

CALIFORNIA STATE PTA

LEGISLATION ACTION ALERT

DATE: January 11, 2008

Governor Proposes Drastic Budget Cuts for Students – The Children of California Need Your Help

IMMEDIATE ACTION NEEDED:

Voice PTA's strong opposition to the Governor's K-12 education budget proposal.

- Email or call your State Assembly member or Senator right away!

Message: **PTA urges legislators not to cut Proposition 98, the minimum public education funding guarantee for our students.** The impact of the unprecedented cuts proposed in the Governor's budget would severely harm each and every school.

[Find Your Legislators](#)

Or paste this into your browser:

<http://www.capwebworks.com/addresslookup/lookup.aspx>

- Forward this alert to others to generate the largest response possible.
- Advise the PTA Legislation Team about your contacts and responses received at legislation@capta.org
- Be ready for additional information from California State PTA. This is the first action in what we expect to be a multi-pronged effort to protect funding for our students.

BACKGROUND

On Thursday, January 10, Governor Schwarzenegger released his state budget proposal. The proposal seeks to address the state's estimated \$14 billion deficit by making the largest reduction to education funding in California history. **For 2008-09, the Governor proposes that the Legislature suspend Proposition 98 (the minimum funding guarantee for schools) and cut \$4.4 billion (more than 9%) in education funds.** The Governor also proposes \$400 million in education funding reductions in the current 2007-08 budget year.

While we are still analyzing the details, the proposal calls for:

- \$2.6 billion in cuts by eliminating the statutory 4.94% Cost-of-Living-Increase (COLA) for schools, and reducing the revenue limit allocation by an additional

2%. This would create a combined “deficit factor” (money that is statutorily owed to schools as part of Proposition 98) by a total of \$2.6 billion, or nearly 7%.

- \$1.1 billion in cuts by reducing categorical programs funding, including reductions to the Class Size Reduction program, Instructional Materials, Transportation, Supplemental School Counselors, and many others.
- \$360 million in cuts by eliminating the COLA and “growth” funding for special education, as well as additional cuts to special education, which is already chronically underfunded.
- \$200 million in cuts by eliminating COLA and growth funding for child development programs (nearly \$200 million), which would eliminate nearly 8,000 existing child care slots.
- Reductions in funding for community colleges, as well as University of California and California State University.

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On behalf of California State PTA, President Pam Brady issued the following statement this morning:

Statement on the Proposed 2008-2009 Budget

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—Sacramento, California, January 11, 2008

Pam Brady, President of the California State PTA, issued the following statement in response to the Governor's budget proposal:

"The proposed California State budget flunks the basic test of good government: It hurts our children. A budget is a reflection of our community values. This budget does not value the education, health, or welfare of our children and the future of California.

"Members of the California State PTA are offended by the failure of the proposed budget to meet the needs of children. The Legislature and the Governor have a responsibility to support the children of California. Any mid-year cuts or suspension of Proposition 98, which provides minimum funding for our schools, is unacceptable.

"We don't move toward Twenty-First Century education by going backwards. It is ironic that the highly touted 'Year of Education' is starting out as the year they tried to take billions of dollars away from our children."

The California State PTA is a branch of the 110-year old National PTA, with over a million members statewide. The PTA is the nation's oldest, largest and highest-profile volunteer organization working on behalf of public schools, children and families, with the motto "Every child, one voice." PTA volunteers work in their schools and communities to improve the education, health and welfare of all California children and youth. The PTA also advocates at national, state and local levels for education and family issues. The PTA is non-profit, non-partisan, non-sectarian and non-commercial. For more information, go to www.capta.org.

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CALIFORNIA EDUCATION COALITION STATE BUDGET TALKING POINTS

California State PTA will be working with the Education Coalition to inform legislators and the public about the severity of the proposed budget cuts. Below are some initial Talking Points that you may utilize in addition to the points emphasized in California State PTA's statement.

- While it is clear there are extraordinary challenges in balancing the state's budget, the Education Coalition strongly opposes the Governor's 2008-09 budget proposal and his plans to eviscerate Proposition 98. Our students and schools did not create this budget problem, and their progress shouldn't be undermined because of it.
- The governor's budget reductions would be disastrous to public schools and they are fundamentally inconsistent with the state's goal of improving student achievement. A \$4.4 billion cut to Prop. 98 would mean laying off tens of thousands of teachers and would also result in increases in class size throughout the state, not to mention a further erosion of the support system for students provided by classified and paraprofessional staff.
- Voters passed Prop. 98 almost 20 years ago to ensure our students and schools receive minimum funding. They strongly reaffirmed their support for the minimum funding law in 2005. Proposals to suspend Prop. 98 conflict with the will of the voters and jeopardize the minimum education funding levels Prop. 98 provides for students and schools.
- According to a report released this week from *Education Week*, California spends \$2,000 less per student than the national average. Other recent studies have shown that California seriously underfunds its public schools, with New York spending 75 percent more than California. The "Getting Down to Facts" studies show that billions more would be necessary to ensure the opportunity for all students to meet the state's rigorous academic standards. In addition, California has some of the most overcrowded classrooms as well as the greatest shortage of librarians, counselors and other critical support staff in the nation.
- Experts including the Fordham Foundation (one of the nation's leading proponents of rigorous academic standards), the Public Policy Institute of California, EdSource and researchers at Stanford University all confirm that California's K-12 academic and performance standards are among the most challenging in the nation. With hard work, modest investments in teacher training and the adoption of standards-aligned textbooks, our students and schools have been making progress. Reading scores are up 25 percent and math scores have increased 17 percent in the last four years. This progress cannot continue with these proposed cuts to our public schools.

- A state budget proposal that looks at cuts alone is not a real solution, because it doesn't address California's underlying problem of inadequate and unstable revenue sources. We cannot talk about spending cuts without also talking about increasing revenues.
- The most pressing challenge is to enact a balanced budget that continues the momentum of educational improvement that has been built since the late 1990s. This budget does not do that and anything less is unacceptable.