



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Educators outline local impact of state budget cuts: call for reform of state budget process and tax policies

Educators and social services advocates representing Pajaro Valley Unified, Cabrillo College, CSU Monterey Bay, and UCSC held a noon news conference at the Pajaro Valley Unified School District office on Wednesday, November 18. Their purpose was to detail the impact of enormous state education funding cuts on their ability to deliver a quality education, and to propose sensible alternatives.

Pajaro Valley teachers' union president Francisco Rodriguez told reporters that "California is the only state in the country that requires a super-majority to pass both a state budget and new revenues for schools." Said Rodriguez, "Schools and social services throughout our state are being harmed, and that means people are being harmed. It's time to change our broken system of school finance."

Pajaro Valley Unified School District administrators and the teachers' union are deadlocked in negotiations, with the District demanding reductions in health care. Teachers and other school staff are looking at furloughs in addition to the layoffs of the past two years.

To address the issue, Rodriguez is submitting a resolution to the PVUSD Board of Education to put the Board on record for state budget reform and fair taxes on the rich and corporations to fund the state's future.

Jennifer Colby, who teaches at CSU Monterey Bay, said, "Because of CSU budget cuts of \$584 million, 40,000 qualified students will be denied access into the CSU system in 2009 and 2010. For CSU Monterey Bay, no transfer students will be admitted in spring 2010, and 250 of the high school students who apply this month will be denied access for next fall. This is on top of a 32% increase in fees this year (180% since 2002) and a 10% cut to faculty and staff pay through 2 furlough days a month. The California Faculty Association (CFA) and Students for Quality Education (SQE) are gathering at the CSU

board of Trustees today to demand college access for students. There are alternatives to the cuts. We support AB 656 (Torricono), which will provide money for public higher education through taxing oil and natural gas extraction in California."

Jeffery Smedberg, who works for the County of Santa Cruz, said, "Millions of dollars in state funding cuts have decimated mental health programs in Santa Cruz County. Just this week La Paloma House in Watsonville closed its doors. This was the only residential treatment facility in the county for the mentally ill with substance abuse issues. For 20 years this program successfully kept its clients out of more expensive institutions like the hospital or jail."

John Govsky, a part time instructor at Cabrillo College, described what faculty and students are seeing at his college. "At a time of extremely high demand for classes, Cabrillo College's total state funding for the year has been cut by about 8 percent. We are serving about 100 more full-time equivalent students this fall than last year, but funding for the current year was reduced by about 500 full-time equivalent students over last year. This has resulted in unsustainably overcrowded classes that are hurting students.

"Cabrillo has cut course offerings by about 5 percent, we may need to make additional mid-year cuts to our budget, and it looks like significant additional cuts will need to be made next year.

Bobby Salazar, president of CSEA Chapter 132 in the Pajaro Valley Unified School District, also spoke about the impact of budget cuts on school staff.

For more information, contact Francisco Rodriguez at 831-726-6866.

Read the Pajaro Valley Unified School District Resolution below

Resolution on state budget crisis and local education impact

Whereas more than seventy per cent of the funding for classrooms in the Pajaro Valley Unified School District originates with the state of California, and

Whereas over fifteen billion dollars has been slashed from the statewide public education budget (including K-12 through university) in the past two budget years, and

Whereas the impact in the Pajaro Valley Unified District has been approximately 14 million dollars in reduced state funding, and
Whereas the Pajaro Valley Unified School District has been forced to implement severe budget cuts due to the state budget deficit, and

Whereas the impact includes increased class sizes and reduced student services resulting in a loss of access for our students to the education they need and deserve, and

Whereas many employees of the District have already lost their jobs, with adverse impact on their lives, and on the local economy, and

Whereas this is not inevitable, but a matter of political choices made by our governor and legislature to preserve tax loopholes for corporations and the richest residents of the state while balancing the state budget on the backs of our school staff and students, and

Whereas the state of California is the only state in the nation that requires a two thirds legislative supermajority to pass both a budget and new taxes, and

Whereas each year a small minority of legislators, opposed to tax increases on ideological grounds, can block the will of the majority and prevent a balanced approach to solving the budget crisis, and they have done so again this year, inflicting great harm on our ability to carry out our educational mission,

Therefore be it resolved that the Board of the Pajaro Valley Unified School District will work with all interested parties in the community to advocate for a balanced approach, including progressive tax policies, to resolve state budgetary problems that affect the delivery of quality education in our District, and

Be it further resolved that the Board will work with all interested parties to publicly advocate for a simple legislative majority to replace the two thirds supermajority in the California Legislature for purposes of passing taxes and passing a state budget.

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