March 10, 2026

The Honorable John Laird
Chair, Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8720
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Jessie Gabriel
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Sasha Renée Pérez
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee 1
1021 O Street, Suite 6720
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable David Alvarez
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee 3
1021 O Street, Suite 5320
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: **Restore Funding for the Golden State Teacher Grant Program**

Dear Members of the Legislature:

Thank you for your continued leadership and support in ensuring every California student has access to a well-prepared teacher. As you consider the 2026-27 budget, we urge you to **fund the Golden State Teacher Grant (GSTG) program at $100 million one-time General Fund**. This will enable the state to sustain the program for two additional years and consider alternative future funding and changes to the administration of the program.

As you are aware, GSTG was established in the 2021-22 fiscal year with a $500 million General Fund allocation and has been sustained with $50 million General Fund **annually** in the last two fiscal years. The California Student Aid Commission recently reported on the impact of the program from 2020-2024, during this time the GSTG program:

- Successfully recruited **more than 27,000 credential candidates**;
- **55% of candidates identified as Hispanic or Latino**;
- **98% of credential recipients are working in over 2,500 different Priority Schools** - a primary goal of the GSTG program;
- 88% of respondents stated GSTG was influential in their **ability to pursue their credential program**,

- 98% of respondents stated GSTG was an important factor in their **ability to complete their credential program**; and
- 88% of respondents stated GSTG was influential in **choosing to work at a Priority School/Preschool Program**.

In 2023-24, independent nonprofit colleges awarded over 40% of the state's teacher credentials overall, with 54% of our enrolled candidates identifying as non-white. Since the GSTG program's inception, we have worked diligently to build the necessary infrastructure and network to maximize its impact.

California continues to face a severe educator shortage, particularly in high-need subject areas and in schools serving our highest-poverty communities. Evolving federal policies affecting student loan availability and student fear over potential repercussions from applying for those loans are making it increasingly difficult for prospective teachers, school psychologists, and school counselors to secure the resources necessary to complete preparation and enter the workforce.

The **GSTG has emerged as one of the most effective strategies to address this challenge.** By providing up to $10,000 in financial support to aspiring educators who commit to serving in priority schools—those with high needs and turnover—GSTG is designed to directly target the shortage and expands access for diverse, low-income candidates.

While we appreciate the inclusion of **$14 million in remaining prior-year funds** in the current budget, this one-time amount is insufficient for the long-term health and growth of the program. After the initial build-up phase, the GSTG network is established and proving its efficacy in recruiting and retaining educators in high-needs schools.

A halt to new funding would **break down the essential infrastructure and momentum** that has been painstakingly built within districts and institutions to support this program. Stopping now would undermine the proven success of placing highly qualified, committed educators where they are urgently needed.

We urge you to increase funding to ensure that aspiring educators can continue to benefit from the GSTG as a vital pathway into the profession. Sustaining the GSTG at a higher funding level is crucial to recruiting and preparing educators and ensuring our most underserved students have access to the skilled professionals they deserve and need to succeed. This investment is not just about funding a program; it is about protecting a functioning system that delivers qualified educators to California's most underserved students.

On behalf of the undersigned programs and institutions, we thank you for your leadership and urge you to prioritize the sustained funding of the Golden State Teacher Grant program.

Sincerely,

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