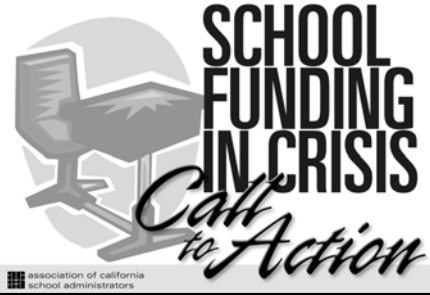
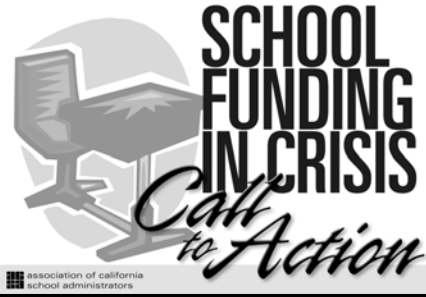


Top 10 Things YOU Can Do NOW to Advocate for Public Schools



1. Contact the governor and state lawmakers immediately in opposition to unfair and onerous cuts to schools and in support of flexibility proposals that protect revenue limit programs including adult education and ROC/P and allow local districts to decide what's best for students. Give lawmakers specific examples of how budget cuts will affect local schools. Sample attached.
2. Contact the President and federal lawmakers to register your support for funding for California schools in the proposed federal economic stimulus package. Billions of dollars in funding for California's public schools will help maintain educational programs and services now threatened by the state's budget crisis. Sample attached.
3. Educate your staff and school community on the details of the proposed \$10.8 billion cuts to education over the next 18 months and describe how cuts will harm your district. Describe how the federal economic stimulus plan and broad fiscal flexibility that protects revenue limit programs including adult education and ROC/P will help local schools maintain critical programs and services for students.
4. Contact local education reporters and editorial boards to explain how further cuts will hurt local schools. Describe the programs and services that already have been eliminated and how further cuts may force your district to make cuts at the classroom level. Explain how current rules and red tape make it impossible to do what's best for students. Sample attached.
5. Write and submit an opinion piece or letter-to-the-editor to your local newspaper(s). Sample attached.
6. Encourage your local school board to adopt a resolution in support of broad fiscal flexibility and in opposition to onerous and unfair cuts to schools. Sample attached.
7. Encourage parents to write and call the Governor and lawmakers immediately. Sample attached.
8. Lead a local news conference urging lawmakers to reject onerous and unfair cuts to education funding. Get involved by participating in a superintendents' rally on Feb. 11 in Sacramento and ACSA's Legislative Action Day on March 23.
9. Speak to your local clubs or community organizations and ask for their support in voicing concern about education budget cuts.
10. Visit ACSA's website at www.acsa.org for the latest news and information about budget developments and ACSA action alerts.



ACSA Talking Points

CUTS TO STUDENTS AND SCHOOLS ARE ONEROUS AND UNFAIR

We strongly oppose budget proposals that cut an additional \$10.8 billion from schools over the next 18 months. We also oppose any manipulation of Proposition 98, the state's minimum school funding law, and current proposals to take \$7 billion from our schools that would never be repaid, in direct violation of the constitutional guarantee. Lawmakers need to raise revenues and solve California's budget problem without further detrimental cuts to an already underfunded public school system.

FLEXIBILITY WILL ALLOW LOCAL DISTRICTS TO PUT STUDENTS FIRST

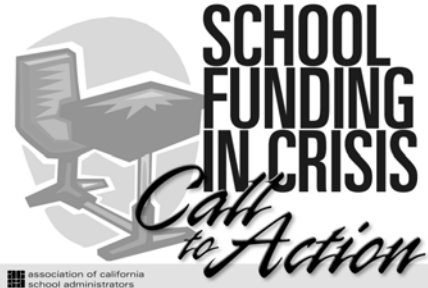
Mid-year and budget year cuts to public schools will disrupt educational programs and classroom learning. We urge lawmakers to support broad fiscal flexibility proposals that protect revenue limit programs including adult education and ROC/P and ensure that local school districts - rather than state lawmakers - decide how to best maximize resources for students and classroom instruction.

