduate high school prepared for success in college, career, and civic life. Unfortunately, our ability to deliver on this promise has been compromised by 40 years of underinvestment in public schools. Resources that were standard in previous decades have been reduced or eliminated while rising costs limit what we can provide our students, our staff, and our communities. For a state with the fifth-largest economy in the world, this is unacceptable. And if we want to meet our responsibilities to the next generation of Californians, it's simply unsustainable.

That's why I'm joining the California School Boards Association, the California Teachers Association and other education organizations in the fight for public education. On May 22, we'll be gathering with thousands of other Californians at the State Capitol to demand that legislators prioritize education and provide Full and Fair Funding for our public schools.

This is no ordinary rally – this is a decisive moment in the fight for Full and Fair Funding of California public schools. Momentum for Full and Fair Funding is growing rapidly as more people confront the fiscal crisis faced by districts across the state and the legacy of neglect that has tarnished the reputation of California's school system.

In the 1970s, California schools were the envy of the nation, ranking top five in per-pupil funding and considered among the best in student achievement. Four decades later, California ranks 41st in per-pupil funding, adjusted for cost of living., We're 45th in the percentage of taxable income spent on education – behind states such as Alabama, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, and South Carolina – 45th in student-teacher ratios, and 48th in overall staff per student. That's not good enough for our children, our state, or our future.

Substantial research points to a positive relationship between education funding and improved student outcomes, particularly for economically disadvantaged students. Yet, our state has failed to keep pace with the rest of the nation. As California's school funding has fallen relative to other states, so has its performance. In 2017, California's eighth graders ranked 42nd in math, 38th in reading, 44th in sciences and 39th in writing on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

If California supported schools simply at the national average, funding would increase by \$1,961 per student. For a classroom of 25 children, that's an additional \$49,000, for a school of 500 students, it's nearly a million extra dollars annually to support student learning and improve school conditions. In **{insert LEA here}** we could use that money for **{insert potential expenditures here}** expanded curriculum, class size reduction, counselors, parent and community engagement, support for English learners, intervention programs, instructional support staff, career technical education, textbooks and supplies, additional extracurriculars and expanded offerings in the arts and the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and math).

That would make a world of difference for our schools and help turn the promise of a high-quality education for every student into a reality. It's high time we restore the luster of a public school system that was once the state's crown jewel.

To register for the May 22 *Raising our Voices, Protecting Public Schools* rally, visit: www.fullandfairfunding.org