Date

Governor Jerry Brown

StateCapitolBuilding

Sacramento, CA95814

Fax: (916) 558-3177

**Re: Request for Signature for AB 1729 (Ammiano)**

Dear Governor Brown,

<Enter Organization Name>urges your signature on AB 1729, a bill that reaffirms superintendents and principals discretion to use other means of correction prior to suspension or expulsion, and encourage effective school discipline by providing additional alternatives to suspension and expulsion in the state’s school discipline codes.

California is failing to graduate students at an alarming rate, in part, because our state laws encourage ineffective school discipline. Superintendents and principals deal with low-level discipline issues almost exclusively through suspension or expulsion despite research which correlates exclusionary discipline with lower academic achievement, lower graduation rates and increased pupil dropout rates – all without making campuses safer. Further, schools are not required to document these efforts making it difficult to discern what is most effective or even what has been previously attempted prior to expulsion or suspension.

These ineffective policies also disproportionately affect our state’s most vulnerable populations, especially boys of color and students with disabilities. In March 2010, the ACLU of Northern California released the report, “*Discipline in California Schools: Legal Requirements and Positive School Environments*.” This report verified the findings that severe discipline alone doesn’t make schools any safer and that vulnerable populations face disproportionate rates of suspension and expulsion. The same month, the U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan each addressed a conference of civil rights lawyers and launched an initiative to end racial disparities in student discipline. Secretary Duncan highlighted his concern for disparities for disabled and students of color, and also noted that these students are often punished more severely. Lastly, studies that examine improvements to disproportionate rates of school discipline have included documentation as part of the turnaround in suspension/expulsion rates.

AB 1729 would reaffirm that superintendents and school principals have the discretion to implement alternatives to suspension and expulsion, provide examples of research and evidenced-based alternatives that can be implemented, which have been shown to reduce disciplinary incidents and increase academic achievement and attendance, and encourage documentation of use of any of these alternatives prior to suspension or expulsion to address student misbehavior. The bill is designed to address the pupil’s misbehavior by using other means of correction that are correlated with more positive outcomes than suspension and expulsion.

For all of these reasons, on behalf of <organization name>, I urge your signature on AB 1729. Should you have any questions regarding our support for this bill, please contact me at <Enter Contact Information>.

Sincerely,

<Enter Your Name and Position