



California  
Charter Schools  
Association

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March 27, 2020

Dear Alex,

Angelenos face an unprecedented health crisis. Our public education system is being called on to meet families' most basic needs, while pivoting to ensure every child continues to learn under challenging circumstances. Students, parents, teachers, and staff alike are working selflessly to build some sense of normalcy in education as all of our lives are upended. Our children need their basic food security needs met. But just as important, our children need to stay connected to some of the most important adults in their lives, their teachers and principals, to give them the confidence that together we will overcome this crisis, and to stay anchored to the important relationships in their lives. On a daily basis we are witnessing the best of our community's generosity and compassion, and like Governor Newsom has implored us, many are meeting the moment. But, we also know our community is rightfully scared, shaken, and in desperate need of support and compassion.

Yesterday, in the midst of a worldwide pandemic, you chose to spend your time drafting a letter to elected leaders that targets and demeans charter families instead of showing compassion. You demanded the eviction of charter students and teachers from the learning space provided to them by voter-approved law when they need your support. And, you resurrected your endless demands for a charter school ban. You labeled charter students, families, and staff as unique hazards to public health, stoking perverse and unfounded division. These tactics are shameful, dangerous, dehumanizing and frankly, Trumpian. When you harass families on sidewalks and call our children "invaders" (as you were doing right up until the moment schools were ordered closed) you inflame and divide, and educators would agree such behavior would be roundly condemned in a schoolyard. I am disappointed that instead of uniting our shared community in the best interest of all kids, you chose to use COVID-19 to advance your political agenda.

We are just two weeks into this crisis, and we already see that a million Californians are unemployed, with that number rising by the day. Families are lining up by the thousands to access food from both charters and district grab-and-go distribution centers across this city. High school juniors and seniors from Pacoima to Carson are sick at home worrying whether COVID-19 will shatter their college dreams.

In this time of extraordinary need, Angelenos are better together. That includes you, me, and every member of our public education system. We must use every ounce of skill, talent,

courage, empathy, and love we have to better support the families we serve. We should be working tirelessly to solve the acute problems before us: feeding all families, supporting all teachers as we transition to distance learning with all due haste, and ensuring every child, including Students with Disabilities, English Learners, and students struggling with a digital divide are not forgotten in this crisis.

Last year, I wrote to you asking if you would stand with us where we find common ground, rather than pitting schools and families against each other. Evicting students and banning schools is more of the same. Farmworkers are hard at work tending the fields that feed our state; grocery workers are the new frontline, and health workers are giving their all to help us weather this pandemic. Their children need you now to lead, not demean. This is what being in an essential sector means: we roll up our sleeves and put our common humanity first. We have a unique opportunity to lift Los Angeles up and support our city in the face of crisis. Let's focus on kids and families, instead of politics as usual, so we can meet this moment together.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Myrna Castrejón', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Myrna Castrejón  
President and CEO  
California Charter Schools Association

CC: Gavin Newsom, Governor of California  
Tony Thurmond, California State Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Eric Garcetti, Mayor of Los Angeles