

# Parent Handout

## Your child's academic future is in jeopardy.

***Do our children really come first?*** As a parent, you would do anything for your child if you knew they were in need of immediate help. Today, your children need your help more than ever. California has an estimated \$42 billion dollar state deficit for the next 18 months. Legislators and the governor must work to address the state's budget shortfall, which is projected to be \$22 billion for each of the following four years – through 2014.

In order to fix CA's budget, our legislature is looking to make further devastating cuts to education and children's programs. California's total school funding could be cut by \$13 billion in 2008-09 if lawmakers don't vote for new revenues. For kindergarten through high school schools alone this would mean a cut of \$9 billion.

**The projected cut to each school district is \$300.00 per student for 08-09. This would mean that San Ramon's budget will be reduced by \$9,680,000 dollars mid-year. This could cause San Ramon Valley Unified School District to:**

Dismantle Class Size Reduction – K – 3 <sup>rd</sup> grade would have 32 students per room
Begin program cuts to your child's counselors, librarians, music, drama, art, technology, industrial education, and other non-mandated classes.
Tell Beginning and Temporary employees they have been laid off.

**On a state wide basis, up to \$300 dollars reduction per student would mean:**

Shutting down every school across the state for 5 to 10 days
Increasing class sizes statewide by more than 50 percent
Laying off 160,000 classroom teachers or 180,000 bus drivers, custodians, food service workers, maintenance workers, and other education support professionals
Cutting more than \$9,000 per classroom

***But what can I do?*** As a community, we have to increase our efforts to demand that our legislators act responsibly to reach a solution that does not make further devastating cuts to education and children's programs. Legislators just need 3 votes from the Senate and 3 votes from the Assembly to pass a budget that stabilizes adequate funding for schools and other state-funded programs. Now is the time to be heard! You must share this information with everyone. Your children depend on you. You must write to our government officials demanding not to make further devastating cuts to education. This issue is very tough, given the state's economic condition, but it would be shortsighted and even more harmful if we allowed legislators to undermine future generations of children by failing to enact responsible revenue increases. **Parents of newborns and toddlers** – your children will be the most affected. Your advocacy for your child's education has to start today.

***The facts are these:*** Our state already has some of the most overcrowded classrooms and the greatest shortages of librarians, counselors and other critical support staff in the nation. Even before this year’s most recent, devastating budget cuts, California already ranked 46th out of 50 states in per pupil funding, according to Education Week. And many of these cuts would come in the middle of the school year when local school budgets have already been set.

***So what do I say in my letter to legislature?*** When writing to your government official it’s important that we speak with a unified voice on behalf of all children. Some of the key points to communicate;

✓ Further cuts will have catastrophic consequences for California’s schools, and students.
✓ The time to raise revenues and invest in California’s future is now.
✓ It is beyond reckless to make billions more in cuts to schools in the middle of the school year. We shouldn’t turn back the clock on California’s students because of a budget mess they didn’t create.
✓ Our schools need stable, on-going revenues to ensure that students have the resources they need to succeed.
✓ Providing flexibility without adequate funding raises false hope that schools can do more with even fewer resources, while the real crisis facing our students is potentially billions more in cuts to classrooms.
✓ Our elected leaders need to be reminded of what hard-working Californians already know: devastating cuts to public education are undermining our state's future. That’s why parents, teachers and other educators across California are united against further mid-year budget cuts.
✓ California already spends \$1,900 less per student than the national average. The “Getting Down to Facts” studies from Stanford University show that California seriously underfunds its public schools and would need to spend 40 percent more to ensure that all students meet the state’s rigorous academic standards. The studies also show that other states like New York spend 75 percent more on students than California.
✓ California business leaders say the best way to improve our economy is to make sure we have a well-educated work force. The governor and lawmakers must make California’s students a top priority. Refusing to support solutions to raise revenues for schools shortchanges our students and California’s future.

**Joan Buchanan**  
**Assembly District 15**

**Capitol Address**  
 State Capitol  
 Room 2130  
 Sacramento, CA 94249-0015  
 (916) 319-2015

**District Address**  
 1635 Chestnut Street Suite A  
 Livermore, CA 94551  
 (925) 606-4990

**Mark DeSaulnier**  
**Senatorial District 7**

**Capitol Address**  
 State Capitol  
 Room 2054  
 Sacramento, CA 94248-0001  
 (916) 651-4007

**District Address**  
 2801 Concord Blvd.  
 Concord, CA 94519  
 (925) 602-6593