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January 25, 2021

Ms. Keely Martin Bosler, Director
Department of Finance
Room 1145, State Capitol
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Ms. Bosler:

In a letter dated January 19, 2021, you notified the Joint Legislative Budget Committee, pursuant to the provisions of Section 28.00 of the *2020-21 Budget Act*, of a request by the California Department of Education (CDE) to allocate \$6 billion in one-time federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds (ESSER II) to schools in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The letter requested a waiver from the 30-day legislative review period.

The Legislature views this funding as one part of a comprehensive package of federal and state resources to support schools in serving students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Together, these resources can be directed to assist schools to reopen safely for staff and students, address immediate needs of students related to connectivity, mental health, nutrition, and other areas, and provide support to address learning loss over the near term. The Legislature looks forward to working with the Administration on incorporating the uses of these funds into a larger vision for helping our schools and students persist through and recover from the pandemic, including developing comprehensive reporting guidelines on the use of funds.

We have concluded that it is appropriate to allocate these funds quickly while we continue to negotiate the details of the Governor's plan to reopen schools as soon as possible. The benefit of the \$6 billion in ESSER II funds is the flexibility local educational agencies (LEAs) have in using the dollars. We believe that any state funding that is contingent on the reopening of schools should also be flexible enough to support all LEAs whether they reopen immediately, extend the year, or provide summer school. The funding should allow each LEA to address the unique challenges it faces while also prioritizing equity. Funding based on the Local Control Funding

Formula that supports a comprehensive plan combining proposals to address learning loss with efforts to reopen will help address the impacts that school closures have had on our students.

We look forward to the ongoing discussions and negotiations on how we safely and appropriately reopen all of California's schools.

I have reviewed the request and concur that the change is aligned with the requirements of Section 28.00. In addition, I approve your request to waive the 30-day review period, in order to allow schools to maximize the use of federal funding in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Skinner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nancy Skinner
Chair

cc: Members of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee