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CHAIR: EDUCATION  
BUDGET  
PUBLIC EMPLOYEES, RETIREMENT AND  
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TRANSPORTATION

SUBCOMMITTEES  
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 2 ON  
EDUCATION FINANCE

SELECT COMMITTEE  
CHAIR: PORTS AND GOODS MOVEMENT

# Assembly California Legislature



**PATRICK O'DONNELL**  
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, SEVENTIETH DISTRICT

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March 17, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom, Governor  
State of California  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond, President  
California State Board of Education  
1430 N Street, Room 5111  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Tony Thurmond, Superintendent of Public Instruction  
California Department of Education  
1430 N Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom, Dr. Darling-Hammond, and Superintendent Thurmond,

Without a doubt, California school leaders are facing an unprecedented crisis. The COVID-19 Pandemic has already significantly impacted student instructional time while uncertainties remain for our students and communities over the next few months. In order to bring clarity to our schools, I urgently request that all state and federal requirements for assessment and accountability be paused for the current school year, and that the State Board of Education apply for statewide waivers from the U.S. Department of Education.

**Assessment:** Instructional time loss will likely be significant. When students return to school, we must take every opportunity to devote as much time to instruction as possible, rather than spending time on standardized assessments. Schools will be forced to extend the school year if standardized testing is not waived in order to both make up lost instructional time and test our students.

**Accountability:** During these extraordinary times, California's local educational agencies' primary focus should be on their school communities rather than federal measures of accountability.

I look forward to working with all of you in the coming weeks and months as we work together to reopen schools. Please contact Marguerite Ries, Senior Consultant, Assembly Committee on Education at 916-319-2087 or [marguerite.ries@asm.ca.gov](mailto:marguerite.ries@asm.ca.gov) if there is additional information my office may provide. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrick O'Donnell".

Patrick O'Donnell  
Chair, Assembly Committee on Education

