

A look at the budget

I want to thank you for your interest in our district and your willingness to obtain information about the financial situation facing California public schools in general and the East Whittier City School District in particular. You may not know that during this recession, according to the Legislative Analyst, public education has taken more than its share of the reductions in state spending. In fact, public education represents approximately 40% of the state budget and has taken approximately 60% of the funding cuts. Across the nation, California continues to spend the most per capita on Welfare and Prisons, while the per capita spending on public education remains well below the national average.

The following listing will provide you with a look at the amount of state cuts to the East Whittier City School District budget.

- \$-11,256,000 - The state reduction in General Fund income
- \$ -2,200,000 - Additional General Fund reduction in Governor's current budget
- \$ -2,960,000 - The state deficit of the District categorical funding
- \$ -2,100,000 - The consolidation of all Revenue Limit calculations effective this year
- \$ -30,000 - Title IV Federal funding
- \$-18,546,000 - Total Reduction in funding**
- \$ 6,000,000 - Additional one-time income from the Federal Stimulus (ARRA)

During this time the District has taken many actions to reduce expenditures. The least impact on our students has been our major focus in each of these actions. The following is a brief list of some of these actions that you mayor may not have noticed as we have tried to balance our budget without hurting our educational program.

1. we instituted a soft hiring freeze and required all replacement positions to have Cabinet approval
2. we offered two early retirement incentives and did not replace some of the resulting vacant positions
3. we consolidated district level responsibilities and reduced staffing
4. we completed an employee Benefits audit
5. we cut all District Office travel budgets
6. we reduced all District Office budgets by 10%
7. we reduced school site discretionary funds by 10%
8. we collapsed all Tier III Categorical funds that are not tied to people
9. we implemented an energy saving campaign
10. we are not replacing our Director of Instructional Services as well as other vacant positions as much as possible
11. we reduced the school year by two days so all staff receives two days less pay
12. we reduced the salary of all staff by 1%

TOTAL EXPENDITURE REDUCTIONS FOR ABOVE ITEMS -\$7,075,250

SUMMARY

We have reduced expenditures by over \$7 million with the least impact possible to our classroom program and zero lay-offs to our employees. However, we should all be aware of the fact that all of our employees are taking the equivalent of a 2% reduction in pay this year. We have cut over \$7 million from our budget and if state funding for schools does not improve, it will not be enough. We need everyone to contact their legislators and the governor to get them the message that our California Public Schools cannot take further reductions in funding. According to the California budget agreement of last year, the state now owes the public schools over \$11 billion in order to meet the Proposition 98 minimum guarantee. It is time to start paying some of that back. It is not the time to make that debt even larger. The governor's current proposal cuts another \$2.5 billion from the public schools and he seems unwilling to compromise. As a result, California still does not have a budget for this school year.

We have so much to be proud of in the East Whittier City School District. As parents and community members you help make the difference as this district continues to stand out as a great place for our students to learn and a great place for our employees to work. Thank you.

ADDENDUM - October 27, 2010

As the state finally passed their budget, I decided it would be good to personalize what it means to this district to have our Proposition 98 Minimum School Funding Guarantee Suspended. The Governor and Legislators accepted the fact that they were funding public education in California below this minimum guarantee. This is the second time in three years that they have provided the schools with less than the minimum amount established as necessary to operate the public schools. For the East Whittier City School District, the amount of money we are receiving this year from the state is almost \$5 million less than the Proposition 98 Minimum Guarantee for this year. And it is important to note that amount is on top of reductions in state funding that have been made in each of the past 3 years.