



CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

TOM TORLAKSON

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

February 25, 2013

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-221, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-230, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Speaker Boehner, Minority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader Pelosi:

Without Congressional intervention, automatic budget cuts from sequestration will take effect on March 1. After years of extensive state and federal budget cuts to education, these cuts will devastate communities across California. Struggling families and children are going to incur the greatest impact of the cuts; the least capable individuals to make up such a severe loss. These automatic cuts will cause long-lasting and irreparable harm.

Even with the modifications and delays enacted through the American Taxpayer Relief Act, sequestration cuts would represent a \$262 million funding reduction to California's federal education program, resulting in a funding cut of \$91 million for Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which is intended to improve education for disadvantaged students. Funding for programs that serve the needs of students with disabilities would also be impacted. The state would lose \$72 million in federal special education funding. Federal funding for public charter schools would be cut by \$2.8 million, and funding for Career and Technical Education would be cut by \$6.9 million. Programs devoted to the needs of English Learners would see their federal funds cut by \$9.6 million. And California students in federally impacted school districts, including children of our active duty service members, would see cuts of \$3.7 million to programs like Impact Aid.

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Further, these cuts come at a time when California has just begun a recovery from state-level cuts of over \$20 billion to education spending over the last five years. The California Department of Education, school districts, and local educational agencies will need to find ways to cut costs even further under sequestration. This could result in school closures; teacher and administrator layoffs; increased student-teacher ratios; the elimination of college counselors and school-based mental health personnel; and deferred purchases, renovations, and repairs. These cuts would come at a crucial time in a student's life. Many of these students may never make up the lost ground.

While some federal agencies, like the U.S. Department of Education, have taken steps to cushion the blow of automatic cuts, including delaying the effect of sequestration for some programs, Californians will begin to see the impact of cuts almost immediately. School funding for programs like Impact Aid will be reduced immediately.

Many of our students may already be seeing the effects of sequestration. As school districts and other agencies work to prepare for the worst-case scenario, they will begin issuing pink slips this March.

I strongly urge you to work together. Pass legislation immediately that would repeal sequestration and replace devastating automatic cuts with a well-reasoned, balanced spending plan. Sequestration and a delay in acting on these cuts will only hurt our hard-working families and their communities.

If I can be of any assistance in this process, or if you have questions on this matter, please contact Erika Webb-Hughes, Federal Policy Liaison, Government Affairs Division, by phone at 916-319-0821 or by e-mail at ehughes@cde.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Tom Torlakson

TT:ewh

cc: The Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United States
California U.S. Congressional Delegation