SCHOOL FUNDING MUST BE ADEQUATE TO MEET EXPECTATIONS

A recent report by Education Week shows California ranks 47th in the nation in per-pupil funding. The \$3.5 billion in cuts made last year have led to larger class sizes, more than 10,000 layoffs of teachers and other education support staff, and the further elimination of art, music, and career technical education programs. The catastrophic cuts proposed for K-12 education will cause major disruption in our schools and undermine an entire generation of students.

PUBLIC EDUCATION REMAINS A PRIORITY FOR VOTERS

The Obama administration and congressional leaders recognize that public education must be a budget priority. The federal economic stimulus package now under consideration would provide billions of dollars in funding for California's public schools and will help maintain educational programs and services now threatened by the state's budget crisis. The governor and lawmakers must reaffirm their commitment to students and they must prevent onerous and unfair cuts to schools while providing broad fiscal flexibility that protects revenue limit programs and ensures local districts can decide what's best for local students.



Governor's State of the State and Budget Proposal

January 15, 2009

A quick view of the funding cuts to K-14 schools:

Current Year (2008-09)	Budget Year (2009-10)	Cumulative Cuts
\$3.2 billion (COLA)*	\$2.8 billion (COLA)	\$6 billion (COLA)
\$6.6 billion in other cuts**	\$1.4 billion in other cuts**	\$8 billion in other cuts**
Total: \$9.8 billion in cuts	Total: \$4.2 billion in cuts	Total: \$14 billion in cuts

Total of new cuts proposed by the Governor for the next 18 months:

\$10.8 billion

(\$10.8 billion = Cumulative cuts of \$14 billion - \$3.2 billion cut in COLA approved in the 2008-09 state budget)

* This COLA cut was approved in the 2008-09 budget passed in September 2008

** These proposed combined cuts are as summarized by the Legislative Analyst's Office



Sample Resolution

WHEREAS, California's more than 6 million students deserve the highest quality education; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature and Governor already imposed \$2.8 billion in education cuts in September 2008, resulting in significant reduction of essential programs and services to students that are integral to their success, and

WHEREAS, These cuts have resulted in teacher layoffs and increased class sizes statewide, not to mention a further erosion of the support system for students provided by thousands of classified and paraprofessional staff that have also been laid off; and

WHEREAS, The Legislature and the Governor propose to cut schools even further in the middle of the current school year, compounded by deep cuts in 2009-10, resulting in districts having \$1,500 less per student than they need to maintain programs and services for students of two years ago; and

WHEREAS, Very broad fiscal flexibility that protects revenue limit programs including adult education and ROC/P is essential for maximum local decision-making and would allow districts to prioritize during the budget crisis; and

WHEREAS, The Governor's budget plan also illegally manipulates Proposition 98, the state's minimum school funding law, to permanently cut at least \$7 billion from California's students, in violation of the California Constitution; and

WHEREAS, Further budget reductions to education are fundamentally inconsistent with the state's goal of improving student achievement, at a time when our students are making progress toward meeting rigorous state and federal education standards; and

WHEREAS, The budget problem was not created by our students and fixing it should not come at the expense of their educational progress and success;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the _____ school district/county office of education adamantly opposes further cuts to education funding and urges the Legislature and Governor to immediately solve the budget crisis with a balanced approach that includes revenue increases; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the _____ school district/county office of education supports broad local budget flexibility that protects revenue limit programs and helps school districts prioritize the resources they have to best serve the needs of their students.

