

February 15, 2008

Dear Hillcrest Community:

I am sure that you have heard on the news about the proposed cuts to education that Governor Schwarzenegger is advocating. While it may sound like a foregone conclusion, OUSD indicates that these cuts are not a done deal and that advocacy by parents like us can make a difference. Therefore, I am providing you in this email some information and sample communication that you can use to contact representatives to help stop these cuts. Please read on if you can spend 5 minutes to help preserve public education. The full set of briefing materials prepared by the District is on our website at [www.hillcrestpta.org](http://www.hillcrestpta.org).

Sincerely,

Shannon Broome  
PTA President

## HELP US FIGHT SCHOOL FUNDING CUTS PROPOSED BY THE GOVERNOR!

Governor Schwarzenegger has proposed a \$4.8 billion budget cut for California's schools, cuts that would severely damage the quality of education in our state, forcing school districts to lay off teachers and other educators in already overcrowded classrooms while slashing programs that are critical to student achievement.

Statewide, the Governor's \$4.8 billion budget cut is equivalent to:

- Reducing spending by \$800-per-student
- Laying off more than 107,000 teachers
- Cutting more than \$24,000 per classroom
- Laying off over 137,000 bus drivers, janitors, food service workers, maintenance workers and other education support professionals
- Increasing class sizes statewide by as much as 35%

In Oakland Unified, the District would have to trim \$1.1 million by March 15 to meet the Governor's budget demands and an additional \$22 million from the budget for the 2008-09 school year. This would significantly reduce funding for:

- Class size reduction
- Textbooks and other instructional materials
- School and library improvement
- Child nutrition programs
- Before and after school programs

- Home-to-school transportation
- Childhood development programs
- Adult and special education
- Cost of living adjustments

**District Position:** The gutting of public education, which hits cash-strapped districts like Oakland Unified the hardest, is unacceptable. For the future of our students, and the well-being of our communities, we must fight to keep the proposed budget cuts from becoming law.

## What Can I Do? Six Ways to Fight for Education

We all agree that the proposed cuts to California's education funding are a travesty. Deciding how to prevent this nightmare scenario from becoming reality is less obvious. With that in mind, here are six ways you can work with your community to stress the importance of education, lobby for long-term changes in school finance and stop the budget cuts before they become law.

1. Educate your staff and school community on the details of the budget cuts and what cuts would mean to your school, to Oakland Unified and to the state of California as a whole.
2. Submit a letter to your local newspaper condemning the budget cuts (see enclosed sample).
3. Contact your state senator and assembly member and ask them to fight for education funding. Feel free to include examples of how the budget cuts would impact your school and Oakland Unified as a whole.
4. Call or email your local elected officials (see enclosed contact list) and ask them to speak out against the injustice of across-the-board budget cuts. Even though local officials may not have a vote on the issue, they can use their platform to create and intensify public pressure against these measures.
5. Write and call the Governor and other elected officials to protect school funding. (See enclosed sample).
6. Speak to local clubs and community organizations and ask for their support in voicing concern about the budget cuts.

**Please send a letter** (hardcopy or email) to your representatives (we have them listed at the end of this email) and the Governor's office. You can use the sample letter below to get you started but please feel free to personalize with your own examples. To the extent we can keep track of submissions, it would help to show OUSD what we are trying to do to support their efforts so please also copy [hillcrestforOUSD@yahoo.com](mailto:hillcrestforOUSD@yahoo.com).

## Sample Parent Letter

Dear XXX,

As a parent of a child in X grade, I was both outraged and saddened to learn about the Governor's proposal to cut funding to our schools. Year after year, we are being forced to fight to ensure our children receive the quality education they need and deserve. Whenever the state faces a budget shortage, it seems politicians look to our schools to solve the problem. That's just not fair. Our kids had nothing to do with creating the current budget problems and funding for their education is supposed to be protected.

The Governor's proposed \$4.8 billion budget cut will severely damage the quality of education in our state and decimate the voter-approved minimum-funding guarantee for schools. That is incredibly short-sighted and simply unacceptable. A \$4.8 billion cut to schools would mean laying off tens of thousands of teachers, statewide increases in class size and the further erosion of the support staff provided to our students.

As a parent, I understand the challenges inherent in balancing a budget, but I strongly oppose Governor Schwarzenegger's 2008-09 budget proposal and plans to eviscerate funding for students and schools. Our kids and our schools did not create this budget problem, and their education and future progress shouldn't be undermined because of it. My child, my student, deserves better than this.

Sincerely,

[Your name/contact info]

cc: [hillcrestforOUSD@yahoo.com](mailto:hillcrestforOUSD@yahoo.com)

<b>The Honorable Barbara Lee</b> The United States House of Representatives 1301 Clay Street, Suite 1000 North Oakland, CA 94612 510.763.0370 510.763.6538 (f) Enter: <a href="https://forms.house.gov/wyr/welcome.shtml">https://forms.house.gov/wyr/welcome.shtml</a> into your browser and complete the form.	<b>The Honorable Don Perata</b> Senate President pro Tempore California State Senate 1515 Clay Street, Suite 2202 Oakland, CA 94612 510.286.1333 510.286.3885 (f) <a href="mailto:Senator.Perata@sen.ca.gov">Senator.Perata@sen.ca.gov</a>
<b>The Honorable Loni Hancock</b> California State Assembly 712 El Cerrito Plaza El Cerrito, CA 94530 510.559.1406 510.559.1478 (f) <a href="mailto:Assemblymember.Hancock@assembly.ca.gov">Assemblymember.Hancock@assembly.ca.gov</a>	<b>The Honorable Sandre Swanson</b> California State Assembly 1515 Clay Street, Ste. 2204 Oakland, CA 94612 510.286.1670 510.286.1888 (f) <a href="mailto:Assemblymember.Swanson@assembly.ca.gov">Assemblymember.Swanson@assembly.ca.gov</a>