



WINTERS JOINT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
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REBECCA D. GILLESPIE, ED.D.
SUPERINTENDENT

**BOARD OF
TRUSTEES**

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December 2009

Dear Winters School District Stakeholder;

The Board of Trustees and I are interested in sharing some information with you and gathering your feedback in order for us to do some very important financial planning. We receive much of our school funding from the State of California, and recent cuts to education have been devastating. The voter-approved Proposition 98 established minimum funding for education, but last year, the legislature and Governor cut this funding guarantee to balance the State budget. In fact, of all public entities, Public Education took the largest budgetary hit, with reductions of more than 48% to the Prop 98 guarantee. The next largest hit was to Higher Education with almost 11%, and reductions to other agencies falling far below the 10% range. In other words, the State balanced its budget based largely upon cutting funds to our schools. Over the last 2 years, we have experienced a 20% reduction in State funds. To put it another way, we are operating today on an income that is very close to what we received five years ago. While costs have escalated, income has been slashed – often in the middle of a school year.

Due to no fault of our own, we are now projecting a \$1.4 M structural deficit in 2010/11 and in 2011/12 unless we further cut our 2010/11 expenditures by \$700,000. Our District has been hit very hard due to 7 straight years of declining enrollment on top of the draconian cuts from the legislature. Schools are funded on student attendance (not *enrollment, by the way, but actual attendance*), and when there are fewer students, our income decreases even though often, our costs to provide services (clean classrooms, utilities, transportation, business functions) do not decline proportionately.

We now face very difficult budget-cutting decisions. About 85% of our budget is comprised of costs associated with people as we are in a people business. That cost covers all employees and benefits. Over the many years of declining enrollment, we have “picked the low hanging fruit” and made cuts as far from the classroom as we could. For example, we have cut custodial and operations costs to bare bones; we have left vacant positions (administration, instructional, and support staff) unfilled whenever possible; we have offered retirement incentives; and we have cut energy use, to name some of the cost-cutting measures.

Our stakeholders have expressed an interest in having input into how further cuts are made. We have held two budget workshops where we brainstormed ideas with our community. While many good ideas have been put forth, we would also like to extend the opportunity for any and all interested parties to express an opinion or offer ideas. The list of ideas brainstormed so far is available in our District Office or on our website. Please feel free to take a look at those ideas.

Thank you for your ongoing interest in and support of our schools. We believe that we will get through this together.

The Board and Superintendent of the Winters Joint Unified School District

**(SURVEY ON BACK TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENT/GUARDIAN
& RETURNED TO THE SCHOOL OR DISTRICT OFFICE BY
DECEMBER 16, 2009)**

WE LEARN TOGETHER / APRENDEMOS JUNTOS

**WINTERS JOINT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
COST SAVINGS SURVEY**

1. Please give us your ideas about how you think we can cut costs and continue to offer a quality education to our students?

2. What are your top 3 priorities for us to **keep** during these tough budget times?

3. Any other comments or suggestions?

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