

# Monterey County Office of Education

*Leadership, Support, and Service to Prepare All Students for Success*

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*Dr. Deneen Guss  
County Superintendent of Schools*

Governor Gavin Newsom  
c/o State Capitol, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

April 22, 2019

Dear Governor Newsom,

Despite boasting the fifth-largest economy in the world and the highest gross domestic product of any state, California sits near the bottom nationally in nearly every significant measure of school funding and school staffing. The Monterey County Office of Education and its 24 school districts are writing to implore you to increase K-12 funding to the national funding average.

Adjusted for cost of living:

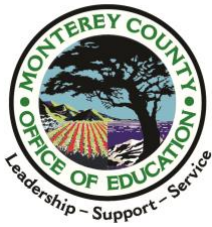
- California ranks 41st in per-pupil funding
- 45th in the percentage of taxable income spent on education
- 45th in student-teacher ratios, and 48th in staff per student.
- In Monterey County, our cost of living index (194.3 overall and 416.2 for housing) is well above the national average (100).

With the average annual in-state college tuition in California at \$13,947, education is becoming unaffordable for teachers. Our teachers are paying this rate for four, or often five years of higher education. In addition, they are paying the costs of teacher preparation programs, certification programs to obtain a credential and required tests. After meeting these rigorous, and expensive, requirements to enter the teaching field, many of our teachers are arriving in the system with debts totaling hundreds of thousands of dollars.

In Monterey County, our median home cost is \$778,300, but our average teacher salary is only \$66,386.92. This salary is not providing our teachers enough money to rent an apartment, even less, to own their own home. In order to live and work in Monterey County, many of our teachers are working second jobs to meet their financial obligations. This is a tragedy for our public school system and a disrespect to our highly-qualified teachers.

We must pay our school teachers and staff a fair wage. Under-funding our K-12 education system leads to difficult decisions by administration and boards of education who very much support and appreciate the work of all school employees, but are in a precarious situation where their first responsibility is to balance budgets. Over the last several years, many of our districts have been faced with tremendous budget cuts, resulting in not only the elimination of school and district staff members, but the complete inability to provide additional compensation. Due to a lack of Full and Fair Funding, we are unable to provide teachers and employees with the compensation they deserve.

Our schools and staff members are also consistently being asked to do more with less. Our classrooms and offices provide support for a student's academic, physical, and socio-emotional needs. Our students' needs vary greatly, including special education needs, students experiencing homelessness, hunger, violence and so much more. Without



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additional funding, essential programs, that used to be standard in California schools (art, music, physical education, etc.) are being eliminated to try and meet our students' most basic needs.

Our districts are facing significant fiscal pressures that destabilize the budget and force reductions. Among these fiscal pressures are rising employee pension costs, increasing employee health care costs, increasing special education program and transportation costs, and costs associated with recruiting, retaining and training effective teachers.

The State Legislature pension contribution rates through CalSTRS and CalPERS are rising dramatically. In 2013-14, the rates were 8.25 percent for CalSTRS and 11.44 percent for CalPERS. Now, in 2019-20, these rates will be 20.7 percent and 17.1 percent respectively. These rate increases cost districts millions more for both STRS and PERS without any associated increases in state revenue.

In meeting the variety of unique needs for our special education population, approximately one in ten children in California's public schools, we are grossly underfunded. For the 2017-18 year in Monterey County, special education expenditures totaled \$133,190,770 while federal revenue only accounted for \$11,728,227 and state revenue \$31,930,630. This is a shortfall of \$89,531,913, where districts must make a local "contribution" from their unrestricted general funds (encroachment) in order to cover these mandated costs.

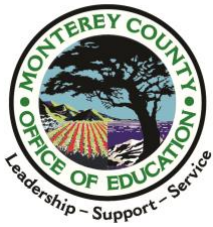
To meet the needs of Monterey County's almost 78,000 students and California's 6.2 million public school students, while preparing them for an increasingly competitive and complex world, we simply must do more. We must secure Full and Fair Funding for public schools to provide every student with a high-quality education and the resources needed for success in college, career, and civic life. We must also secure Full and Fair Funding to provide each public school employee the respect and fair wage they deserve.

Thank you,

Dr. Deneen Guss, County Superintendent of Schools  
**Monterey County Office of Education**

Dr. Hector Rico, Superintendent  
**Alisal Union School District**

Dr. Barbara Dill-Varga, Superintendent  
**Carmel Unified School District**



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Dr. Deneen Guss  
County Superintendent of Schools

Yvette Irving, Superintendent  
**Gonzales Unified School District**

Zandra Jo Galvan, Superintendent  
**Greenfield Union School District**

Rory Livingston, Superintendent  
**King City Union School District**

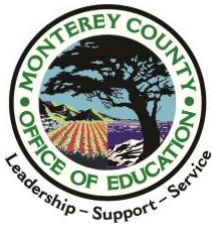
Daniel Stonebloom, Superintendent/Principal  
**Lagunita School District**

Jinane Annous

Dr. Jinane Annous, Superintendent/Principal  
**Mission Union School District**

Dr. PK Diffenbaugh, Superintendent  
**Monterey Peninsula Unified School District**

Kari Yeater, Superintendent  
**North Monterey County Unified School District**



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Dr. Deneen Guss  
County Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Ralph Gómez Porras, Superintendent  
Pacific Grove Unified School District

Martha Martinez, Superintendent  
Salinas City Elementary School District

Dan Burns, Superintendent  
Salinas Union High School District

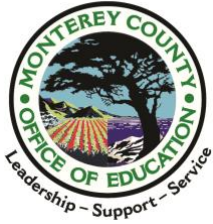
Dr. Catherine Reimer, Superintendent/Principal  
San Ardo Union School District

Jessica Riley, Superintendent/Principal  
San Lucas Union School District

Tim Vanoli, Superintendent  
Soledad Unified School District

Dr. Brian Walker, Superintendent  
South Monterey County Joint Union HS District

Eric Tarallo, Superintendent  
Spreckels Union School District



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County Superintendent of Schools

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gina Uccelli".

Gina Uccelli, Superintendent  
Washington Union School District