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Statement from John Affeldt, Managing Attorney, Public Advocates, on EdSource/Learning Policy Institute Poll on California Teacher Shortage:

“The poll released today affirms that voters understand what the Brown Administration thus far has not—that the State itself has an overarching duty to maintain the quality of its teaching force. This duty flows both from a constitutional obligation and common sense. The state is supposed to make sure every student has the same opportunity as any other. To help improve teacher quality the state could adopt loan forgiveness, make grants, encourage salary increases and adopt other incentives to rebuild the teacher pipeline. The State can and must play a prominent role but, sadly, to date the Brown Administration has shirked that duty under its mantra of local control.”

Background on State's Recent Failures to Address Teacher Supply

The poll released today affirms that voters understand what the Brown Administration thus far has not—that the State itself has an overarching duty to maintain the quality of

its teaching force. This duty flows not only from common sense but from the constitutional obligation of the State to ensure basic equality of educational opportunity.

We have been disheartened to see a number of signs that Governor Brown and his Administration does not recognize that the State is uniquely positioned to improve the supply and distribution of quality teachers across California. Among these:

- Some State Board of Education members declared in July that teacher quality issues are a matter for local districts, not the state, to address;
- the Governor vetoed funding in 2011 for a statewide teacher data system (CALTIDES) without which it is unable to detect, correct and prevent an array of teacher quality supply and individual classroom assignment issues in a timely manner;
- the Governor declined to support an Assembly bill this year to initiate a new loan program for teacher candidates, and
- the Governor rejected a bill this year that would have ensured all districts provide the initial induction supports that has been show effective in retaining new teachers.

The growing teacher shortage will again disproportionately hit low-income students, English Learners, students with disabilities, and students of color the hardest. The state must address this

statewide crisis head-on, not wait for local districts to solve it. At a minimum, the State should take the following steps to address the teacher shortage:

- Adoption of loan forgiveness, grants, and other incentives which have in the past helped attract new teachers particularly to hard-to-staff schools and districts. The state needs, aggressively, to return to such programs to rebuild its teacher pipeline before shortages become even more acute.
- Support to districts for increasing teacher salaries. The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) when fully implemented in 2020-21 will only get the State back to its 2007-08 level of funding, adjusted for inflation, when California was 44th out of 50 states. Due to high labor costs, we are routinely 50th out of 50 in terms of adult-to-student ratios, meaning larger class sizes, fewer social workers, psychologists, nurses, counselors, librarians and administrators to support and more stressed teachers.
- Requiring districts to continue and to fund California's former marquee teacher induction program for new teachers (BTSA), instead of leaving the decision to offer BTSA up to a patchwork of local district decisions;
- Reestablish efforts to build a comprehensive teacher quality information system to enable the State to assess the quality of its teaching force as a whole, spot trends that require state or local policy responses, and correct unlawful classroom assignments in a timely manner.

The devolution of many aspects of educational decision-making under LCFF does not erase the ongoing fundamental role of the State to fulfill its overarching teacher quality and equality obligations. California's voters seem to understand this. Hopefully, this poll will help the Governor understand it too.

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