



April 2, 2025

The Honorable Scott Wiener
Chair, Senate Budget Committee
1021 O Street, Room 8620
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Jesse Gabriel
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
1021 O Street, Room 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Roger Niello
Vice Chair, Senate Budget Committee
1021 O Street, Room 7110
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Heath Flora
Vice Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
1021 O Street, Room 4730
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable John Laird
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee #1
1021 O Street, Room 8720
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable David A. Alvarez
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #3
1021 O Street, Room 5320
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Retain Support for the Golden State Teacher Grant Programs and Investment in the Teacher and Administrator Workforce Pipeline

Dear Members of the Legislature:

On behalf of the AICCU Education Deans and Directors Council, thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to ensuring every student has access to a well-prepared and effective teacher. As you consider Governor Newsom's January budget proposal, we urge you to **retain the \$50 million allocation for the Golden State Teacher Grant (GSTG)**, a critical investment in California's teacher workforce, school counselor, and administrator pipelines and the future of our K-12 schools.

With 43 colleges and schools of education, independent nonprofit colleges are well-positioned throughout the state to recruit, educate, and place well-prepared teachers into high need classrooms. As a sector, we award 44.3% of the teacher credentials in the state, and the majority (57%) of those enrolled in our programs identify as non-white. Since the program's inception, our programs have worked closely with financial aid offices to maximize the efficacy and utilization of the GSTG program for our students. To date, over 11,000 students enrolled at our colleges and universities have benefitted from this program. We commend the Legislature and Newsom Administration for the shared belief in the program.

As you know, California is facing a severe and ongoing teacher shortage, one that is especially acute in high-need subject areas and in schools serving the state's highest-poverty communities. Recruiting and retaining educators in these schools has long been a challenge, and the post-pandemic environment has only deepened the crisis. The rising cost of living, limited financial aid options, and the burden of student debt all contribute to a shrinking pipeline of new teachers, particularly for the schools that need them most.

The **GSTG has emerged as one of the most effective strategies to address this challenge.** By offering financial support to aspiring teachers who commit to serving in high-need schools and subject areas, GSTG directly targets the shortage where it is most severe. The program provides up to \$10,000 to candidates in approved credential programs who agree to teach at a priority school, typically those with high concentrations of students from low-income families, higher levels of staff turnover, and the greatest unmet instructional needs.

This model works. GSTG reduces the financial barriers that prevent many diverse, low-income, and first-generation college graduates from entering the profession. It not only expands access to teacher preparation programs but also ensures that those who receive the grant are placed in the highest-poverty schools, the very schools where high-quality, committed teachers are most urgently needed.

Moreover, the grant's service requirement increases the likelihood that these new teachers will remain in the classroom beyond the critical first few years, improving both teacher retention and student outcomes in our most underserved communities. By aligning financial support with a commitment to high-need schools, GSTG is doing exactly what California needs: building a more equitable and sustainable teacher workforce and administrative services pipelines.

The \$50 million proposed in the governor's budget proposal is essential to keep the program operating and to ensure that teacher preparation institutions and school districts can continue to use GSTG as a recruitment tool, particularly in communities that have historically struggled to attract and retain qualified teachers.

We understand the state is facing fiscal constraints, but this modest, targeted investment will have a lasting impact. **Retaining this funding means more highly qualified teachers in our highest-poverty schools and more students receiving the quality education they deserve.**

We also urge the Legislature to continue working toward a longer-term solution that ensures sustained support for teacher candidates and allows California to address the systemic inequities in access to well-prepared educators.

On behalf of the undersigned programs and institutions, we thank you for your leadership and urge you to continue funding this important program by supporting the proposed \$50 million investment in the state budget.

Sincerely,

 **ALDER** GRADUATE
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Heather Kirkpatrick, CEO and President
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