

Paradise Valley Unified School District

"Where individual excellence is our goal"

January 15, 2010

Dear Parents:

This is a great time for Paradise Valley Unified School District, as a result of the Maintenance and Operation Override approval by our voters. These are the worst economic times we have faced. Many of our patrons have lost jobs or wages, and taxes in general have increased. In spite of these circumstances, our community demonstrated its support of our schools and for public education. I am so thankful for this, and I am committed to maintaining the fiscal responsibility we have demonstrated in PVUSD for years.

I want to assure our parents that I take very seriously the responsibility to allocate the funds provided by the override to the purposes that were put before voters. Specifically, those purposes are decreasing class size; offering competitive salaries to attract and retain highly qualified teachers and staff; providing instruction for technology, physical education and fine arts (with thoughtful consideration and input from school councils); giving additional assistance in reading, writing and math to students; and promoting safe and healthy school environments.

Even as I celebrate the passage of the override that will result in an increase of \$4.9 million in our overall budget beginning in July 2010, I must caution that we are not yet out of the woods financially. Late last fall, the Arizona Legislature made cuts to the state budget for this fiscal year, and we estimate that our share of those cuts will be about \$5 million. We took that money from our soft capital budget, which normally would be spent for things like classroom supplies and textbooks, rather than cutting employee pay again or decreasing staff.

We are hearing that the legislature may make more cuts in this fiscal year that would result in additional reductions to the district budget. Continued declining enrollment is another factor that may have a significant impact on our ability to fully fund all of the programs and initiatives in which we take so much pride.

I promise that we will be transparent and open about the budget challenges we face, and all stakeholders will have the opportunity for input before I make final recommendations to the Governing Board regarding the 2010-11 budget.

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I want to take this opportunity to thank the parents and employees who have been part of the Community Legislative Network (CLN), who I believe were instrumental in garnering support for public education at the legislature in the last session. I encourage all of you to become familiar with the work of the CLN and to participate in its continuing efforts. You can find more information about the group, and sign up for legislative updates via e-mail, at this website, <http://cmweb.pvschools.net/siteweb/legislative.htm>.

I want you to know that I believe good things are happening in our classrooms and schools, and that we remain committed to the quality of education that our parents and community expect. There is much evidence of this, including the fact that 22 of our schools are Excelling, eight are Highly Performing, and others are receiving higher labels than they did the year before. There also are no Underperforming schools.

I have complete confidence that our dedicated staff will continue to do great things with our students, in spite of the budget situation we face as a district.

Thank you for your continued support of our students, our schools, and our district.

Sincerely,

James P. Lee, Ed.D.
Superintendent

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