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Governing Board

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Paradise Valley Unified School District

"Where individual excellence is our goal"

May 22, 2009

Budget update: employee salaries will be reduced by up to 6.2%

John A. Kriekard, Ed.D., superintendent

In February I prepared a letter for parents explaining some of the budget issues the district faced for this year and next, and the difficult decisions district administrators were recommending. The financial situation of the state continues to worsen as we continue to work toward a balanced budget for 2009-10.

During the 2008-09 year, the state reduced our budget by almost \$4.3 million and we believe next year's budget could be reduced by as much as an additional \$9.1 million. Compounding the situation unique to our district is the steady decline in student enrollment, and the failure of a budget override election last November. The override had been in place since 1988 and would not have resulted in new taxes, just a continuation of what property owners had been paying. The failure of the override alone is causing us to cut another \$5.3 million from the 2009-10 budget. If the Governing Board calls for another election next year and it passes, the district will be able to add back that \$5.3 million, but not until the 2010-11 school year. If the ballot question failed again, the district will be required to cut an additional \$5.3 million for the 2010-11 year.

The district will receive some of the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (AARA) stimulus funds, but the money can only be used for Title I programs and special education. It is our belief that the general funds provided by the AARA stimulus will be used by the state to diminish the state's deficit and will not be passed along to school districts.

In the February letter to parents I outlined the staffing changes we are making for next year. The full text of the letter is available to you on the district Website at www.pvschools.net. Choose About PVUSD and then click on Superintendent.

Since February, we have made other difficult decisions. Every employee group agreed to accept a 6.2 percent reduction in salary, including two unpaid furlough days. With an increase in class size and the elimination or reduction of other positions, it is clear that fewer people will be doing more in the coming year. Yet I know that bus drivers will be friendly to students and drive safely; classroom aides will work with special students to help their individual needs; facilities workers will continue to do all they can to provide a quality educational environment; principals will treat students with respect and support teachers; and teachers will work to help all of their students achieve. All employees will help students by doing their jobs the best they can, given the economic conditions.

I hope all of our students and their families have a restful, fun summer break, but I also hope parents will encourage their children to read and reflect on their own learning during that time. And don't forget, Every day counts! Every student should be in his or her classroom when school begins August 17 for another exciting year of learning.