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Dear Parents/Guardians, Students, Teachers, Classified Staff, Administrators, and Community Members:

Re: SRCS Budget Information 2009-10

The Board of Education and I are deeply concerned about the direction in which the California State Budget is developing...or rather unraveling. Not only have the state and its schools endured cut-after-cut, but the Governor now projects a new round of budget cuts to be revealed in January. The current fiscal year's budget is estimated to be another \$5 to \$7 billion in the red on top of the original \$7.4 billion deficit. Sacramento insiders' estimate the projected deficit ranges from \$12.4 billion to \$21 billion, not \$7 billion.

The governor has promised added "across-the-board cuts." More than likely, these will come from deeper cuts to the operating budget, which is the source of funds for educational programs. This could also mean additional deferrals of money, a tactic that has had a crippling effect on many school districts. Monies originally allocated for March may have been deferred until June or later, making cash flow for school districts extremely difficult. For those who did not have healthy reserves or the ability to borrow, cash flow could come to a grinding halt.

All of this has fallen upon the state and our students because of "weaker than expected revenue collections and unrealized-but-budgeted savings." Who is doing Sacramento's accounting? Are they living in the same recession we are? School districts must present a three-year budget in the black to receive a positive rating and approval from the County Superintendent. Where is the state's three-year budget in the black? Please contact your legislators, and let them know your concerns.

*In the meantime, we in Santa Rosa are placed in the predicament of having to make decisions such as shortening the school year, increasing class sizes, or cutting valuable, non-mandated classes for 2010-11. With the understanding that the budget projections for the next two years may include staff and service reductions, the Board of Education and staff are highly interested in your input on the **List of Potential Budget Reductions**. This list is available in both English and Spanish on our district website www.srcs.k12.ca.us.*

Simply click on an item and send a comment to the Board and to me automatically. We have already received over 295 comments regarding potential budget reductions. An idea was sent to us recently to reduce the time a particular service was offered rather than cut the service altogether. The Board and staff would like to know your ideas for looking at services in new and different ways, so that we can preserve as much as possible for our students.

On our SRCS website, you will find a Budget Calendar which chronicles the budget process we have and detailed information about the budget. At the next two Board meetings, November 18 (6:30 EAHS) and December 9 (6:00 City Council Chambers), and at the two Town Hall Meetings, November 30 (6:30 -8:30 PHS) and December 7 (6:30 – 8:30 MHS), we will be specifically listening to input from the staff, students, parents, and community members. The ideas will be considered by the Board as decisions are made beginning January 13 and thereafter. We hope you will join us.

The place we call “school” has been around for many decades, often having to reinvent itself when there were windfalls of money or severe cutbacks. Working together, we can make it through this tough time as well. It is so important to our children, youth, and community to keep students progressing successfully toward their goals for the future.

We will know more when the Legislative Analyst’s Office releases its report shortly. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call or email.

Sincerely,

Sharon Liddell

*SHARON E. LIDDELL, ED.D.
Superintendent*