

Preserve Oakland Public Schools

Don't let the state slash education funding. Make your voice heard!



The proposed cuts to school funding are unacceptable.

- ❑ The health of a society is largely dependent upon the quality of education it provides its citizens.
- ❑ Quality education is a civil right that is presently denied many of our children. The proposed budget cuts will disenfranchise even more of California's youth.
- ❑ A well-educated California is a prosperous California. If California wants to continue as a domestic and global leader, it must invest in education – not undermine academic progress.
- ❑ The budget cuts are not only wrongheaded, they are unjust. Across-the-board cuts hurt neediest students the most and increase inequity.
- ❑ Because California residents value education, they voted for Proposition 98 almost 20 years ago. The Governor now seeks to undermine the will of the public by suspending Prop. 98 and reducing voter-mandated funding for education.
- ❑ Shortchanging education does not solve California's fundamental problem of inadequate and unstable revenue sources. A quick fix that cheats our children will not solve the state's financial woes.

California lags the nation in school funding.

- ❑ Education Week gave California a D+ for school funding.
- ❑ Only four states put less money into their schools than California.
- ❑ States like New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts spend at least 50 percent more per student than California.

We can preserve our schools.

- ❑ The budget cuts are not a done deal. We can prevent them from becoming reality if we exert enough political pressure.
- ❑ Contact your elected officials to let them know you oppose the cuts and share your views with friends, family and neighbors.

By The Numbers...

- ❑ The state has proposed cutting school funding by \$4.8 billion by the end of the 2008-09 school year
- ❑ OUSD would have to **cut \$22 million** by the end of next school year to meet the budget demands
- ❑ A \$4.8 billion budget cut would **reduce spending by \$800 per student**
- ❑ CA currently – without the budget cut – spends **\$1,900 less per student** than the national average
- ❑ **California ranks 46th** in education funding, behind states such as Louisiana and Mississippi
- ❑ The proposed budget cuts will decrease revenues by more than **\$20,000 per classroom**
- ❑ The cuts are equivalent to:
 - Laying off **more than 107,000 teachers** statewide
 - Increasing class sizes statewide by up to 35%
 - Closing every school in the state for an entire month



School Funding Cuts Briefing Note

Background

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.

Key Messages

- The proposed cuts are not a done deal. All those concerned about public education must fight to prevent the proposed cuts from becoming reality.
- California schools are already underfunded, particularly those in urban districts like Oakland Unified. The proposed cuts would hit urban districts the hardest, punishing the neediest children and increasing inequity.
- California spends \$1,900 per student less than the national average. The state ranks 46th nationally in per-pupil spending, behind states such as Louisiana and Mississippi. States like New York spend 75 percent more than California.
- Because California residents value education, they voted for Proposition 98 almost 20 years ago. Proposition 98 guarantees a minimum level of school funding and was re-approved during the 2005 special election. The Governor now seeks to undermine the will of the public by suspending Prop. 98 and reducing voter-mandated funding for education.
- Shortchanging education does not solve California's fundamental problem of inadequate and unstable revenue sources. A short-term fix that cheats our children is not a real solution to the state's financial woes.
- The Governor declared 2008 "The Year of Education". Let's hold him to that promise by applying pressure against the budget cuts

Call to Action:

- Educate your community on the details of the budgets cuts, what they mean to your school, to the district, and to California
- Contact your state senator and assembly member and ask them to oppose cuts to education and urge your community members to do the same.
- Submit a letter to your local newspaper condemning the budget cuts (see sample letters on reverse side)
- Speak to local clubs and community organizations and ask for their support in voicing concerns about the budget

Contact Information:

Troy Flint
510.879.8242
troy.flint@ousd.k12.ca.us



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. Encourage parents to 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



Budget Cut FAQ

Q1. So, the Governor has proposed cutting education funding. How much money do the schools really stand to lose?

