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March 23, 2017

The Honorable Ben Allen
Chair, Senate Education Committee
State Capitol, Room 2083
Sacramento, California 95814

Via electronic mail

RE: SB 527 (Galgiani) – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Allen:

Public Advocates supports SB 527 (Galgiani), the proposal to increase the home-to-school (HTS) transportation funding in the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) by a cost-of-living adjustment.

Public Advocates is a civil rights legal organization that has served as a key voice for educational equity in landmark cases such as *Serrano v. Priest* and *Williams v. California*. Our commitment to “making rights real” shapes our vision of building an educational system that empowers marginalized communities and provides meaningfully equal access to opportunities, regardless of background. At the forefront of this work are efforts to ensure equitable state funding for schools so that the needs of all students, especially those with high-needs, are sufficiently met. Public Advocates, along with our community partners, have been early and vocal supports of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) since it was proposed in 2012. We worked closely with Governor Brown to ensure that fiscal accountability is implemented with the plan. To make real the promise of quality education, we continue in our work to shape local spending decisions in ways that promote student achievement for all, including low-income, minority, English Learners, and foster youth.

Much work remains ahead to ensure that California’s school funding is not only fair, but also used properly to address the needs of our disadvantaged students. Home-to-School (HTS) transportation funding was not addressed in the LCFF legislation when it was enacted in 2013. It was a budget provision and the lack of time resulted in the issue being put off. The decision was made to simply add on to LEA allocations the same amount they had previously been receiving for transportation, with the understanding it would continue to be used for that purpose. In the five years since that happened, that transportation adjustment has not received a cost-of-living adjustment, despite obvious increases in personnel, insurance, fuel, and other expenses. Until a fuller review of

transportation funding can be undertaken, we respectfully request that this funding be kept at least in line with the cost of living.

For these reasons, we support SB 527. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about our position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Liz Guillen".

Liz Guillen
Director of Legislative & Community Affairs
(916) 803-5596 – cell

Cc: Senate Education Committee
Senator Cathleen Galgiani
Tia Nguyen