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## **FUND ALL KIDS COALITION FORMS TO FIGHT STATE EFFORT TO DEFUND THE EDUCATION OF 52,800 CALIFORNIA STUDENTS**

*Coalition Unites to Urge Governor Newsom and State Legislature to release over \$542 million in state funding that is currently not following the students*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Families with children at four growing public school organizations across the state announced today that they’ve launched a new coalition called Fund All Kids ([www.fundallkids.org](http://www.fundallkids.org)), after filing a lawsuit against the State of California and Governor Gavin Newsom, among others last month. The lawsuit, *Samaiya Atkins v. State of California*, challenges the constitutionality of SB-98, the state budget deal that was recently signed into law.

The coalition, which is referring to the deal as the Student Defunding Law, noted that the state’s actions harm any growing public school, including an estimated 3,500 traditional public and over 450 public charter schools, and will deeply strain the budgets of many of these growing school districts and public schools this fall. The state’s actions also allow schools that are losing students to keep the funding for students they are no longer educating, under a perverse incentive.

The Student Defunding Law froze student funding at pre-pandemic attendance levels as of this February. This means that any student who has chosen another public school since then will have zero dollars follow them to the public school of their choice, and without a fix, their education will be defunded. The Fund All Kids coalition estimates that this will affect the education funding of over 52,800 students across California, withholding a total of over \$542 million in public funding intended to follow the students.

“The state’s actions violate the constitutional right of my students to a free and equitable public education and our political leaders need to take immediate action to correct this situation,” said Margaret Fortune, president and CEO of Fortune School, where five of the student plaintiffs are enrolled. “Our school community is over 90 percent Black and Latino and 82 percent low-income. Defunding these children’s education and calling it equity is a slap in the face to their parents who have chosen their child’s school for a good reason. State funding should follow the child to the school that is educating them. That’s what’s fair and right.”

“At issue, is a constitutional matter of equity and justice, under the law. It is the constitutional right in California of every child to receive a free, public education,” said Dr. Dean Forman, Ph.D., founder of John Adams Academy, where seven of the student plaintiffs are enrolled. “That education cannot be held hostage or hijacked by an incomplete or arbitrary funding model. Anything less than full funding of every child is unacceptable.”

The Fund All Kids coalition also launched online [petitions](#) in English and in Spanish, urging Governor Newsom and the state Legislature to quickly remedy the unconstitutional problem they created. As of this date, the petitions have gathered over 38,000 signatures.

The Fund All Kids coalition is led by the lawsuit plaintiffs, including 19 public school students attending [John Adams Academy](#), [Fortune School](#), [Voices College-Bound Language Academies](#) and [Sycamore](#)

[Creek Community Charter School](#). These four public school systems, who between them will be growing by 1,397 students this fall whose educations will not be paid for, also report having 2,872 students on their wait lists and unable to get in this year. Approximately \$14.3 million will be withheld from these public schools this fall.

### **About Fund All Kids**

Fund All Kids came together this August, united in the belief that all children are guaranteed equal education rights and opportunities under California's constitution and to fight the looming negative impact of SB-98, the Student Defunding Law, which punishes children and families who are leaving poor-performing schools for better education opportunities—and perversely rewards schools for no longer educating students. [www.fundallkids.org](http://www.fundallkids.org)

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