**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Attendance Works, Families In Schools and Parent Institute for Quality Education
Launch *Keep Learning California* Initiative**

*Initiative helps low-income families navigate evolving educational models and keep children learning in urban and rural communities*

**LOS ANGELES AND CENTRAL VALLEY, CA** – In response to the sudden closure of schools due to COVID-19, Attendance Works, Families In Schools and Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) have launched *Keep Learning California* (KeepLearningCA.org). This innovative initiative is designed to empower low-income, English learner, immigrant and Black urban/rural elementary school families that have been severely impacted by COVID-19 transition to the new school year.

“Initiatives like Keep Learning California provide critical support for families, students and educators so children can continue learning in these challenging times,” said California State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond. “These organizations have earned the trust of the communities they serve and have the relationships to reach families most impacted by the pandemic. This kind of support is essential in closing the equity gap in education.”

Through the initiative’s website and direct outreach by these organizations, families, caregivers and educators will have access to information and tools to support their children’s learning and attendance whether classes are virtual, in-person or hybrid.

“The communities we serve suffer from high anxiety and stress over job loss, food, rent and housing insecurity, and limited or no access to healthcare,” said PIQE President and CEO Gloria Corral. “Parents, guardians, and family members also feel ill-prepared and unequipped to step in as co-educators with teachers in distance and online learning. We want to make sure families and caregivers know what they can do to support their children, so they don’t fall behind and increase the equity and learning gap.”

The initiative is designed to proactively reach out to English learner, immigrant families, and Black families in urban and rural areas delivered through traditional and non-traditional communication channels and provide the knowledge and tools that support participation in distance learning, in-school learning and hybrid learning models. Keep Learning California (*KeepLearningCA.org*) offers a one-stop shop for authentic and powerful family engagement with links to local resources and downloadable materials in English and Spanish that can be used and shared through a variety of media such as websites, social media or print. Community-based organizations, education partners and others can also share these resources and tools with their families. In addition, parents and families can contact Keep Learning California at info@keeplearningca.org or reach partners by phone.

“Because of COVID-19, it is estimated that students of color will likely be behind nearly a year academically which will only widen racial and economic gaps,” said FIS Director of Advocacy, Sandy Mendoza. “It is critical that families can successfully adapt to the transition of learning instruction from the classroom to the living room or kitchen given the uneven distance learning opportunities students experienced in the Spring. Families need to know about the resources that are available to help them continue supporting their children’s learning while also keeping them safe.”

“Keep Learning California helps empower families and students with information that promotes daily participation and engagement during distance learning, regardless of the teaching method adopted by school districts,” said Attendance Works Executive Director Hedy Chang. “Monitoring when students miss opportunities to learn is an invaluable tool for strengthening efforts to improve attendance and reduce the adverse impact of this pandemic on California’s school children.”

For more information, visit [www.KeepLearningCA.org](http://www.KeepLearningCA.org).

**Attendance Works**

*Attendance Works is a national and state initiative that works to advance student success and help close equity gaps by reducing chronic absence.* [*www.attendanceworks.org*](http://www.attendanceworks.org)*.*

**Families In Schools**

*Families In Schools envisions a public education system where students have all the opportunities and resources necessary to succeed in school and in life. We seek a workforce prepared for lifelong learning, and active engagement in the civic life of our society. Guided by this belief, the mission of Families In Schools is to involve parents and communities in their children’s education to achieve lifelong success.* [*www.familiesinschools.org*](http://www.familiesinschools.org)*.*

**Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE)**

*PIQE is a national organization with evidence-based programs that engage, empower and transform parents to actively engage in their children’s education and strengthen parent-school collaboration. PIQE provides empowering information, skills development and support systems for low-income families, communities of color, English Learner and immigrant families.* [*www.piqe.org*](http://www.piqe.org)*.*

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