



C A P S O

# California Association of Private School Organizations

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March 17, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
California State Governor  
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom,

I write on behalf of the California Association of Private School Organizations, a statewide consortium of 24 service agencies and administrative units serving some 1,400 private schools enrolling approximately 370,000 pupils in grades K-12, inclusive.

At an hour of unprecedented challenge to the people of California, it was both reassuring and uplifting to observe the members of our legislature act as one to express confidence in your leadership in both word and deed. Our lawmakers succeeded in crafting and passing legislation with due dispatch, granting you both sweeping powers and the necessary accompanying appropriations to safeguard the people of the state from the dire public health threat we face. And this is but the beginning.

Among the actions taken by the Legislature, yesterday, was the appropriation of \$100 million to enable our state's public schools to purchase personal protective equipment and to pay for supplies and labor related to cleaning school sites. Given that a virus draws no distinction between public and private schools, commensurate consideration ought, surely, be extended to private schools, which educate 7.2 percent of all California students enrolled in grades K-12, inclusive. To assure a safe and healthy environment in every school when students return to campus, a sum of \$7.2 million should be made available for the cleaning of private school sites and the provision of related protections.

As is true of our public schools, California's private schools currently find themselves taking extraordinary measures – and incurring extraordinary expense – to assure continuity of instruction and other educational support services. Recognizing that the assumption of these costs is a consequence of compliance with public health requirements, we call upon the state to furnish private schools with emergency financial support for expenses related to the continuity of instruction during the period of emergency, proportionate to funds provided to public schools for the same purposes.

Should a fire occur at a private school, no legal question is raised regarding the provision of public assistance through the agency of a local fire department. Likewise, for the publicly funded protective services afforded by law enforcement agencies. When human lives and public health are at risk, the state has an obligation to protect its people, and to work hand-in-hand with those institutions and entities that have taken extraordinary measures to shoulder the burden.

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CAPSO is an affiliate of the Council for American Private Education

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It is a foregone conclusion that every private school in the state will be negatively impacted by the economic consequences of the current pandemic. Many will experience extreme financial duress. The question isn't *whether* a number of private schools will be forced to close, but *how many*. For every such closure, the state will incur additional expense. As a practical economic policy, it thus makes good sense for the state to take such temporary actions as are necessary to prevent the permanent closure of schools that, in the aggregate, save government *billions* of dollars a year. The assistance in question is extraordinary, rather than recurring.

Now more than ever California's private schools should be viewed as partners in the education of the public. As is true of our public schools, California's private schools are committed to safeguarding public health while maintaining continuity of high quality instruction and related educational services. With common commitments, shared determination and ample good will, we will rise to meet the current challenge, *together*.

Thank you for your leadership, and your consideration of our requests. Please call upon our association to be of assistance, now and in the future.

Sincerely,



Dr. Ron Reynolds  
Executive Director  
California Association of Private School Organizations

CC: Berit von Pohle, Pamela Lyons, Gil Graff, Stephanie Rynas, Raymond Burnell