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**California Department of Education
News Release**

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State Superintendent Tony Thurmond Announces Support for Bill that Helps Fund Schools Equitably, Addresses Absenteeism and Truancy

SACRAMENTO—State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond and Senator Anthony J. Portantino (D-La Cañada Flintridge) today joined state school leaders and partners to urge support of a bill that would inject new funding into schools using a more equitable funding calculation and finance efforts to address chronic absenteeism and truancy.

Senate Bill (SB) 830, co-sponsored by State Superintendent Thurmond, would augment California's education funding system, which is now based on average attendance with additional funding based on average enrollment. This modification would help schools be funded more equitably and help schools struggling with absenteeism—and all schools—receive the financial support they need to recover from the pandemic and thrive in the future.



"With the pandemic already causing so many difficulties across schools and in people's lives, the last thing that should happen is for schools to face additional economic uncertainty," said State Superintendent Thurmond. "SB 830 gives districts predictability on how they receive funding and gives them important resources to address what has been one of our most perplexing challenges: dealing with chronic absenteeism in ways we have not yet seen before. It will put students and schools on a better path to further close opportunity and education gaps."

California is one of six states that does not consider enrollment figures for determining state aid to school districts. Districts currently plan their budgets and expend funds based on enrollment but receive funds based on attendance. For example, if a school district enrolls 100 students but their attendance rate is 95%, the school district must still prepare as if 100 students will attend class every day. As such, school districts do not receive funding if a student does not attend school on any given day despite having fixed educational, programmatic, and operational costs.

“The state is looking at a historic surplus, and this change would inject \$3 billion into public education,” said Senator Portantino, the bill’s author. “This is a modest change given the dollar amounts we’re looking at in this budget, but it’s a historic change. We have traditionally funded education based on attendance, and that has been historically unfair to districts. I look at this bill and this proposal as something that deals with the present situation as well as five years from now and 10 years from now. It creates that stability in the present and for the future.”

“Enrollment-based funding, commonly known as average daily membership, is the student counting method most states use to count students because it allocates funds equitably based on the actual number of students each school must be prepared to serve,” said Shane Dishman, President of the California School Employees Association. “At least 50% of the additional funds allocated under this bill are dedicated to addressing absenteeism by providing additional services and support.”

“We know that attendance in school is critical because a student has to be in class to learn, but when students are facing trauma, economic uncertainty, or dangerous routes to school, the simple act of showing up to class isn’t so simple,” said Kelly Gonez, President of the Los Angeles Unified School District’s Board of Education. “School districts like L.A. Unified, with large numbers of students in historically underserved communities, face high levels of chronic absenteeism, and that absenteeism means that our schools receive less funding just when our students need more resources and supports to address these root cause issues.”

Read the full text of the bill on the [California State Legislature SB-830 web page](#) . An archived broadcast of the full press conference can be viewed on the [CDE Facebook page](#) .

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