

NEWSLETTER

Community Partnerships Academy
Berkeley High School



March 2008

website: <http://www.bhscpa.org>

Bad News—Budget Cuts!

Governor Schwarzenegger wants to cut spending for public education by \$4.8 billion. The budget has not been passed but school districts must submit a balanced budget by June 30th based on the proposed cuts.

The Cuts

Karen Hemphill, a CP Academy Parent and Berkeley School Board member, tells us:

*Let's be clear. The **only** reason that our School District is in this position of likely having to lay off teachers and other critical staff positions is **because of the proposed state budget cuts.***

The Governor's proposal to cut \$4.8 billion from public education is devastating to Berkeley schools. Although, the State has not adopted this proposal yet, school districts are required to submit a balanced budget by June 30th based on the Governor's current proposal. For Berkeley, this means that we must reduce our budget by \$3.7 million for the 2008-09 school year. Unfortunately, given that approximately 85% of our district budget is staff costs this means that the Board is forced to cut teachers, administrators, and other staff positions.

How The Cuts Hurt Us

Governor Schwarzenegger's cuts mean big problems for CPA. First, our counselor, Caren Ohlson has already received a layoff notice. (See her sad goodbye in the *Counselor's Corner*.) Her leaving means that there is no adult dealing with the daily grind of student personal problems. It will be left for CPA teachers who will have to subtract time from teaching to pick up the slack. The many of us who have experienced Caren's help firsthand know how supportive and committed she is and how much difference it makes having a person at school

dedicated to our children's well-being both inside and outside the classroom. Losing her is a big blow to our program.

Another dire possibility is the threat of a cut in administrative support time for both Lead Teachers, Annie Johnston and Wyn Skeels. They've already publicly said that they can't continue on the present 0.4 FTE, they need 0.6 FTE administrative time to run the small school. Unfortunately, the Board will probably offer 0.2 FTE as a beginning bargaining chip due to the drastic cuts. The eventual negotiations will probably lead up to a 0.4 FTE which is what both teachers say they can't handle. So the cuts lead right to the heart of the viability of CP Academy as a small school. This is only a start.

There is also the distinct possibility that we will lose teachers. Our allocation for teaching staff is currently under discussion and the proposal from the administration is a significant reduction, threatening our ability to continue either our math program or our English programs as planned. We are in the midst of discussing this situation with the administration and with the Shared Governance body.

If you were ever going to do something to support CP Academy, now is the time. You need to write a note to your local and state representatives and Governor Schwarzenegger, making it clear that if they cut education you will not be voting for them. Don't think you can stand on the sidelines on this one and not get burned, or, as Fredrick Douglass more eloquently put it, "The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress."

What You Can Do

■ This Thursday, March 20th, come to a meeting in the BHS library to plan a mobilization to Sacramento to protest the budget cuts this spring and demand that the California legislature increase its commitment to the education of our youth. We will accept nothing less than an increase in resources for education.

■ Write/call/email your State representatives and urge them to fully fund public education.

Governor Schwarzenegger, State Capitol Building,
Sacramento, CA 95814

State Senator, Don Perata, 1515 Clay Street, Suite 2202,
Oakland CA 94612

State Assembly Person, Loni Hancock, 712 El Cerrito Plaza,
El Cerrito CA 94530

■ Write the following local representatives about the 0.4 to 0.6 FTE for Lead Teachers at 2134 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley, CA 94704 or email them through the BUSD website:

Superintendent Bill Huyett,, Board Members: Joaquin J. Rivera, John T. Selawsky, Shirley Issel, Karen Hemphill, Nancy Riddle

■ Urge any professional, social, and/or political organizations that you belong to take formal positions to fully fund public education and send letters to the Governor and other State officials.

■ Ask family, friends, and associates living in conservative legislative districts to contact their representatives and let them know that full support of public education is valued and that their continued pledge to refuse to even consider additional revenue options to help address the State's budget deficit and/or support public education is **not acceptable** and **not supported** by voters in their districts.

Counselor's Corner



Caren Ohlson is the counselor for all CP Academy families. You can always contact her at 644-8987 or caren_ohlson@berkeley.k12.ca.us.

Helping with the Big Transition

Every year at Berkeley High, we see ups and downs among the Senior class as they make the exciting and difficult transition into adulthood. For most teenagers, graduating high school is their first huge accomplishment. It is a rite of passage. With this transition is celebration and sadness; something is gained and something is lost. I have spoken to many seniors this semester about the many conflicting feelings they have about transitioning

from childhood to adulthood. Some days they feel ready, some days they don't. Some days are exciting; others are terrifying.

How do we, as adults, welcome these young folks into the adult world? There is no one answer, but here are a few suggestions:

■ Celebrate your child's accomplishments even before June 13th. Take as many opportunities to celebrate as you can!

■ Shower them with praise and appreciation. If you like something about how your child is planning, studying, or relating to you and others, keep telling them! It will help them feel confident and excited about being in the "real world."

■ Ask them questions that get them thinking about next steps. Some students have a plan, others don't yet. If your child seems depressed or anxious, they may need your help figuring out what's next for them.

■ Talk to someone you trust about your own feelings about your child's transition. Expressing your own feelings of fear, anxiety and sadness outside of your child's presence could help you be more present and helpful when your child needs your adult wisdom.

■ Get some consultation from a counselor, pastor or friend if you notice your child has lost motivation, seems depressed or overly stressed out.

Transitions can be very hard on some folks, but with a little extra help, they get through just fine!

On the topic of transitions, I am sad to say that I have not been asked to return to Berkeley High School next year. I will greatly miss the students and feel blessed to have gotten to know each of them—some a lot, some just a little—in the last year and a half. There will be many opportunities to say goodbye between now and June 13th. I wish all CPA families many blessings and hope that each of you will become as involved as you can with the program.

Other News

■ The next parent meeting will be Thursday, March 20th from 7 pm to 9 pm in the College and Career Center on the 2nd floor of the "D" Building.

■ Good news—We received a \$10,000 grant from In Dulci Jubilio for our Writing for College program which includes both AP English and WritersCoach Connection. We are still writing grants for both.

■ Correction: Louis Davis should have been included on the honor roll last month.