A. The proposed budget cuts would slash school funding by \$4.8 billion. That's equivalent to:

- Cutting more than \$20,000 per classroom
- Shutting down every school across the state for one month
- Laying off 107,000 teachers

In Oakland Unified alone, the school district would have to cut more than \$1 million by March 15th and an additional \$22 million from the 2008-09 budget

Q2. That's a lot of cash but do schools really need all that money?

A. In a word, yes. California school's are already underfunded. California ranks 46th in education funding, behind less prosperous states such as Louisiana and Mississippi and currently spends \$1,900 less per student than the national average.

Q3. So what happens if the budget cuts become reality?

A. In Oakland and many other districts, the budget cuts could result in layoffs and would significantly reduce funding for, and in some cases, eliminate programs that cover:

- 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

Q4. Why are people complaining about Proposition 98?

A. Proposition 98 is a voter-approved statute that establishes a minimum level of funding for California schools. The Governor now suggests suspending Proposition 98 so schools receive less funding than the voters and the legislature have declared necessary.

Q5. I'm frustrated by the damage the budget cuts will do to education. Whom should I contact with my concerns?

A. You should contact your elected officials, some of whom are listed below. Feel free to use the following talking points as a reference:

- California schools are already underfunded, particularly those in urban districts like Oakland Unified. The proposed cuts would hit urban districts the hardest, punishing the neediest children and increasing inequity.
- California spends \$1,900 per student less than the national average. The state ranks 46th nationally in per-pupil spending, behind states such as Louisiana and Mississippi. States like New York spend 75 percent more than California.
- Because California residents value education, they voted for Proposition 98 almost 20 years ago. Proposition 98 guarantees a minimum level of school funding and was re-approved during the 2005 special election. The Governor now seeks to undermine the will of the public by suspending Prop. 98 and reducing voter-mandated funding for education.
- Shortchanging education does not solve California's fundamental problem of inadequate and unstable revenue sources. A short-term fix that cheats our children is not a real solution to the state's financial woes.
- The Governor declared 2008 "The Year of Education". He needs to honor that promise.

The Honorable Barbara Lee
The United States House of Representatives
1301 Clay Street, Suite 1000 North
Oakland, CA 94612
510.763.0370
510.763.6538 (f)
Enter:
<https://forms.house.gov/wyr/welcome.shtml>
into your browser and complete the form.

The Honorable Don Perata
Senate President pro Tempore
California State Senate
1515 Clay Street, Suite 2202
Oakland, CA 94612
510.286.1333
510.286.3885 (f)
Senator.Perata@sen.ca.gov

The Honorable Loni Hancock
California State Assembly
712 El Cerrito Plaza
El Cerrito, CA 94530
510.559.1406
510.559.1478 (f)
Assemblymember.Hancock@assembly.ca.gov

The Honorable Sandre Swanson
California State Assembly
1515 Clay Street, Ste. 2204
Oakland, CA 94612
510.286.1670
510.286.1888 (f)
Assemblymember.Swanson@assembly.ca.gov



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,



The Year of Education: Rhetoric or Reality?

When Governor Schwarzenegger anointed 2008 the “Year of Education”, school districts throughout the state welcomed the declaration. Little did we realize that the “Year of Education” would morph, to paraphrase State Superintendent of Education Jack O’Connell, into the “Year of Evisceration”. Yet, twelve months after the Governor’s proclamation, that is exactly what districts throughout California are facing – the evisceration of funding for textbooks, child development, supplemental instruction, nutrition and transportation programs, as well as the prospect of layoffs in schools and central offices already stretched thin by budget constraints. This bleak image will harden into reality if the Governor’s proposed cuts to education – more than \$4 billion worth – become law. Californians of all stripes must organize to ensure that this frightening prospect, which damages our state’s reputation, the Governor’s legacy and our children’s future, never comes to pass.

