



Budget Watch 2008

Tracking the state's \$16 billion budget deficit. 03.18.08

The pain of the Governor's proposed \$4.8 billion cuts to public education is undeniable—especially with 14,000 pink slips now issued—but CTA's message about the impact of these cuts is being heard and is starting to pay off. There have been numerous local Education Coalition events with outraged parents, teachers, education support professionals and principals. More than 300 news stories have appeared in local papers in the last month alone. These local events are sending a clear message to lawmakers that the education community is united and will not accept any more cuts to public schools. We must continue to put a human face on the proposed budget cuts by telling how they will impact students, schools and colleges. We want our lawmakers to see the need to increase revenues.

Now that midyear budget cuts have been made (*see details on next page*), the Legislature and Governor have moved into the 2008-09 budget debate. This will be a lively debate as many players have already begun to publicly state their positions.

"Democrats will reject any budget that includes less for education next year than this year." —Sen. President Pro Tem Don Perata

Lawmakers are taking notice and speaking out

A Republican lawmaker in Orange County found she had no place to hide as hundreds of parents and teachers stormed a local legislative meeting demanding a better solution. Democratic Senate leaders have taken a "no cuts to education" stance, refusing to negotiate a budget that doesn't also look at revenue increases.

The Los Angeles Times reported that Democratic legislative leaders were "prepared to delay the state budget this year if that's what it takes to get tax increases, which they called the only reasonable solution to California's multibillion-dollar shortfall."

At a news conference at a Sacramento high school, Senate leader Don Perata said, "The Governor's proposal to cut school spending by 10 percent is unacceptable, and Democrats will reject any budget that includes less for education next year than this year."

Even Governor Schwarzenegger has now said that "everything" will be on the table and opened the door for closing tax loopholes for businesses and wealthy Californians.

And where are the other Republican lawmakers on the Democratic leaders call for increasing taxes? According to a report from the e-newsletter *The Roundup*, "almost every GOP lawmaker has signed a 'Taxpayer Protection Pledge,' vowing to 'oppose and vote against any and all efforts to increase taxes.'"

The State Budget Crisis: What Can You Do?

CTA has created a State Budget Crisis Resource Center on its website to provide you with the tools to fight the proposed budget cuts on the local level.

Log in to www.cta.org to find:

- Talking points in English and Spanish
- a Sample School Board Resolution
- a Sample Letter to the Editor
- a Sample Press Release
- a Sample Media Advisory
- and Other budget updates

All of these materials can be used when planning your own local event with your local education coalition.



Encourage other members, as well as friends and family, to visit cta.org to watch our flash video, "It Hurts," about how these proposed cuts will hurt our students and public schools. While on the cta.org home page visitors can e-mail the video to friends and e-mail their lawmakers encouraging them to reject the governor's proposal.

The CTA Legal Department is ready to help any member who has received a reduction-in-force notice. Contact your CTA Primary Contact Staff if you need assistance.

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Midyear cuts

As you know, in January the Governor proposed to cut K-12 and community college education funding by \$4.8 billion over 18 months—including midyear cuts. CTA succeed in limiting midyear cuts. After CTA beat back several attempts to cut more than \$1.5 billion from K-14 schools in the current year, the final legislation reduces education spending by almost \$507 million.

While any cuts to education hurt our students, these midyear cuts—from unexpended funds at the state level—are funds that would have been available to spend on education programs, but were not yet allocated to local districts. It's important to recognize that the Legislature rejected any proposals to manipulate the Proposition 98 constitutional funding protection, which would have made it easier to cut school funding in the future.

Given that the midyear reductions came from savings and unspent funds, local chapters will have to work collaboratively to minimize the impact to programs, staffing and services in the current year. *Be sure to see Bargaining Advice for Local Chapters in this issue.*

The Importance of Working Together

The reality is that the governor's budget proposal could cut school funding next year by nearly \$800 per pupil. It would increase class sizes, eliminate critical support staff, and devastate programs that schools have put in place to help students meet grade-level standards and pass the high school exit exam.

The education community must work together to effectively oppose the governor's destructive proposal. CTA's work with the Education Coalition has been having a tremendous impact (*visit www.protectourstudents.org to see how*).

