



Superintendent: Pamela A. Martens, Ph.D.

Trustees:
Gary De Smet
Nicole Abaté Ducarroz
Daniel Gustafson
Camerino Hawing
Helen Marsh

June 26, 2009

Dear Staff,

We wanted to provide all of you with an update on our current budget situation and the immediate impact it will have on our District's programs and planning processes.

As a reminder, we have taken significant cost-saving steps in the last year and a half in anticipation of looming State budget problems. These have included reductions in purchases, employment, and administrative services. As you are aware, the State budget situation continues to deteriorate. This has created unexpected negative consequences for Basic Aid districts such as ours in the last two weeks. We must, therefore, very unfortunately continue to look for ways to implement reductions.

We have had a long-standing commitment to making cuts "as far away from the classroom as possible," but continuing reductions challenge our ability to do that. We will constantly seek to implement a thoughtful balance of reductions as they impact both our core educational mission as well as educational support services.

On Wednesday evening, June 24th, the Governing Board provided approval for a set of steps that will be taken in preparation for the opening of the 2009-2010 school year. As we begin to implement these reductions, we also will continue to evaluate **all** potential reductions in light of their impact on learners at all levels within the District.

Key changes anticipated in the next several weeks include the following:

- We will continue the Class Size Reduction program at the high school level, and in grades K, 1, and 2. We will be eliminating the program in third grade.
- We will be reducing counseling services at the high school, the middle school, and within alternative education programs.
- We will be reducing custodial, grounds, and administrative services (custodial, transportation, and District Office support staff).

Another important set of next steps includes the development of a plan for further budget reductions. In addition to the budget balancing necessary prior to the opening of the 2009-2010 school year, there is a strong possibility that we will need to make an **additional \$2.5 million in cuts** prior to the opening of the 2010-2011 school year, depending on State actions.

The plan activities and timeframe will be as thorough as possible, while taking into account time restrictions related to implementation of identified reductions. Among others, the following activities will be implemented:

- Providing detailed information to key constituents regarding the District's finances;
- Holding forums to provide information to and gather information from the Sonoma Valley community at large;
- Creating a budget committee;
- Developing a final set of recommendations to be reviewed by the District's Governing Board

We anticipate final Board action on 2010-2011 budget reductions by January 30, 2010.

These challenges will continue to confront us in the months and years ahead. We are concerned with the nature and gravity of these challenges, but acknowledge the incredible resourcefulness of our district staff and community. Together we will confront these challenges and together we will continue to provide the best possible education to the children of our community. Your assistance and cooperation in this endeavor continues to be greatly appreciated.

For additional information presented at the June 24th Board Meeting, please refer to a PowerPoint presentation on the District website, www.svUSDCA.org. A Budget Update will be given at a Special Board Meeting on July 2, 2009 at the District Office.

While this is very difficult and unpleasant news to receive, we wish you an otherwise enjoyable and restful summer.

Sincerely,
SVUSD Board of Trustees and Pamela Martens, Supt.