



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

State Budget cuts for educational technology proposed by the Legislature are 'penny-wise, pound-foolish'

Walnut Creek, CA, January 6, 2009 — A proposal by the CA Legislature to eliminate funding for the California Technology Assistance Project (CTAP) and the Statewide Educational Technology Services (SETS) programs could jeopardize more than \$500 million in federal technology funds for California schools, according to Mike Lawrence, Executive Director of Computer Using Educators, an organization of thousands of California teachers, administrators, and other educators. His statement was validated by data collected and analyzed as part of a three-year external evaluation of CTAP and SETS and with information provided by the California Department of Education.

The \$17.5M CTAP/SETS program, in place since 1998, funds 11 regional technology projects that assist districts in applying for federal E-Rate and Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) grants. Small and rural school districts stand to suffer more since they rely on CTAP to help write and groom district technology plans, which are required to apply for federal E-Rate funds and EETT grants. Due to CTAP efforts, districts received more than \$33 million in EETT funds during the 2008/2009 school year. According to Kathy Pon, Assistant Superintendent of the Patterson Joint Unified School District, "CTAP provided expert technical assistance in applying for new EETT funding. They also went the extra mile to support staff during the implementation of our EETT competitive grant."

"CTAP has been an integral part of our staff development program at Sylvan Union School District", says Martha Gausman, Assistant Superintendent Curriculum and Instruction. "They have provided support in the form of after school workshops and have been a partner in providing professional development for our federally funded, Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) grants. With their support, we have been able to provide our teachers with the skills and strategies to enhance instruction through the use of digital tools. We rely on CTAP to keep us up-to-date in terms of State issues, including funding opportunities, E-Rate, and new legislation."

A three-year comprehensive external evaluation of CTAP and SETS consistently documented in all regions of the state, significant increases in the use instructional use of technology in ways that increase learning and make curriculum more engaging to students. The

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evaluation also documented the leveraging of Federal funding as well as support from Foundations and corporations.

Through CTAP and SETS assistance, California schools received more than \$1.2 billion dollars in federal E-Rate funding during the past three years. Without this assistance, schools quite often do not have the knowledge and staff to develop these required technology plans. Fred Brakeman, President of Infinity Communications, said, "E-Rate is one of many federal and state programs that require an approved tech plan. This year alone, school districts have applied for more than \$500 million dollars in E-Rate funds. How will California districts receive assistance and approval if no one is there to help?"

"CTAP and SETS are critical support structures for California's teachers and administrators," says Mr. Lawrence. "They are the only programs that enable school districts to develop and adopt the plans necessary to ensure federal compliance with these programs as well as new programs that may be proposed by President-Elect Obama and Congress." This budget cut would put California at risk of being out of compliance with No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and would be in danger of losing more than \$33 million annually in federal EETT grant funds and \$500 million annually in E-Rate funds.

California, considered the high-tech state, ranks about 46th in the country in terms of technology access and use in schools and cannot afford to lose what little it has. There are many economic reasons for preparing students for the 21st century workforce. This is difficult if schools cannot provide the technology to enhance the capacity of educators to prepare students for California's future.

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About CUE: CUE, Inc. has provided leadership in education and technology for over 30 years through high quality professional development, legislative advocacy, publications, professional collaboration, and by producing California's premier educational technology conferences. More information on CUE, Inc. is available at www.cue.org.

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