Sample Letter to Governor/Lawmakers



The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger/Senator/Assemblymember
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger/Senator/Assembly member:

As the superintendent in _____, I will continue to voice strong opposition to public education cuts that threaten our ability to meet the academic needs of our students and the achievement goals set by the state. But I am writing to convey my strongest possible support for broad flexibility in the use of categorical programs, similar to that suggested in the governor's proposal for the special session, while we work to protect revenue limit funded programs including adult education and ROC/P.

This very broad fiscal flexibility is essential in order to manage and survive the level of cuts now under consideration. I am asking you and other state leaders to focus on approaches that help ease the challenges the budget cuts will bring. Every option available that reduces the onerous burden of cuts falling on education must be considered.

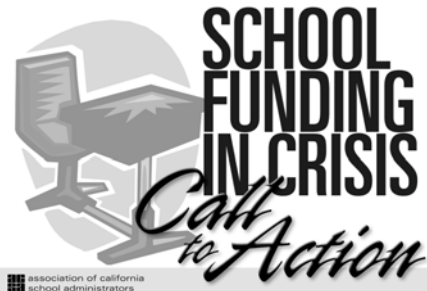
Spending cuts and new revenues must be part of the final solution to solving the state's serious and unprecedented mid-year and budget year funding shortfalls. At the same time, we know that the level of mid year education cuts currently under consideration for the 2008-09 year (\$6.6 billion) will impose reductions so unthinkable that they will significantly undermine our ability to continue essential academic programs and will seriously threaten the fiscal stability of our district.

Including broad and diverse local decision-making authority to schools as part of the final budget agreement is imperative. Such authority is essential so school districts can manage both academically and fiscally – the magnitude of cuts now under consideration by you and other state policy leaders.

Sincerely,

Name

Sample Letter to President and Members of Congress



Dear Members of the California Congressional Delegation:

On behalf of more than 16,600 education administrators in California, the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) is pleased to support the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act "Education for the 21st Century"* economic stimulus package, which provides approximately \$250 billion to support K-12 and secondary education. HR 1 will be on the House floor this week and we urge your support.

We believe the stimulus package for education strikes the right balance by proposing \$41 billion in formula driven allocations (e.g. IDEA, Title I, School Construction, etc.) and \$79 billion in state fiscal relief of which \$39 billion will be used to back-fill serious cuts to K-12 and higher education in California and other states. We recommend HR 1, and the Senate version of the economic stimulus package includes two important accountability provisions for the states:

1. HR 1 (and the Senate bill) would hold states accountable to "supplement not supplant" funding, particularly for the formula driven allocations. We want our state to remain committed to their state mandates and obligations, both in statute and under our state Constitution.
2. It would require states to allocate the funds as soon as they become available to the states. California ties up federal education funding in our state budget process, which has created numerous challenges to meeting federal deadlines and serving students. Recently our state turned back \$12 million in Title I funds because of our complicated state budget process and wrangling over policy differences.

Some key highlights of the "Education for the 21st Century" include:

\$39 Billion for State Stabilization Fund – To Backfill State Education Cuts

As you are aware, California faces an unprecedented fiscal crisis. K-12 education is bracing for a devastating \$10.8 billion in proposed cuts. School districts across the state are facing laying off tens of thousands of teachers on top of the 5,000 teachers who have already lost their jobs. In addition 9,000 bus drivers, custodians, food service workers and other school employees have already been laid off, with more to come. We also anticipate cuts in class size, the arts, music and sports as well as the potential loss of actual instructional days.

Raising the Federal Share of IDEA Funding to 25 Percent - \$13 Billion

Fully funding the 40 percent federal share of IDEA is one of our highest priorities and we commend your committee for their efforts over the years to support this promise.

We understand that \$13 billion in additional federal IDEA funding will raise the federal share to 25 percent (up from 19 percent). This is very good news. California has faced an explosion in autism rates (300

percent in the last five years) and costly lawsuits that make special education funding mandates a key factor when some districts face deficits and insolvency. We urge the committee to retain the full \$13 billion in the package.

