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ACS A, CSBA and School Districts File Suit to Restore $2 Billion in Education Funding
2011-12 State Budget Violates Prop 98 Funding Guarantee

SACRAMENTO, CA—The Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), the California School Boards Association (CSBA) and state school districts today filed a lawsuit to restore more than $2 billion that had been designated for California public schools under the voter-approved Proposition 98 formula, but which was cut from the 2011-12 state budget.

“California schools and schoolchildren were shortchanged in this last budget cycle,” said CSBA President Martha Fluor. “The cuts to education in the 2011-12 state budget are clearly unconstitutional, and the goal of the lawsuit is to ensure that the minimum funding guarantee for California public schools is calculated correctly.”

Before signing the 2011-2012 state budget, Governor Brown and the Legislature decided to bypass Prop 98’s constitutional guarantee for education funding by diverting the money owed to California schools and schoolchildren toward other budget items.

Because there is no concrete obligation to backfill this shortfall in education funding, school leaders are taking matters into their own hands.

Alice Petrossian, president of ACSA, acknowledged budget challenges and said, “We recognize that the Governor and lawmakers worked together to develop a state budget that avoided deeper cuts to some public services in the short-term. However, the enacted budget’s hodgepodge of ifs and maybes shortchanges students and flies in the face of the Constitution’s formula for funding our public schools.”

Carlos A. Garcia, superintendent of San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), agreed.

“We can’t fund schools with promises,” said Garcia. “It’s important to have stable funding for schools in order to assure that students get the quality of instruction they need to be successful in life. Recent budget cuts have made this a real challenge by shortening the school year and wiping out vital programs and services. Students, parents and teachers deserve better.”

Approved by voters in 1988, Prop 98 guarantees a minimum level of state funding for California public schools.

The more than $2 billion owed to schools under Prop 98 for the 2011-12 year would provide nearly $10,000 per classroom to help restore smaller class size, arts education, libraries, sports and other essential programs to local schools.

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