

Sample letter to Legislator or Governor from a Parent or Grandparent

February 21, 2008

Re: Public Education in California is in Jeopardy

Dear _____,

As a parent/grandparent of children enrolled in public schools in the Coronado Unified School District, I was shocked and saddened to learn of the Governor's proposed drastic funding cuts to our schools. It wasn't too long ago, California was a leader in the USA in public education funding yet we are now ranked at 46th. How can we graduate children who can compete not only nationally, but globally as well when public education is on the verge of absolute devastation?

The 2008-2009 proposed \$4.4 billion budget cut equates to a \$1.2 million cut in our small district of 3,000 students in five public schools. Why am I so gravely concerned?

- Over the last five years, we have painfully cut \$1.5 million from the budget of our academically excellent schools, all with Academic Performance Index (API) test scores well in excess of the state required "800".
- With 83% of our budget funding salaries, there is nothing left to "cut" except teachers which will mean substantial increases in class sizes and without a doubt, the quality of education will suffer significantly.
- The Governor is asking the Legislature to suspend Proposition 98, the Voter Initiative to ensure the state designates at least 40% of the state revenue to fund public education.
- By law, our district must give any teachers "pink slips" by March 15th. What does this do for the morale for our already underpaid teachers who are on the front lines in the classroom?
- The state requires school districts to maintain a 3% reserve or state officials will take over the operations of the district. With the proposed budget cuts, how can any district maintain reserves of any amount and continue to provide quality, meaningful public education?
- Public funding continues to erode yet the government mandates programs like Special Education without fully funding the mandate.
- The increase in restricted funds makes balancing even the current budget a "chess game." Please drop the restrictions for school districts like ours whose administrators and teachers have proven they know that motivates students and graduates students with the educational tools needed to succeed.

At a time when we are beginning to see progress in student learning throughout California, this draconian proposal is a major leap backward. I understand the challenges inherent in balancing a budget but I am strongly opposed to Governor Schwarzenegger's 2008-09 budget proposal and plans to eviscerate funding for our students and public schools. My child, your child, our collective "children," deserve a better today and an even better tomorrow.

Sincerely,