



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

JUN 29 2020

To the Members of the California State Senate:

I am signing Senate Bill 98, which provides schools with the resources and flexibilities necessary to provide quality public education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Among other things, this bill protects school funding from uncertainties caused by COVID-19, including for schools that offer distance learning to accommodate public health and safety conditions.

The fiscal protections offered to schools by this measure are predicated on new standards for distance learning that prioritize quality instruction for all students. The preferred method of instruction will always be in-person; students gain the most from the relationships developed through in-person interactions. However, it is the expectation of the state that if a school offers hybrid or mixed-delivery instructional models, it will do so through a framework of maximum teacher-student engagement, with plans in place to ensure that no child falls through the cracks. This balance of flexibility for schools and instructional accountability is essential to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic while minimizing the impact of educational disruption on student learning.

While maintaining school funding at current levels allows for stability in the public education system, it does not take into account schools that had planned expansions. By not funding those expansions, families enrolled in those schools may be displaced, with impacts exacerbated by the uncertainties caused by COVID-19. I urge members of the Legislature to pursue targeted solutions to these potential disruptions, and will work with you in the coming weeks to enact them.

Sincerely,



Gavin Newsom