School Modernization and Repair Program - \$14 Billion

In a state with more than 6 million public school children, our facilities needs are great. Currently 404 applications are with the Office of Public School Construction and many have been delayed or halted due to our ongoing budget crisis. Our needs in new construction over the next five years will be 23,468 classrooms or 13 new classrooms per day to house 609,997 students.

Our five-year need for classroom modernization and repair is 37,020 classrooms, which translates into 21 per day in order to meet the need of over 800,468 students currently housed in classrooms that are more than 25 years old. We urge the committee to support and retain the \$14 billion for school construction and modernization. This not only benefits students and teachers but will invigorate our economy by putting construction workers back to work.

\$13 Billion in Title I

Closing the achievement gap is one of our highest priorities and given the limited funding to implement NCLB this proposal is critical. We need funding that goes directly to students for additional instructional time, instructional resources, teacher professional development and to implement the reforms and sanctions required under NCLB. Ideally we hope the committee will look toward reforms that allow states to use Title I funds to implement reforms locally that rely less on prescriptive federal sanctions and more on local need.

\$250 Million to Develop Longitudinal Data Systems

Fully funding and implementing California's longitudinal data system is one of our top priorities. In order to fully gauge individual student growth over time and track dropout and graduation rates of more than 6 million school children is a daunting task. We have finally begun the first phase at the state level but we lack full funding to implement the system at the local level in training and infrastructure. We urge the California Delegation to support this small but critical allocation.

We also support other aspects of the package and have just highlighted some critical areas. We urge the California Congressional Delegation to vote aye in support of HR 1.

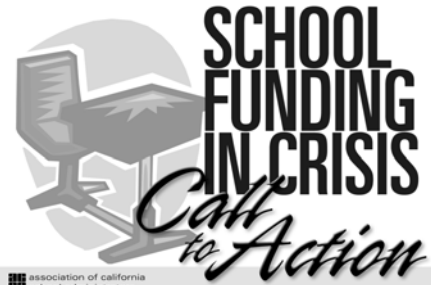
We stand ready to assist. If you should have any questions please contact our staff, Sherry Skelly Griffith, at sgriffith@acsa.org or 916-955-1699.

Sincerely,

Frank Gomez
ACSA President

Bob Wells
ACSA Executive Director

Sample Letter to Editorial Boards and Journalists



Dear Editor:

The Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) is opposed to onerous public education cuts that threaten our ability to meet the academic needs of our students and the achievement goals set by the state. While we understand that some spending cuts and new revenues must be part of the solution to solving the state's serious and unprecedented fiscal crisis, we also know that the level of mid-year education cuts currently under consideration will impose reductions so unthinkable that they will significantly undermine our ability to continue essential academic programs and will seriously threaten the fiscal stability of our districts. Schools must not bear a disproportionate burden of the cuts.

As school leaders, we also want to convey our strongest possible support for broad budget flexibility that protects revenue limit programs including adult education and ROC/P and allows districts to manage and survive the level of cuts now under consideration. ACSA is urging state leaders to focus on approaches that help ease the challenges the budget cuts will bring. Every option available that reduces the onerous cuts falling on education must be considered.

Including broad and diverse local decision-making authority to schools as part of the final budget agreement is imperative. Such authority is essential so all districts have the tools to manage their budgets.

On behalf of all California students, ACSA urges you to shed light on the disproportionate burden of cuts schools are facing and support broad local budget flexibility to help school districts academically and fiscally manage the inevitable cuts.

Local representatives stand willing to meet with your editorial board to further discuss the budget cuts and flexibility proposals now under consideration.

Sincerely,

Name
Title



Sample Letter from Parents

The Honorable (Insert Name)
California State (Insert Assembly/Senate)
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 94248-0001

Dear _____:

As a parent, I am writing to ask you to think about children FIRST in considering solutions to the state budget crisis. Please know that I understand the magnitude of the current financial crisis. Families throughout California are living each day with the realities of the economic downturn. But families also understand we all have a responsibility to children.

