



December 18, 2009

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Full Funding of Proposition 98 in the January Budget Proposal

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

The San Diego Unified School District strongly recommends that your January Budget Proposal include full funding of Proposition 98, the voter-approved, constitutional guarantee for public education funding.

The state of California has cut public education by \$18 billion over the past two years. The Federal State Fiscal Stabilization Funds that you aggressively pursued helped temper some of the cuts, but our schools will feel the full brunt of past state cuts next year as this one-time funding runs out. San Diego Unified School District already has had to increase class sizes, cut back on learning materials and make other significant program reductions as a result of the continuing reductions in state funding for K-12 education. Next year, we will need to make \$64 million in additional budget cuts within the district as we continue to adjust our budget in response to past state funding cuts and decreased federal funding. The loss of additional state funds if Proposition 98 is suspended would prove devastating.

The Proposition 98 minimum guarantee is not a high bar. The guarantee was designed to be responsive to declines in state revenues. Indeed, the guarantee allowed for the deep cuts made in recent years because state revenues declined so dramatically. The guarantee does not allow for greater cuts in the current or budget year, however, and to force those cuts with the suspension or manipulation of Proposition 98 would significantly threaten our ability to provide students with a quality education.

We recognize that in these difficult times everyone is being asked to do more with less. Public education in California has contributed more than its fair share. On behalf of our schoolchildren and their families, we urge you to fund public education at the level required by the state constitution so that our district's budget shortfall is a problem we can solve, rather than one that will devastate our schools and harm the future of our students and our state.

Sincerely,

Richard Barrera
Board President

William Kowba
Interim Superintendent

C: Jeannie Oropeza, Department of Finance
Paul Navarro, Office of the Governor
Glen Thomas, Secretary of Education
San Diego Legislative Delegation