



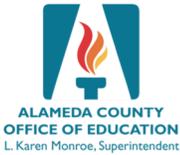
UPDATED AND AMENDED LETTER

June 5, 2015

Governor Jerry Brown  
c/o State Capitol, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Fax: (916) 558-3160



Senate President pro Tempore Kevin de León  
State Capitol, Room 205  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Fax: (916) 651-4924



Assembly Speaker Toni Atkins  
State Capitol  
P.O. Box 942849  
Sacramento, CA 94249  
Fax: (916) 319-2178



***SUPPORT FOR BUDGET REQUEST: \$30 Million Augmentation to Align the Foster Youth Services Program with the Local Control Funding Formula***



California Alliance  
OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

Dear Governor Brown, President pro Tempore de León, and Speaker Atkins,

We are a group of organizations invested in improving the educational outcomes of California’s estimated 60,000 foster youth. Children enter foster care when they have experienced abuse or neglect through no fault of their own. When this happens, the State becomes their parent and assumes responsibility for their safety, health, and well-being, including their educational success.



In 2013, California became the first state in the nation to prioritize the education of foster youth in a substantial way by creating an education finance and accountability system that supports the educational needs of students in foster care. However, today, many foster youth in California cannot access the education opportunities that can help them reach their college and career dreams. A recent review by SRI International of *Local Control and Accountability Plans developed by school districts found “slim evidence of districts’ attention to foster youth.” “School districts find themselves on still unfamiliar terrain,”* the authors wrote, and *“California still has a long way to go before it can guarantee that foster youth do not fall through cracks in the system.”*<sup>1</sup> To ensure that the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) is implemented effectively and fulfills the LCFF promise to students in foster care, we request a budget augmentation for California’s Foster Youth Services (FYS) program.



CHILDREN NOW



<sup>1</sup> Daniel C. Humphrey and Julia E. Koppich, Foster Youth and Early Implementation of the Local Control Funding Formula: Not Yet Making the Grade, SRI International and J. Koppich & Associates, 2015.



CWDA



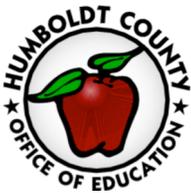
The Education Trust–West



GLENN COUNTY  
OFFICE of EDUCATION



Hillsides  
CREATING LASTING CHANGE



The inclusion of foster youth in the LCFF framework was an important acknowledgement that our foster children need targeted education supports to fulfill their potential. With over four decades of investment by the State, the FYS program is now well-positioned to coordinate those much-needed targeted supports. ***A \$30 million budget augmentation will allow the program to serve all foster youth and support implementation of LCFF.***

***In this current landscape, FYS is not being fully leveraged to support the successful and efficient implementation of LCFF for students in foster care.*** The FYS program and LCFF are currently misaligned in their definitions of “foster youth.” While the LCFF definition includes all foster youth with an open case, regardless of where they are placed, the FYS definition and funding are limited to foster youth placed in non-relative foster care settings such as group homes.<sup>2</sup> This misalignment is creating confusion for school districts and county offices of education. More importantly, it means that foster youth living with family members are not eligible or funded to receive supports provided by FYS programs.

Studies have found that foster youth fare better emotionally when placed with people they know, so over time we have placed more foster youth with relatives and provided services to their parents to keep families together, if appropriate. Unfortunately, studies have also found the educational outcomes of foster children living with relatives to be similar to those living in non-relative foster homes, significantly worse than the general student population and worse than other underserved student subgroups.<sup>3</sup>

In recognition of this fact, the LCFF definition includes all foster youth. The FYS program should be aligned with LCFF so that all foster children receive the educational supports they need, regardless of the type of foster placement in which they reside. This will fulfill the promise of LCFF and support a streamlined implementation structure for foster youth. Aligning FYS with LCFF requires changing the FYS definition of foster youth to match the LCFF definition of foster youth and increasing FYS funding by an additional \$30 million.

As California’s child welfare system shifts towards prioritizing family-based foster care settings, it is important that our education system keep up with the changes to placement priorities. The State’s children are served by many systems. To fully support foster children, we must encourage these systems to work in concert and coordination.

***We urge you to augment FYS by \$30 million and to align FYS with LCFF to ensure that all foster youth benefit from the promise of LCFF.*** We look forward to continuing to work together to improve the educational outcomes of foster youth. For more information, please contact Melissa San Miguel at [msanmiguel@youthlaw.org](mailto:msanmiguel@youthlaw.org).

<sup>2</sup> See Cal. Educ. Code § 42238.01 for the LCFF definition of foster youth and § 42921 for the FYS definition of foster youth.

<sup>3</sup> Kristine Frerer, Lauren Davis Sosenko, Robin R. Henke, At Greater Risk: California Foster Youth and the Path from High School to College, Stuart Foundation, 2013.



Sincerely,

ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS



CALIFORNIA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

ALAMEDA COUNTY COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES



ALAMEDA COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Los Angeles Area  
Chamber of Commerce

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES



CALIFORNIA PEACE ALLIANCE

CALIFORNIA YOUNG DEMOCRATS, LATINO CAUCUS

CALIFORNIA YOUTH CONNECTION

CHILDREN NOW



CHILDREN'S LAW CENTER OF CALIFORNIA

COMMUNITY COALITION OF SOUTHERN LOS ANGELES

Lifting Up What Works®



COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES OF LOS ANGELES



COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

EDUCATION TRUST—WEST



FOSTERCLUB

FAMILIES IN SCHOOLS



GLENN COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION, YOUTH DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

HILLSIDES



HUMBOLDT COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

JOHN BURTON FOUNDATION



LEGAL ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

LEGAL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

LOS ANGELES AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Allison Cruz  
MINOR'S COUNSEL OF SANTA CRUZ

MONTEREY COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

NATIONAL CENTER FOR YOUTH LAW

POLICYLINK

PUBLIC ADVOCATES

PUBLIC COUNSEL

READING AND BEYOND

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

TRINITY COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

YOUTH LAW CENTER

cc:

Senator Mark Leno  
Senator Ricardo Lara  
Senator Jim Nielsen

Assembly Member Shirley Weber  
Assembly Member Richard Bloom  
Assembly Member Melissa Melendez