



## CALIFORNIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

David A. Sanchez  
**President**

August 3, 2009

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**Vice President**

Gail M. Mendes  
**Secretary-Treasurer**

Arne Duncan, Secretary of Education  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202

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Dear Secretary Duncan,

It was so good to meet with you in your office in May. As I said, it was the first time CTA leaders had been invited to meet with the Secretary of Education and we appreciate your willingness to listen to educators. I was also glad you were able to attend and hear from educators from across the country at the NEA Representative Assembly in San Diego. Such dialogue is critical to stay connected to what is happening in our classrooms.

The 340,000 members of the California Teachers Association share your goal of quality public schools for all children and a quality teacher in every classroom. It's why in California, CTA has led efforts over the past several years to bring support to lower-performing schools. In fact, it was a CTA study back in 2001 that exposed the challenges these schools face and led to several different programs to help close achievement gaps. Unfortunately, some of those programs lost funding this year as the state cut more than \$18 billion from our public schools. The federal stimulus money will play an important role in offsetting some of these budget cuts. Thank you and President Obama for including education as part of the federal stimulus package.

We also share your commitment to providing quality data systems to help improve student learning, effective instructional strategies and professional development. Unfortunately, there seems to be confusion about how the data systems work in California.

California law does not prohibit linking student and teacher data. In fact, **the data is already linked at the local level.** Many school districts currently use effective data systems and soon all districts will have that capability when the state's CALPADS system becomes operational. You and President Obama have often hailed the success of the data system operating in Garden Grove and it is a great example of how California's data system is already working.

Carolyn Doggett  
**Executive Director**

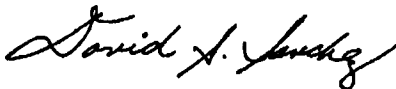
California law also does not prohibit the use of student assessment results in the evaluation of teachers. Many districts include it as one component of the evaluation. This may be the heart of the confusion. CTA joins the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the California Secretary of Education in saying that the evaluation of teachers should remain at the local level (see attached letter). That is a function of the local school district – not the state legislature. Therefore, there is no need to create another level of state bureaucracy to link student and teacher data. All data functions you are requesting exist at the local level, where they belong.

As we shared with you in May, CTA does object to the use of a single test score to pay or evaluate teachers. It is simply not fair or constructive. There must be multiple measures in determining student achievement, as well as evaluating educators. President Obama said these same words in his speech on July 24. We all certainly learned with No Child Left Behind that one size does not fit all students.

If we can better clarify how California's data system operates, or if you have any questions, please let me know. It would be a shame to let confusion deprive the more than 6 million children in California public schools of the opportunity to be eligible for additional federal funding. We look forward to commenting on all of the *Race to the Top* requirements.

I will end with again inviting you to join CTA in visiting schools in California where educators are taking many innovative approaches to improve student learning and close achievement gaps.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David A. Sanchez".

David A. Sanchez  
CTA President

Attachments  
cc: Jo Anderson, Jr.

DAS/BZ/lem