



April 20, 2017

By electronic mail

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

RE: AB 1661 (Limón) – Support As Amended April 17, 2017

Dear Assembly Member O'Donnell:

Public Advocates and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) support AB 1661 to align the Education Code with the changes California has made from using a test-based school accountability system and the Academic Performance Index (API) to a multiple measures accountability system.

Public Advocates and the ACLU have served as key voices for educational equity and fought for high-need students in California to have access to resources for a meaningful opportunity for college and career readiness. As counsel in *Williams v. California*, we sought to ensure that all students are (1) taught by properly assigned teachers, (2) have access to sufficient instructional materials to use in class and take home, and (3) are educated in facilities that are not a threat to their health or safety. The settlement in *Williams* is memorialized in the Education Code.

The Legislature and Governor Brown reaffirmed the importance of the *Williams* standards and accountability systems in the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) statutes and budget provisions. The instructional materials, facilities and teacher standards were enshrined in the first state priority, and funding for the county office of education responsibilities was rolled up into the LCFF allocations. In addition, the statutes governing district self-checks and county office visits were revised to ensure they would continue post-LCFF. As a result, teaching and learning conditions have continued to improve.¹

Consistent with our long-standing support for California's transition to a single, coherent school accountability and continuous improvement system, we support AB 1661 as amended to integrate the *Williams* site visits and teacher assignment reviews by the county office of

¹ See, e.g.,

http://decentschools.org/settlement/Williams_v_California_Lessons_From_Nine_Years_Of_Implementation.pdf.

education into the evolving LCFF-based system. However, we and our allies in the LCFF Equity Coalition have expressed our concerns to the State Board of Education and CDE about the methodology they are proposing to identify schools in need of support and assistance in the evolving school accountability system. We are hopeful that the Board and Department will be responsive. Contingent upon the final decisions on this yet-to-be-determined methodology, we endorse moving to a single, coherent equity-based accountability system and want to work together to ensure it becomes a reality.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you wish to discuss our position further.

Sincerely,



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Katherine Sher
Legislative Advocate
The American Civil Liberties Union
of California
The Center for Advocacy and Policy

Cc: Assembly Education Committee
Assembly Member Monique Limón