"We all need to work collaboratively, to keep communications open and honest, and to focus on the primary issue—to protect our students and to reject the Governor's proposal to suspend the Proposition 98 funding guarantee," said CTA President David A. Sanchez. "We encourage management, labor, parents and students to join together in local coalitions. It is important now more than ever that the education community come together to fight these devastating proposals to cut education funding."

In that spirit, CTA has also joined a broader coalition

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David A. Sanchez
CTA President

against the state budget cuts. This coalition is just getting started, but its goal is to show lawmakers that parents, teachers, seniors, firefighters, health care advocates, environmentalists, religious groups, law enforcement officers and all working families are opposed to cutting vital public services. More than 25 organizations have already joined the coalition.

Local action

It was former U.S. House Speaker Tip O'Neill who said, "All politics is local." Well, in this state budget fight, all school cuts are local.

That's why CTA has been holding events all across the state—in San Francisco, Chico, Bakersfield, Eureka, Fresno, San Diego, Ventura, Palm Springs, Monterey, Los Angeles, San Jose, Santa Cruz, and many other cities. CTA is also working with some elected leaders to take the message into cities and communities that these proposed budget cuts are bad for schools and the future of California. On average, about 15 education stories are being written each day in newspapers across the state.

Help protect our students by visiting www.cta.org for the tools to fight these proposed cuts to public education.

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What CTA is Doing

The CTA Board of Directors recently approved CTA's State Budget Crisis Organizing Plan, which was developed by a group of members, leaders and staff. The State Budget Crisis Organizing Plan will lead CTA through the fight to approve a state budget that funds public schools and colleges, and protects the state's minimum school funding law, Proposition 98. This campaign will be very different from a typical CTA political campaign. It must be locally based and must target specific legislative districts. We must continue to put a human face on the proposed budget cuts by telling how they will impact students, schools and colleges—causing lawmakers to see the need to increase revenues. In the next few weeks each CTA region will be meeting to develop its own regional plan.

CTA has been coordinating numerous local Education Coalition events with outraged parents, teachers, education support professionals and principals. More than 300 news stories have appeared in local papers in the last month alone. These local events are sending a clear message to lawmakers that the education community is united and will not accept any more cuts to public schools. Our latest set of radio ads has been getting a lot of attention around the state, especially in Sacramento. After phone calls started coming into legislative offices, Democratic lawmakers launched their own local media events to protect schools from cuts. Senate leaders have taken a "no cuts to education" stance, refusing to negotiate a budget that doesn't also look at revenue increases. And even Governor Schwarzenegger has now said that "everything" is on the table and has given some support for closing tax loopholes for businesses and wealthy Californians. ***So keep up the good work and keep organizing.***

Because we are stronger when we all work together, CTA is also part of a broader coalition against the state budget cuts. A strong California provides quality public schools, affordable health care, safe communities, and help for those who need it. This coalition is just getting started, but its goal is to show lawmakers that parents, teachers, seniors, firefighters, health care advocates, environmentalists, religious groups, law enforcement officers and all working families are opposed to cutting vital public services. *More than 25 organizations have already joined the coalition.*

Bargaining advice for Local Chapters

On February 15, the Senate and Assembly passed legislation to implement nearly \$507 million in midyear cuts to K-12 and community colleges. This reduction was obtained from unexpended state funds—funds that would have been available to spend on education programs, but were not yet allocated to the local level. While these midyear cuts will have no impact on local school district budgets in the current year, many school districts have still issued layoffs based on the Governor's 2008-09 proposals. The deadline for educators to receive layoff notices was March 15.

Bargaining Recommendations from NODD

- If a district has withdrawn a current and/or prior year negotiations offer and/or tentative agreement based on the 2007-08 proposed midyear cuts, the chapter should now expect the district to adjust its budget and reinstate its offer or tentative agreement. If the district refuses, contact your NODD specialist.
- Carefully evaluate any contingency language or formula that may include out years. Always request a review of any potential formula language from your NODD Specialist.
- Continue to engage as much as possible in coordinated bargaining with other local chapters to increase political and bargaining power.
- If the district proposes pay cuts or take-backs you will have to defend the status quo in your contract. Not only is it OK to just say "No" to district proposals, it is encouraged when appropriate. In the past, districts have often said "No" to association proposals when money was available.