

## **Governor's Proposed Budget Cuts Include Special Education, Related Programs**

Citing a budget crisis, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has proposed a budget that cuts nearly all departments by 10 percent, including \$400 million in reductions in this year's budget and \$4.4 billion in cuts to education in the next fiscal year.

What this means to school psychologists is largely unknown and will depend on the budget situation facing each school district. However, among the proposed cuts is a \$357.9 million cut in 2008-09 for special education, \$198.9 million for child development programs and \$59.6 million for before and after school programs. The proposed 2008-09 budget also calls for a \$9.2 million reduction in Special Day Schools.

"Many of our small school districts and those districts that are experiencing declining enrollment already feel like they are maximizing all their resources and have 'bare bones' budgets," said CASP President Betty Connolly. "While all LEAs will be heavily impacted by mid-year budget cuts, these smaller districts will be hit the hardest. These budget cuts come at a particularly difficult time for all California schools as they strive to comply with the demands of No Child Left Behind and increased requirements for accountability at the federal level."

"Now is certainly the time for school psychologists to increase their visibility at school reminding administrators and teachers of their value in all areas of special and general education" said CASP Executive Director Suzanne Fisher. "CASP is ready and able to provide members with the materials or advice needed to make presentations to school boards; county offices; parents and local community leaders on how their skills and talents are critical to the academic, social, and mental health of children and families."

The major reductions, as described by the governor's office, are described below:

- \$2.6 billion in 2008-09 for school district and county office of education revenue limit apportionments. This will eliminate the 4.94 percent COLA and reduce existing revenue limit levels, thereby creating a 6.99 percent deficit factor.
- \$357.9 million in 2008-09 for Special Education. No COLA will be provided and existing state funding for local schools' special education costs will be reduced. Schools may have to backfill most of this reduction as the program is federally mandated.
- \$198.9 million in 2008-09 for Child Development programs. No COLA or growth will be provided for this program and, after accounting for normal program savings, approximately 8,000 existing slots will be reduced. Normal attrition rates in these programs should reduce the likelihood of a currently enrolled child losing their slot.
- \$59.6 million in 2008-09 for Before and Afterschool Programs. The administration will propose a ballot initiative to amend Proposition 49 to achieve these savings. The impact of this reduction would be minimal because a number of recent grant recipients have not implemented the program or have not achieved the enrollment levels initially anticipated.
- \$14.2 million in 2008-09 for Child Nutrition Programs. This reduction will cut the free and reduced price meal reimbursement rate by approximately \$0.02. However, the program received a \$0.06 per meal augmentation in 2007-08.
- \$1,095.7 million in 2008-09 for other K-12 categorical programs. COLA adjustments will not be provided and proportional funding rate reductions will be applied to programs such as Class Size Reduction, the Charter School Categorical Block Grant, Instructional Materials, Supplemental Instruction, Home-to-School Transportation, Supplemental School Counseling and various Career Technical Education programs.

- \$5.6 million in 2008-09 for Department of Education administration and program support. The Superintendent of Public Instruction will have discretion to allocate this reduction.
- \$9.2 million in 2008-09 for the Department of Education State Special Schools. This reduction is unallocated to provide maximum flexibility to the Superintendent and the State Special Schools.

So, what can a school psychologist do about this? Tell the people you work with and for of your important role in the educational community. CASP can help.

- In this issue of *CASP Today* is a Resource Paper on the school psychologist's role in general education. Cut it out, make copies and pass it around. The paper is also available on the CASP web site at [www.casponline.org](http://www.casponline.org). Click on Publications and check the drop-down menu.
- Colorful brochures on school psychologist and what they do are available from CASP by calling 916.444.1595 or emailing [memberservices@casponline.org](mailto:memberservices@casponline.org). Downloadable brochures are available in the *members-only* section of the web site.
- Apply for a California School Psychology Foundation Mini-Grant. These \$500 grants can be used for programs or ideas that would not otherwise be paid for with school funds. The CSP Foundation is currently focused on pairing school psychologists with school district homeless coordinators to fund student's unmet needs. Please see the CASP web site under CSP Foundation for more information.
- APA Licensure Exemption renewal: The American Psychological Association is considering not renewing its exemption for school psychologists. This exemption allows psychologists with less than a doctoral degree to practice school psychology in educational settings. Remind administrators that having to turn to clinical or other licensed psychologists for services could place more strain on district budgets. See the CASP website for more information on the APA/MLA issue.
- Make a presentation to your school board: Show your local elected representatives what you do. Collect anecdotes (you'll want to change student names), distribute brochures and cite state law while letting them know of the role school psychologists have in safe, secure and successful learning environments.
- Use every networking opportunity you can. Attend CASP Convention 2008 and check out the Job Faire. A district near yours could be looking for school psychologists. Also, talk to other school psychologists about potential openings. You never know what district or county office may be in the market for school psychologists despite the proposed budget cuts.
- Become educated: Education is on the long list of programs and services the governor has proposed for major cuts. Keep up with how the Legislature will react to these proposals and let your representatives know what you think about them. Please check the Legislative page of the CASP web site for current updates on the proposed cuts. If you would like to meet with your Assemblymember or Senator, please contact Justin Salinek, CASP 's legislative assistant, for information on setting up a meeting or tips on what to say in a letter.