

## Poway Unified School District

*Donald A. Phillips, Ed.D., Superintendent*

May 6, 2009

Dear Parents

I am writing to keep you apprised of our school district budget as we deal with deep cuts due to the loss of State revenue. Let me begin, however, by sharing some very good news.

The Poway Federation of Teachers (PFT), the classified employees represented by the California School Employees Association (CSEA), the administrators, managers, counselors, and others represented by the Association of Poway School Managers (APSM), and the Board of Education have all taken proactive steps to roll back salaries by 2.7% for the upcoming school year, with a corresponding five-day reduction in non-student days. Students will still attend school for 180 days, as required by law.

We know of only two other districts out of the thousand-plus school districts in California that have taken a similar action. This generous and unselfish act will help us to preserve approximately \$4.5 million in jobs and will help reduce the negative impacts on our educational program. I ask you to join me in thanking our staff and the Board of Education for doing the right thing for our students, our community, and their colleagues. We are very fortunate to have such progressive union leadership in our district and such a dedicated and talented staff.

### **Looking Forward:**

We still have two major pieces of the budget puzzle that need to be addressed in our fiscal planning for the years ahead.

The first piece is the federal stimulus package that has recently received so much attention. Our earlier fears that the federal stimulus funding might be siphoned off at the state level appear not to be a concern. The federal government put in place a series of accountability and transparency measures to ensure this would not happen. Although these are one-time funds, the federal stimulus package is the first piece of good news we have heard in a long time, though it falls well short of making us whole.

The second, and most troubling, piece is what lies ahead from Sacramento. The May 19th special election includes budgetary measures 1A through 1E, which appear likely to be unsuccessful. Given the current polling numbers for the special election, we anticipate that the State will be facing a total revenue shortfall of at least \$14 billion (\$6 billion from the special election and \$8+ billion from decreased tax revenues). We are hopeful, but not certain, that the federal stimulus dollars will be sufficient to offset the depth of additional cuts likely to come in the form of major revisions to the 2009-10 budget. It is also not clear when the State will adopt revisions to the 2009-10 budget and whether the political wrangling will carry into the fall or even winter.

### **Next Steps:**

We are working with PFT, CSEA, and APSM to be in a position to rescind layoff notices based upon the salary rollback. We plan to take teacher rescissions to the Board starting as early as the May 11th Special Board Meeting, and classified employee rescissions starting with the May 18th Board Meeting. We are in the initial conversation phase with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). We will closely watch the May 19th special election and the Governor's Budget Revise, due by June 8th. All of these pieces to the budget

puzzle will need to be sorted out and the State will need to approve a final budget agreement prior to considering any additional significant staffing commitments for Poway Unified.

**Program Impact:**

Eighty-five percent of our district's budget is in personnel. In order to manage major budget reductions two years in a row, we cannot help but reduce staff and programs. In developing our budget, we are focusing on maintaining our core program and the necessary support services to provide the very best possible education in a safe, clean environment with the dollars we have. Our staff will continue to do their very best work to support our students, parents, and staff. Having said that, we are making cuts to our very fine education system that will have both a direct and indirect impact on your child's educational program.

**How You Can Help:**

Your continued support of our schools through site foundations, PTA, or individually is deeply appreciated and much needed. Additionally, your voice for your child's education and public education matters in Sacramento. It is important that education receives stable and adequate funding so our students can compete with students around the country and world for colleges, additional training options, and ultimately, jobs. The funding system for education in California needs to be revised so we don't continue to experience this roller coaster in funding.

Please let your legislators know your concerns. I know we all want the very best education for our students. I appreciate your ongoing support and understanding as we navigate these troubled financial waters during difficult economic times in the best way possible for our students.

Sincerely,  
Don Phillips, Superintendent