

Budget Alert

As you probably know, the California School Boards Association is a member of the Education Coalition, which works to present a united voice on behalf of adequate funding for K-12 education so that California's children can receive the world-class education they need to prepare for the future. In the current budget crisis, we are continuing to make it our top priority to advocate for new, permanent state revenue increases and to oppose the cuts to education proposed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Gov. Schwarzenegger's proposed budget would require schools to make major midyear cuts and then additional major cuts in the budget year. The only way to stop or reduce these cuts is for you to begin publicly analyzing these cuts and to widely publicize their impact. We also urge you to work collaboratively with district management, collective bargaining representatives and other education leaders in your community to develop and present a plan to address this extraordinary financial crisis. This will accomplish two important objectives:

1. Only by engaging in public discussion of the proposed cuts will these budget issues become tangible to local communities and legislators. The current budget debate at the state level lacks this reality. It is important that people understand that "cuts" are not just numbers—they will mean the end of specific programs and layoffs of real people. We strongly believe this local public debate will ultimately reduce the magnitude of state budget cuts to education.
2. Early public discussion will allow all members of the education community to have an understanding of these difficult but important local budget decisions.

Traditionally, school districts wait until the Legislature and the governor have acted to publicly evaluate specific budget reductions. This year, however, both the governor and the state legislature have come out in support of at least \$2 billion in current-year cuts to K-12 education.

For this reason we believe it is appropriate to begin considering the impact of the following:

Current year

1. Elimination in the current year of the 0.68 percent cost-of-living adjustment that was approved last fall as part of the 2008-09 state budget and the additional reduction of \$1.6 billion in revenue limit funding.
2. To accommodate these cuts, the governor has proposed "complete and permanent flexibility" with regard to the use of state categorical education funding. If the budget provides this flexibility, how will your district respond?

Budget year

1. No cost-of-living adjustment for the second year in a row and an additional net reduction of \$900 million in revenue-limit funding.
2. The Governor's proposal is to make "permanent" the ability to use categorical education funds for other purposes. With this flexibility available, where would your district plan cuts in order to operate under the governor's proposal budget?

We strongly urge you to begin this budget deliberation process as soon as possible. Further, we strongly encourage you to hold these deliberations at the public school board level and to invite parents, the press, your local legislators and community members so that they become aware of the devastating consequences of the proposed budget cuts.

