



KEEP OUR PROMISES TO STUDENTS

COMMITMENT CARD



The Stark Reality in California's Schools



Over the last two years, more than \$17 billion has already been cut from education. California's schools rank at the very bottom of all 50 states in staff-to-student ratios, and nearly last in the nation in per-pupil spending. In addition, libraries have been virtually wiped out, while arts, music, sports, advanced placement and other essential programs have been eliminated from the curriculum.



After decades of budget cuts and our students being forced to do "more with less," a recent report from UCLA, entitled "Educational Opportunities in Hard Times," found that 67 percent of principals in California reported that class sizes increased this year, with 74 percent of elementary school principals reporting larger class sizes. The same study showed that 75 percent of principals reported that summer school had been reduced or eliminated.



The Promise Made to Our Students



Last July, when lawmakers passed and the governor signed the state budget, an agreement was memorialized in AB 4X 3, which imposed \$5.2 billion in cuts to education funding, including an unprecedented *retroactive* reduction of \$1.6 billion to the prior year Proposition 98 guarantee. As part of the agreement to balance the magnitude of these cuts, the Governor and Legislature agreed to certification and created a maintenance factor to restore \$11.2 billion to public schools and community colleges. AB 4X 3 left no doubt that it was addressing a maintenance factor created by, and subject to, the provisions of Article XVI, Section 8 of the California Constitution – Proposition 98. This bill was passed by two-thirds vote of the Legislature and signed into law by the Governor.



The Broken Promise



Less than seven months later, the Governor proposed to directly ignore that law and renege on the promise made to students to restore the \$11.2 billion. He did this by manipulating the General Fund and Proposition 98 in his 2010-11 budget proposal to make more cuts to education funding. Essentially, the Governor's maneuvers would attempt to repeal AB 4X 3, violate the Constitution by recertifying the 2008-09 Proposition 98 funding guarantee and break the July 2009 budget agreement.

The Governor also redefines revenues to reduce State General Funds through the gas tax swap and by claiming that the 2008-09 funding level actually consisted of \$1.3 billion owed to schools for a prior year, therefore allowing the Governor to lower the Proposition 98 guarantee even further.

The \$2.4 Billion Cut

If the Governor and the Legislature do not live up to their word it would mean an additional cut of \$2.4 billion to education funding, on top of the more than \$17 billion that has been cut from education over the past two years. This results in an additional cut of \$400 per student and a total cut of \$2,500 per student over the last two years.

Uphold the Promise to California's Students

As an elected official, I will stand by my promise to California's students and:

- Protect public education funding from further cuts,
- Stand by the budget agreement signed into law (AB 4X 3) to restore \$11.2 billion in funding owed to schools and community colleges, and
- Oppose any attempts to suspend or undermine Prop 98, the voter-approved minimum school funding guarantee.

Our students deserve better. Investing in public education is an investment in California's future.

Signed,

(Date)