California’s schools simply do not have \$4 billion to spare. While the Governor has declared a “fiscal state of emergency”, California’s schools have been suffering through an educational emergency for some time now and budget cuts would only aggravate an already precarious situation. In the best of times, our school districts are woefully underfunded, – Education Week magazine recently gave the state a D+ grade for its school funding efforts. California currently spends \$2,000 less per student than the national average and ranks 46th in the country in school funding – behind less prosperous states such as Louisiana and Mississippi – despite having the most challenging student population in the country.

Sadly, the proposed cuts would hit urban districts the hardest, punishing the neediest children and increasing inequity in education. Oakland Unified alone would have to slash \$22 million from its 2008-09 budget to meet the Governor’s demands. Statewide, the total effect of the proposed budget cuts is equivalent to cutting \$20,000 per classroom, eliminating 107,000 teacher salaries and reducing funding by \$800 per student. If this slash-and-burn strategy prevails, it will 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

The impact of such a scenario would be devastating not only for school districts, but for all of California's residents. We recognize that the state, for reasons not entirely beyond the Governor's control, is presently in distressing financial shape, but California's financial future is dependent on what the Governor does today to address its educational funding deficit. To quote Schwarzenegger's 2007 State of the State Address, "That small child with sticky hands starting the first day in kindergarten is the foundation of California's economic power and leadership. We must invest in education."

The Governor spoke wisely then and a solid education hasn't become less important in the past twelve months. If anything, it's grown in value and we must now answer a series of vital questions: How do we prepare our youth to meet the demands of a democratic nation? How do we address persistent inequality in our society? How do we maintain our economic prosperity in an increasingly competitive world? The answers to these questions, if they are to be answered satisfactorily, lie in education.

Our state legislators recognized this truth when they established Proposition 98, a measure which guarantees a minimum level of funding for California schools. The Governor now suggests thwarting the will of the legislature and the public they represent by suspending Proposition 98.

At this critical juncture, Schwarzenegger would do well to reflect on another passage from his State of the State speech, one where he noted that, "It is a privilege to be able to help future generations fulfill their promise. And when they look back, they will see you in this room, and they will be grateful for what you have done." They will certainly look back. Will they be grateful? Only if we fight to ensure that the Governor's proposed budget cuts remain propositions – not reality. Please join me and the rest of the Oakland Unified School District in the struggle to protect our public schools and California's future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vincent Matthews". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Vincent Matthews
State Administrator
Oakland Unified School District

Vincent Matthews
State Administrator

Oakland Unified
School District
1025 Second Avenue
Oakland, CA 94606
www.ousd.k12.ca.us



Communications Office
Contact: Troy Flint

Phone (510) 879-8242
Cell (510) 206-3737
Fax (510) 879-8800
troy.flint@ousd.k12.ca.us

Oakland Unified School District Press Advisory *For Immediate Release*

Alameda County Education Leaders to Denounce School Funding Cuts at Wednesday Press Conference

Superintendents of all 18 Alameda County school districts, as well as students, teachers, principals, school board presidents and community leaders unite against budget proposals

Oakland – Feb. 11, 2008 – On Wednesday morning, Alameda County Superintendent of Schools Sheila Jordan will join education advocates, community leaders and the superintendents of all 18 Alameda County school districts to condemn proposed cuts to the state education budget. The event, scheduled for 9:45 AM at Oakland's Westlake Middle School (2629 Harrison St. Oakland, CA), will feature students, teachers, principals, administrators and school board members united in their opposition to a plan that would slash school funding and undermine progress in student achievement.

"The prospect of the suggested budget cuts becoming reality is too frightening to ignore, so it's important that school districts work to mobilize the public and inform concerned citizens about the role they can play in preserving school funding and promoting academic achievement," said Vincent Matthews, State Administrator of the Oakland Unified School District. "This press conference is really just one step, albeit a significant one, toward the ultimate goal – building a groundswell of support for proper funding of California's schools."

Event Details

What: Alameda County Superintendents Press Conference regarding budget cuts

When: Wednesday, February 13, 9:45 AM

Where: Westlake Middle School (510.879.2130)

2629 Harrison St.

Oakland, CA 94612

every student. every classroom. every day.