There are tough decisions to be made. But please understand – California's responsibility to children cannot be compromised in bad economic times.

The proposed budget cuts threaten an entire generation of children – and that seriously threatens California's economic future.

California is now 47th in the nation in terms of how much we invest in the education of each student. Your decision on the budget will determine if we move forward or backward in our commitment to the future. Your decision will determine whether we abandon quality schools and health and social services for our children. Your decision will determine if tomorrow's workers have the skills they need.

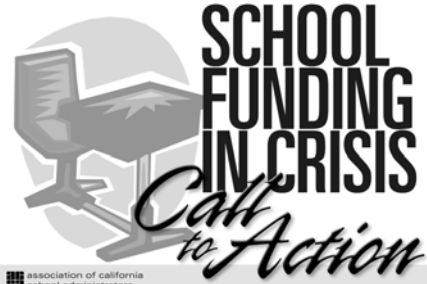
That's how much is at stake.

We must find a balanced approach to the budget crisis that includes **sufficient new revenues** to protect children and the future of California.

The smartest economic recovery plan for California is to invest in students.

Sincerely,

Name



Sample Opinion Article

FLEXIBILITY WILL ALLOW LOCAL DISTRICTS TO PUT STUDENTS FIRST

By: Bob Wells, Executive Director,
Association of California School Administrators
And Kenneth Young,
Riverside County Superintendent of Schools

California's students are halfway through their academic year and neither schools nor teachers are certain they'll have enough funding to keep classrooms operating until graduation day. That's inexcusable in a state where every child is guaranteed the right to a free public education. Especially when funding falls short of expectations, school districts should have the ability to decide how remaining resources are best allocated for their students and schools.

When California voters passed Proposition 13 more than thirty years ago, they shifted the burden of funding schools from local property taxes to the state's general fund. Since that time the annual roller coaster ride of California's economy, coupled with schools' reliance on state tax revenues, has had a dizzying effect on school finance.

Proposition 98 – approved by voters in 1988 – does guarantee schools a minimum level of funding to keep pace with enrollment growth. But it provides a floor, not a ceiling, for funding levels necessary to sustain annual growth in academic achievement and meet expectations in this new era of school accountability.

As California's economic climate has soured in recent years, this floor of funding has secured California's ranking at almost dead last in the nation in the amount we spend to educate each student. A recent report by *Education Week* shows California ranks 47th in the nation in per pupil funding, trailing the national average by nearly \$2,400 per student. Educators are forced to do more with fewer resources year after year as expectations for our students and schools continue to increase.

Today schools' financial and academic predicament is more pronounced than ever before. Lawmakers remain mired in partisan politics and are unable to resolve the unprecedented state budget crisis.

When policymakers approved the 2008-09 budget in September, it was wrought with short-term fixes and borrowing and a lack of stable revenues to meet the needs of California. As a result, schools and other programs that rely on the state for funding are faced with enormous billion dollar mid-year cuts as well as further cuts in the coming year.

Lawmakers contend that the state's economic situation is so dire that even with revenue increases, millions of dollars in cuts to most local school districts will be unavoidable. In Riverside County, education officials estimate over \$500 million in cuts to local schools if the governor's January budget proposal is approved.

While such a reality is frightening it doesn't explain why schools and students are facing a disproportionate share of cuts compared to other state programs and services. Nor have lawmakers agreed to provide school districts broad and diverse local decision making authority to manage their remaining funds and survive the level of cuts now considered unavoidable.

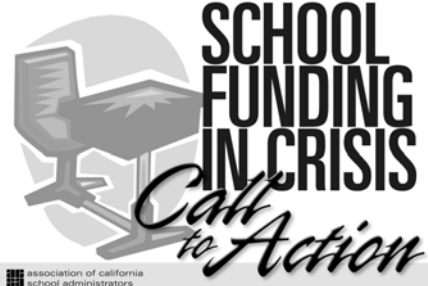
Governor Schwarzenegger has wisely proposed allowing districts to make cuts based on their local needs. His proposal would give districts permanent, broad-based authority to access almost all of funds currently earmarked for specific programs, while still protecting special education, federal programs, bond funds, and court-protected/mandated programs. This will give local schools and communities the ability to run more cost effectively their highest priority programs, downsize and continue second-tier priority programs, and/or shift dollars from low priority programs to protect essential student services and personnel.

