

Poway Unified School District

Superintendent Donald A. Phillips, Ed.D.

May 30, 2008

RE: Governor's May Revise Budget

Dear Poway Unified School Community,

As the superintendent of Poway Unified School District, I first want to say thanks to all of you who recently sent letters, emails, and made phone calls to your elected representatives on behalf of public education. Your strength and clarity of voice made a tremendous difference, and the Governor's May Revise budget proposal reflects a higher level of funding for K-12 education than his January proposal. While we are thankful and this improves our financial picture, our district will still need to make significant cuts in next year's budget.

Specifically, the May budget proposal provides \$5.3 million more to Poway than was projected in the Governor's January proposal. Therefore, rather than having to cut over \$16 million from next year's budget, we will need to cut approximately \$10.7 million. While this is not great news, it does make a difference in our ability to maintain many of our fine educational programs supporting your children's education.

Throughout the budgeting process, we have utilized the following four priorities to drive both reductions and decisions to restore when new funds become available:

- Maintaining a focus on College Readiness for each student
- Giving first call of resources to the classroom
- Maintaining a safe and orderly environment
- Retaining staff and discontinuing or reducing program and material costs

Based upon these priorities, we have dedicated the additional \$5.3 million to bringing back teachers and support staff. As a result, program offerings and class sizes will look very similar to the current school year. Our kindergarten through 3rd grade class size ratio will remain at 20 to 1. The goal for our kindergarten program is to move toward full-day kindergarten at each school site where classroom space allows. At the 4th and 5th grade levels, staffing ratios will rise only slightly. The middle school and high school staffing ratios will also rise slightly. Districtwide, this represents a reduction of approximately 15 of over 1,000 teachers.

In order to retain as many programs and fine staff as possible, we have made deep cuts into program and material expenses. Of the \$10.7 million that we still need to cut next year, we were able to target \$8 million in reductions to programs, materials, and services. The remaining \$2.7 million will need to be in the form of other non-classroom personnel reductions.

Reductions include:

- School site supply and material budgets were reduced by approximately 30% for the upcoming school year (a reduction of about \$30 per student).
- Fifth grade music teachers, middle school P.E. teachers, and music assistants were assigned to state grant funds.
- The number of high school assistant coaching positions was reduced by 10 per school.

- District funding for athletic transportation has been eliminated. We will be relying on voluntary donations from parents in order to transport our athletes.
- Regular education home-to-school transportation has been reduced by \$1.2 million. We are restricting regular education home-to-school transportation services to bus routes that generate a minimum of 50 riders in order to cover our operating costs. Only about 6,000 regular education students of our 33,000 students currently utilize transportation services. We anticipate these changes will decrease the number of riders to approximately 4,500 and reduce the number of bus routes by approximately one third. All special education transportation will be continued, based upon state and federal laws. More details will be mailed from our Transportation Department to families currently receiving regular home-to-school transportation.

As a result of these reductions, we are hoping our parents and community will once again give time, energy, and financial support to help maintain Poway's excellent educational programs. I'm confident that, as we work together through our school site foundations and PTA, we will be able to continue to provide a first-rate educational experience for our students.

I also encourage you to continue contacting our legislators to ensure they pass a final state budget that is at least as good for public education as the Governor's latest proposal. And, most importantly, we need to push our legislators and Governor to fix a budgeting system for public education that does not work. Ultimately, schools need stable and adequate funding. Our state needs to invest in our youth to prepare them for their future and to ensure the long-term economic viability of California. Your continued support and involvement is even more important during this coming year.

For more details on the budget, please go to www.powayusd.com and click on "PUSD Budget Updates," located above the Hot Topics menu.

Thank you again for your continued understanding and support.

Sincerely,
Don Phillips
Superintendent