

## **Urgent Budget Alert – Your IMMEDIATE Action is Needed**

To address the state's estimated \$14 billion deficit, Governor Schwarzenegger has proposed the largest reduction to education funding in California history. For 2008-09, the Governor has proposed that the Legislature suspend Proposition 98 (the minimum funding guarantee for schools) and cut \$4.4 billion (more than 9%) in education funds. The Governor has also proposed \$400 million in education funding reductions in the current 2007-08 budget year.

When spread across the 6 million students enrolled in California's public schools, \$4.8 billion in cuts equates to **\$800** per student or:

- **\$24,000** for a classroom of 30 students
- **\$500,000** for an elementary school of 625 students
- **\$2 million** for a high school of 2500 students

The County Office of Education estimates that these cuts will force half of San Diego's school districts to file a qualified or negative certification stating they cannot meet their financial obligations. Because school districts are required by law to provide layoff notices by March 15, some are already issuing pink slips. If these cuts go through as proposed, we can expect:

- class sizes to increase by as much as a third
- the loss of reading specialists and other interventions
- fewer counselors and class selections for middle and high school students
- the likely elimination of transportation, music and art programs

### **WE MUST ACT QUICKLY!**

Ninth District PTA has nearly 80,000 members, and we are represented in the California legislature by nine Assemblymembers and four State Senators. As PTA members, we have tremendous credibility with our legislators because we are driven solely by what is best for children and we know first-hand how these cuts will impact our children's classrooms. If Sacramento hears from all corners of our district, we will have a powerful impact.

**Log onto the Ninth District PTA website: [www.NinthDistrictPTA.org](http://www.NinthDistrictPTA.org)**

- 1. Click on the link to find out who your state representatives are;**
- 2. Download the letters for your legislators and fax or mail them today;**
- 3. Pass on this information to everyone in your unit and/or council and ask that they do the same.**

## **Education Coalition Fact Sheet - Governor's 2008-09 Budget Proposal**

- While it is clear there are extraordinary challenges in balancing the state's budget, the Education Coalition strongly opposes the governor's 2008-09 budget proposal and his plans to eviscerate Proposition 98. Our students and schools did not create this budget problem, and their progress shouldn't be undermined because of it.
- The governor's budget reductions would be disastrous to public schools and they are fundamentally inconsistent with the state's goal of improving student achievement. A \$4.4 billion cut to Prop. 98 would mean laying off tens of thousands of teachers and would also result in increases in class size throughout the state, not to mention a further erosion of the support system for students provided by classified and paraprofessional staff.
- Voters passed Prop. 98 almost 20 years ago to ensure our students and schools receive minimum funding. They strongly reaffirmed their support for the minimum funding law in 2005. Proposals to suspend Prop. 98 conflict with the will of the voters and jeopardize the minimum education funding levels Prop. 98 provides for students and schools.
- According to a report released this week from Education Week, California spends \$1,900 less per student than the national average. Other recent studies have shown that California seriously underfunds its public schools, with New York spending 75 percent more than California. The "Getting Down to Facts" studies show that billions more would be necessary to ensure the opportunity for all students to meet the state's rigorous academic standards. In addition, California has some of the most overcrowded classrooms and the greatest shortages of librarians, counselors and other critical support staff in the nation.
- Experts including the Fordham Foundation (one of the nation's leading proponents of rigorous academic standards), the Public Policy Institute of California, EdSource and researchers at Stanford University all confirm that California's K-12 academic and performance standards are among the most challenging in the nation. With hard work, modest investments in teacher training and the adoption of standards-aligned textbooks, our students and schools have been making progress. Reading scores are up 25 percent and math scores have increased 17 percent in the last four years. This progress cannot continue with these proposed cuts to our public schools.
- A state budget proposal that looks at cuts alone is not a real solution, because it doesn't address California's underlying problem of inadequate and unstable revenue sources. We can not talk about spending cuts without also talking about increasing revenues.
- The most pressing challenge is to enact a balanced budget that continues the momentum of educational improvement that has been built since the late 1990s. This budget does not do that, and anything less is unacceptable.

For more information, log onto the California State PTA Website at **[www.capta.org](http://www.capta.org)** and the California Education Coalition's website at **[www.ProtectOurStudents.org/](http://www.ProtectOurStudents.org/)**

To be added to the California State PTA "Legislation email alert list," please send your name and email address to: **[leginfo@capta.org](mailto:leginfo@capta.org)**.

To be added to the Ninth District PTA email list for Legislation updates, please send your name and email address to **[Ninth-D-PTA-Leg@san.rr.com](mailto:Ninth-D-PTA-Leg@san.rr.com)**