



February 5, 2020

The Honorable Kevin McCarty
 Chair, Assembly Subcommittee 2 on Education Finance
 State Capitol, Room 6026
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chair McCarty:

We represent organizations that advocate on behalf of students, parents, and educators in our state’s public schools. We are united by a common belief that all schools and districts should address long-standing inequities of opportunity and offer every student an excellent education. In the spirit of California’s system of support and Governor Newsom’s commitment to a longitudinal data system ensuring all programs work for well for California’s kids, we write to request that the subcommittee include an item in its oversight budget hearings on the California Department of Education (CDE) regarding a student-level growth model. To accelerate the development and implementation of a statewide student-level growth model to better measure Local Education Agency (LEA) and school academic performance, we recommend the subcommittee adopt an item and related budget bill language directing the CDE to partner with an LEA to access Proposition 98 dollars and get underway as soon as possible.

California is one of just two states (along with Kansas) that does not use a student-level growth model to measure school performance. Instead, California uses a grade-level proficiency and change in performance metric that only shows how many students are performing at grade level, and how much that performance changed this year compared to last year's cohort of students. For example, the 2018 end-of-year 8th graders' performance in a given school is compared to the 2019's end-of-year 8th graders' performance, with no consideration of student demographics and enrollment change between the cohorts of students. As a result, there is no consistent statewide accurate way of knowing what is working in terms of improving academic achievement ~ and what is not. [see Attachment]

Even more troubling, this approach masks how well great schools are working for disadvantaged students and English learners. It provides near-zero validity in knowing the impact each school is having on improving their students' academic performance ~ a critical outcome of any data-driven school improvement system. The combination of grade-level proficiency and growth data would strengthen the system of support's ability to target schools that are failing according to both indicators, and not shut down programs that are truly working for kids.

Such an approach will allow the state to identify those exceptional schools and LEAs that consistently achieve at higher levels in supporting all students, regardless of racial, ethnic, or economic background, and help other districts replicate their success. We believe California must utilize a model that accounts for actual matched students' data to more accurately measure outcomes and make confident decisions to double down on what works.

Parent demand for growth data is on the rise in California. All too often, parents express frustration with the limited information provided by the Dashboard's "proficiency-only" data model and want meaningful academic achievement data and their input included in the decision-making that impacts all students. The availability of accurate growth model data would provide actionable data and allow parents to more authentically partner with school and community leaders in the development of LCAPs and support programs that work to improve their schools and hold schools accountable for serving all students. As those closest to the students facing challenges presented by the inequities in public education, it is imperative that parents (as well as other stakeholders advocating for students of color, low-income students, students with disabilities, and English learners) have access to accurate data on student achievement.

A student growth model will make data-driven continuous improvement a reality for all of California's public schools. Thank you for your consideration and your continued efforts on behalf of all California students.

Respectfully,

Katie Braude
Executive Director
SpeakUP

Ted Lempert
President
Children Now

Dan Nieman
Vice President, External Affairs
Para Los Niños

Ray Chang Lopez
Program Officer, Education
Policy and Advocacy
United Way of Greater LA

Sarah Lillis
Executive Director
Teach Plus California

Ana Ponce
Executive Director
Great Public Schools Now

Kirk Clark
Executive Vice President
**California Business
Roundtable**

Seth Litt
Executive Director
Parent Revolution

Scott Richards
Executive Director
**Teach For America, California
Capital Valley**

Jeimee Estrada-Miller
Executive Director
Educators For Excellence

Bill Lucia
President
EdVoice

Dr. Elisha Smith Arrillaga
Executive Director
The Education Trust – West

Dr. Lida Jennings
Executive Director
**Teach For America,
Los Angeles**

Alma Marquez
Founder
La Comadre

Ryan Smith
Executive Director
**Partnership for Los Angeles
Schools**

Paul Keys
Executive Director
**Teach For America,
Bay Area**

Desiree Martinez
Los Angeles Associate Director
of Organizing
**Students For Education
Reform**

Chad Soleo
Chief Executive Officer
Green Dot Public Schools

Jonathan Klein
Co-Founder and CEO
GO Public Schools

Colin Miller
Senior Advisor
CCSA

Randolph Ward, Ed.D.
Executive Director
Teach For America, San Diego

CC: The Honorable William P. Brough, Assembly Member, 73rd District
The Honorable James Gallagher, Assembly Member, 3rd District
The Honorable Monique Limón, Assembly Member, 37th District
The Honorable Jose Medina, Assembly Member, 61st District
The Honorable Al Muratsuchi, Assembly Member, 66th District
The Honorable Patrick O'Donnell, Assembly Member, 33rd District
Jeff Bell, Program Budget Manager, Department of Finance
Ben Chida, Chief Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom

Why Does This Matter?

School 1

Current Dashboard



With Growth



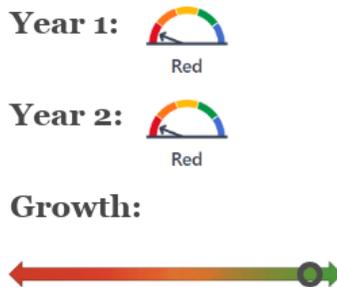
School 1 is still green, but programs are becoming less effective with the same kids. It begs the question: why is the rate of learning going down with the same students? This should prompt data-driven LCAP revisions. Is it caused by teacher turnover or retirement? New materials? Natural disaster? Cuts to after-school tutoring? School leaders, parents, and educators can now plan for the needed revisions.

School 2

Current Dashboard



With Growth



School 2 is on track to move kids and up to orange and then yellow and green, but without growth model data, programs may be abandoned because it's still red in year 2. The green level of growth tells decisionmakers to stay the course and double-down on programs that are working. School personnel, parents, and stakeholders are relieved that school is on track to succeed.