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July 13, 2022

Jeremy Anderson, President
Education Commission of the States
700 Broadway #810
Denver, CO 80203-3460

RE: Frank Newman Award for State Innovation

Dear President Anderson:

It has come to my attention that the Education Commission of the States is awarding the State of California with the Frank Newman Award for State Innovation "in recognition of its coordinated approach to educating all students...as well as its historic financial investments."

While it is true that California is now spending more than it ever has on education, and over doubled spending in the past decade, these investments have not improved outcomes for students.

As it stands today, California has the lowest literacy rate of any state and its 8th graders are performing at a 5th grade level in math. Even before the pandemic California consistently ranked near the bottom nationally in academic test scores and had an abysmal achievement gap. Only 39 percent of low-income seventh graders met or exceeded ELA standards and only 20 percent of low-income students met or exceeded math standards.

To make matters worse, California then imposed the longest school closures of any state and was the last to get kids back to the classroom. As a result, students are now suffering from crippling learning loss. In LAUSD, the state's largest school district, it is estimated that students lost an average of 22 weeks of learning in math and 18 weeks of learning in reading. It is no wonder enrollment in California is declining at an alarming rate.

Across California, there are parents, teachers, and other education leaders working tirelessly – and indeed innovating – to help students succeed. It is their efforts that should be celebrated, not those of a state government that so often stands in their way.

When considering future award recipients, I urge your organization to consider data driven academic outcomes rather than measuring success based solely on the amount of dollars spent.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Kiley", written over a light blue horizontal line.

KEVIN KILEY
Assemblyman, 6th District