The proposal not only gives districts sufficient flexibility to weather the fiscal storm ahead, but also moves the state toward the funding model long sought by educators statewide: one based on outcomes, not inputs. In the past, especially during tough budget times, lawmakers have agreed to increased flexibility for school districts to decide what's best for local schools. As recently as 2003-04 greater fiscal authority at the local level has helped educators focus resources where most needed at the local level.

This budget year should be no exception. The broad local budget flexibility proposed by the Governor will help school districts manage both academically and fiscally the magnitude of cuts now under consideration by the governor and lawmakers. For schools in Riverside County, local communities know what's most needed for all of their students to succeed at school. Determining whether class sizes remain small, library doors stay open, and art and music programs are sustained are decisions that are best made by local school communities.

State lawmakers should not unilaterally decide which education programs are priorities and which ones are expendable at the local level when state resources fall short. Those are decisions best made by parents, students, educators and other local stakeholders in honest and open budget discussions. Such discussions are happening right now throughout Riverside County because school districts have no choice but to immediately prepare schools for harmful mid-year and budget year cuts. With flexibility granted by the state, final budget decisions can focus on what's best for local students.

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Sample Letter to the Editor 1

Dear Editor,

As superintendent of the _____, I am responsible for making sure each and every child has the opportunity to succeed. It is disheartening to know that this success will be much more difficult, if not impossible, if the resources they need for success are not available.

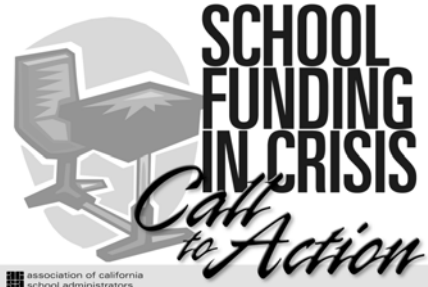
In this era of high-stakes accountability, state lawmakers should not unilaterally decide which education programs are priorities and which ones are expendable at the local level when state resources fall short. Those are decisions best made by parents, students, educators and other local stakeholders in honest and open budget discussions.

Broad fiscal flexibility that protects revenue limit programs will allow school districts the ability to weather the fiscal storm ahead. It also would move the state toward the funding model long sought by educators statewide: one based on outcomes, not inputs. Including broad and diverse local decision-making authority to schools as part of the final budget agreement is imperative. Such authority is essential so all districts have the tools to manage their budgets.

Sincerely,

Name

Title



Sample Letter to the Editor 2

Dear Editor:

There is no denying that the state finds itself in an extremely difficult situation on the budget. As the Legislature debates endlessly about possible solutions, educators are growing concerned that all the budget cut proposals being discussed would place a disproportionate share of the reductions on California students.

Public education in California has already shouldered a larger than fair share of budgetary cuts, even before the recession hit full force. In addition, studies commissioned by the Legislature last year clearly showed that education needs much more funding – not less – in order to meet the state standards for education. California already ranks 47th in the nation in education funding. How low do we want to go?

Maybe the question is how low do lawmakers want to go? California voters have continuously stated in polls and shown at the ballot box that education funding remains a high priority for them. It's time for legislators to reflect that desire of their electorate.

At the very least lawmakers ought to provide flexibility that protects revenue limit programs and allows districts to decide how to manage the cuts at the local level. As a school leader, I am staunchly opposed to onerous and unfair cuts to schools, and I strongly support added flexibility to allow educators to decide what's best for local students.

Sincerely,

Name

Title