



## State Budget – May Revise: Questions and Answers

**Q: I've heard that the revised budget recently proposed by Governor Schwarzenegger restores the funding to schools and means education programs won't be cut. Is this accurate?**

A: No. The Governor's first budget released in January proposed the most severe cuts to schools in our state's history. Parents, teachers and other education advocates across California have been vehemently protesting these cuts. Unfortunately, the Governor's most recent budget proposal ("the May Revise" released on May 15) – while restoring some of the funding into the education budget – would still significantly under-fund our schools and force more than \$4 billion in cuts to education programs. That's why the PTA opposes this most recent budget. It still flunks the basic test of good government: It hurts our kids.

**Q: But, doesn't the May Revise fully fund Proposition 98 – the state's minimum guarantee for education funding levels?**

A: The May Revise would meet the *minimum* legal funding level for schools, but it still proposes far less than *the minimum amount needed by schools to pay for the increased costs just to keep programs at their current levels*. The May Revise would eliminate annual cost of living adjustments to schools, despite the steadily increasing operating costs for local districts. Once again, schools and students are being asked to do more with less. In addition, this budget proposal would make across-the-board cuts to many vital programs that contribute to student achievement and engagement, such as class size reduction, arts and music, instructional materials, and career technical education programs. While the May Revise proposes to *partially* restore some cuts from the January budget proposal, it still cuts billions of dollars from public education. All cuts hurt students and California's schools are already woefully under-funded.

**Q: How would it impact children's healthcare?**

A: If the May Revise is implemented, it would impose new, draconian policies in the Medi-Cal and Healthy Families programs that would result in more than 500,000 California children losing their health coverage over the next two years — increasing the number of uninsured children in California by 70%.

**Q: What about programs for foster children and working families struggling to make ends meet?**

A: The proposed budget would eliminate financial assistance for 200,000 children whose parents are in the CalWORKs program – often single mothers working their way out of poverty. It would also cut \$84 million from the child welfare services budget, limiting counties' ability to ensure the safety and well-being of the more than 70,000 California children in foster care. It would reduce state funding for child care and development programs in 2008-09. This budget would also make across-the-board reductions for a number of programs that assist children and families, including the Child Welfare Services Program, the Foster Care Program, the Adoption Assistance Program, and the California Food Assistance Program.

**Q: Does this budget proposal include any new proposed revenues or does it rely fully on cuts to balance the budget?**

A: A few fee increases are proposed, such as a state park admission fee increase of \$1, and student fee increases to the UC and CSU systems and a \$6 - \$12 annual surcharge on homeowners' insurance to fund emergency response services. The Governor has also proposed a plan to borrow money from future State Lottery revenues to help balance the budget. This proposal would need to be placed on the ballot as a measure to be approved by California voters in November. In the event the voters reject the Lottery ballot measure, the Governor is asking the Legislature to support a 1% increase in the state's sales tax rate. By and large, the May Revise continues to rely mostly on a "cuts-only" approach to closing the budget deficit gap.

**Q: What's PTA's solution to address the budget deficit and provide necessary funding for schools and other children's services?**

A: PTA continues to advocate for a balanced approach – one that generates enough revenues to prevent cuts to education and children's services and recognizes the need to invest in our children's futures.

**Q. So, what's PTA's message moving forward?**

A: Our message has and will remain the same since January: no cuts that harm children or California's future. We must continue to "flunk the budget" because it contains severe cuts to education and children's services. We believe legislators and the Governor must develop a balanced solution that allows us to invest in our children's future and the future of the state. And we must raise our voices throughout this spring and summer on behalf of California's children, they did not create this financial crisis, and their future should not be undermined because of it.

**Q: What can PTA members do to help protect school funding and children's services?**

A: Help us ensure children have a voice in this debate, now through the end of summer. Please call your local state assembly and senate representatives. Let them know you do not want to see cuts to children's services, and that you expect them to find a balanced approach that invests in our children's future and the future of our state. You can find their names and contact information on-line at <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/yourleg.html>. Just enter your zip code, and your elected officials' contact information will appear. **They are YOUR representatives in Sacramento – are they representing your interests?**

*"Since January, parents and community members throughout the state have raised their voices in overwhelming opposition to the damaging cuts to education and children's services proposed in the state budget. The May Revise appears to reflect some of those concerns by not suspending the minimum education funding guarantee. However, there is still much work to be done by the Legislature and Governor to ultimately ensure a balanced budget solution that does not jeopardize the health, safety and education of our children and our future workforce. Many essential programs and services are still extremely vulnerable. California State PTA will continue to carry the message that shortchanging education funding and services to children is the most expensive mistake California can make.*

*"The dialogue at the Capitol needs to continue moving towards how much we should invest in our children and California's future, not how much can we afford to cut. California has been operating for too long with a broken, outdated budget process. By adequately investing today, we can ensure that California has a viable economy in the future.*

*"Now is the time to invest in our children and in the future of California."*

Pam Brady, California State PTA President