



Honorable Kevin McCarty,  
Chair  
Assembly Subcommittee on Education

Honorable John Laird  
Chair  
Senate Subcommittee on Education

Honorable Al Muratsuchi  
Chair  
Assembly Education Committee

Honorable Connie Leyva  
Chair  
Senate Education Committee

Honorable Jose Medina  
Chair  
Assembly Higher Education Committee

Mr. Chris Ferguson  
Program Budget Manager, Education  
Department of Finance

Mr. Paul Steenhausen  
Legislative Analysts Office

**RE: Adult Education Funding Concerns**

On November 16, 2022 California Council for Adult Education (CCAEE) and California Adult Education Administrators Association (CAEAA) sent a letter to you expressing concerns about adult education program coordination and suggesting changes to adult education funding. We are an organization of adult school students, teachers, and community supporters, and we would like to call attention to another problem with the California Adult Education Program (CAEP) – the fact that under CAEP, state funding for Older Adults programs in K-12 adult schools was eliminated. The arguments for defunding these programs were appallingly ageist, and policymakers ignored a large body of research proving that programs that keep elders socially, physically and mentally engaged actually save the state money by significantly improving the health of participants. In California, one quarter of the population will be over the age of 60 in a few short years. The state's failure to fund educational programs for older Californians is unacceptable and must be corrected.

Under the CAEP system, a statewide network of educational services for California's vulnerable older adult population was destroyed, with most areas losing these services altogether. In the few areas where some services survived, they were severely reduced, and in most cases could only survive by beginning to charge students money. Thus, even those older adults who lived in one of the few areas where Older Adults education survived lost access to services if they were among the 45% of older adults in California who live below the poverty line. As a result, isolation, which puts older adults at increased risk for disability and can ultimately kill, increased in California.

The state's decision to defund Older Adults education programs was woefully short-sighted. Californians over 60 are the fastest growing portion of the state's population; by 2030, 10.8 million Californians will fall into this demographic. In recognition of this demographic shift, the state recently adopted a bold masterplan for aging. In furtherance of this plan, the state should restore funding for programs for older adults offered through the state's adult school system. Educational opportunities for adults are an integral part of healthy aging, combating isolation, providing mental and physical stimulation, and giving seniors access to information that allows them to take control of their lives. When Older

Adults education is offered through K-12 school districts, it can also offer unique opportunities for inter-generational learning and give seniors an ongoing stake in their local school district after their children are grown up and no longer in school.

Restoring state funding for adult school Older Adults programs would support every facet of the Masterplan for Aging. Seniors need to master technology so they can access services like affordable housing and transportation; adult schools can offer computer courses designed specifically for elders. Seniors need to exercise to maintain good health and mobility; adult schools can offer exercise classes that meet their particular needs. Seniors need information about how

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to avoid scams and manage their finances; adult schools can provide workshops and classes to help them. Adult schools are very flexible, and can offer any kind of instruction that is needed to support Older Adults students.

As CCAE and CAEAA have pointed out, the CAEP system is in need of reform and improvement. In addition to the improvements CCAE and CAEAA suggest, we respectfully request that you also consider restoring funding for Older Adults education through CAEP. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

CC: Honorable Tony Thurmond, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education  
Honorable Daisy Gonzales, Interim Chancellor, California Community College Chancellor's Office  
Members, Community Colleges Board of Governors  
Association of Community and Continuing Education (ACCE)  
Sonya Ramirez, President, CCAE  
John Werner, President, CAEAA