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April 16, 2021

Ms. Keely Martin Bosler, Director
Department of Finance
Room 1145, State Capitol
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Ms. Bosler:

In a letter dated January 26, 2021, you notified the Joint Legislative Budget Committee (JLBC), pursuant to the requirements of subdivision (d) of the Education Code section 10859, of the Office of Planning and Research's (OPR) request to approve an expenditure plan that would enable roughly \$6 million, the remaining balance of available system funding, to be released to support the initial development phase of the Cradle-to-Career Data System. The statute provides the Legislature with 30 days to review the request prior to your approval. The JLBC requested and you agreed to extend the Legislative review period until April 15, 2021.

The Cradle-to-Career Data System, when fully implemented, will establish a longitudinal data system that will provide policymakers, researchers, educators, students, families, and other stakeholders answers to key questions about student progression and outcomes. Ultimately, Cradle-to-Career will be a useful tool that will help provide critical information about the pipeline from early care to K-12 to higher education, skills training, and employment along with health and human services data. I support the development of a system that will help support teachers, advisors, parents and students and be an evidence-based tool that decision makers and researchers can use to help California adopt more equitable policies by providing insight into how educational experiences impact students' subsequent academic achievement, work, and earnings.

The 2019-20 budget provided \$10 million non-Proposition 98 General Fund to create such a system and directed OPR to conduct the initial planning activities. OPR contracted with WestEd, an education consulting company, to convene multiagency workgroup planning meetings. They

held over 50 public meetings that included the participation of over a dozen state agencies, numerous data experts, and a wide range of stakeholders.

Building on this effort, the Governor's proposed budget includes trailer bill language that reflects the recommendations of the workgroup, including the composition of the governing board, the creation of two advisory groups, and identification of the Government Operations Agency (GovOps) as the managing entity for the Cradle-to-Career project. The Governor's budget also proposes \$15 million non-Proposition 98 General Fund, of which \$3 million is one-time, to establish an office within GovOps and fund various technology acquisition and other costs related to the longitudinal data system. Additionally, the Budget proposes \$3.8 million ongoing Proposition 98 General Fund to support the California Career Guidance Initiative, a college planning and advising tool for schools, students, and families that would be integrated into the Cradle-to-Career Data System.

Unfortunately, California has had a rocky history in developing new information technology systems and I believe it is appropriate to allow the Legislature to review the workgroup's recommendations and provide input into the development of the Cradle-to-Career Data System before allocating all of the remaining \$6 million appropriated in the 2019-20 budget. For these reasons, I do not concur with the request to approve an expenditure plan that allocates all \$6 million.

Instead, to support further project planning, the JLBC approves the allocation of \$593,000 to allow GovOps to hire two interim positions within the fiscal year (\$93,000) and to support the knowledge transfer from WestEd staff to GovOps (\$500,000). The remainder of the requested expenditure plan should be considered in concert with the deliberation on the 2021-22 budget.

I appreciate all of the work that has gotten us to this point and look forward to continuing to work with the Administration on the development of the Cradle-to-Career Data System.

Sincerely,



Nancy Skinner
Chair

cc: Members of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee