

April 4, 2019

The Honorable Patrick O'Donnell, Chair
Assembly Education Committee
1020 N Street, Room 159
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez, Chair
Assembly Appropriations Committee
State Capitol Room 2114
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 428 (Medina, et al.) as Introduced
Position: Support

Dear Assembly Member O'Donnell and Assembly Member Gonzalez:

On behalf of Davis Joint Unified School District, we are writing to express support for Assembly Bill (AB) 428, which would significantly address Special Education funding issues in the state for its most vulnerable student population—children with disabilities. This bill was heard by the Assembly Education Committee on March 13, 2019.

We concur with several of the findings contained in the 2015 California Special Education Task Force report and recommendations from the Legislative Analyst's Office, which acknowledge the significant Special Education program fiscal challenges faced by school agencies and provide recommendations and actions to improve the system and student outcomes. Both reports include these undisputable facts:

- Special Education expenditures have increased faster than Special Education funding
- Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) base rates are not equitable throughout the state
- The state needs to better support local infant and preschool Special Education programs

AB 428 would address several of these key fiscal issues, including addressing Special Education funding equity by:

- Leveling up base AB 602 funding rates to the 95th percentile over a five-year period
- Establishing a funding formula within AB 602 for programs serving preschoolers with disabilities

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- Amending the current AB 602 formula to allow school districts the ability to calculate a declining enrollment adjustment based on individual school district average daily attendance (ADA) instead of aggregated SELPA ADA

Additionally, AB 428 provides a mechanism within AB 602 that provides additional funding for students with significant high-cost disabilities.

All school agencies grapple with increasing mandated Special Education expenditures and decreasing state and federal funding. We believe the changes proposed in AB 428 would assist every school agency to help them meet the educational needs of students with disabilities.

Therefore, we strongly support AB 428, and ask for your support as it makes its way through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

Bob Poppenga, Board President

John A. Bowes, Ed D., Superintendent

cc : Members, Assembly Education Committee
Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee