Sample Letter of Support- Request for Emergency Funding for School Behavioral Health Supports

[Organization Letterhead]

Cc: jmoran@childrenspartnership.org

[DATE]

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| The Honorable Gavin NewsomGovernor, State of CaliforniaState Capitol, 1st FloorSacramento, CA 95814The Honorable Toni AtkinsPresident Pro Tempore of California State SenateState Capitol, Room 205Sacramento, CA 95814 | The Honorable Anthony RendonSpeaker of California State AssemblyState Capitol, Room 219Sacramento, CA 95814 |
|  The Honorable Holly MitchellChair, Committee on Budget and Fiscal ReviewCalifornia State SenateState Capitol, Room 5050Sacramento, CA 95814 | The Honorable Phil TingChair, Committee on BudgetCalifornia State AssemblyState Capitol, Room 6026Sacramento, CA 95814 |

## **Re: Request for $20 Million in Emergency Funding for Behavioral Health Supports for Students, Teachers, and School Staff - SUPPORT**

Dear Governor Newsom:

The [ORGANIZATION NAME] is pleased to support the request for $20 million in emergency funding for behavioral health supports for students, teachers, and school staff. As detailed in the letter submitted by Assemblymember Chu on April 20th, we must ensure that our state response to the COVID-19 pandemic prioritizes the mental health of California’s early learners, students and educators.

[ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION]

California, and the entire country, is in the midst of a youth mental health crisis as rates of depression, suicide, and self-harm among young people have increased in recent years. Children under age 5 are facing significant mental health risks during this pandemic - at a critical period where the brain is most rapidly developing and is most at risk from trauma and adverse childhood experiences. With the added stress—and for many, trauma—of this pandemic, it is even more critical to ensure that every student in California has access to mental and behavioral health services.

This emergency funding would help equip our schools and early learning centers with additional resources and tools in order to address the impacts this crisis is having on the mental health of students and educators. Schools are essential to the social and emotional health of children, and their closure has and will continue to have far reaching implications for their health and wellbeing. These additional resources will help schools provide behavioral health supports to their students, ultimately helping families navigate this crisis and its aftermath.

Of the $20 million requested, $19.7 million would be allocated to school districts across the state to increase the number of mental health professions and support personnel on campuses, contract with mental health navigation/concierge services to assist families and staff free of charge, and expand the capacity of schools to deliver mental and behavioral health services via telehealth. The remaining $300,000 would be dedicated to implementing AB 2315 (Quirk-Silva) in order to strengthen the availability of telehealth services on school campuses. Sponsored by The Children’s Partnership and enacted in 2018, this bill directed the Department of Education to develop guidelines for school-based mental and behavioral health care provided via telehealth, care that is especially relevant during times of crisis like what we are experiencing with COVID-19.

[INSERT PERSONAL IMPORTANCE AND/OR STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH STORIES]

For these reasons, [ORGANIZATION] is pleased to support and asks that you approve the $20 million request in SB 89 emergency funding for behavioral health support for students, teachers, and school staff.

Sincerely,

[INSERT NAME, TITLE, & AFFILIATION]

Cc: Members, Assembly Budget Committee

 Members, Senate Budget Committee

Assemblymember Kansen Chu

Tony Thurmond, State Superintendent, California Department of Education

Keely Martin Bosler, Director, California Department of Finance