

**Key Points on
Governor's Proposed State Budget
January 18, 2008**

- The governor's proposed budget is a giant step backwards for our students. It's disappointing and ironic that in the proclaimed "year of education," the governor is talking about cutting billions from our public schools and decimating our minimum school funding law.
- Our students didn't create this budget crisis and their education shouldn't be ransomed to solve it. While it is clear there are extraordinary budget challenges, it's also clear that California voters believe our students and public schools should be a top priority and strongly support our minimum school funding guarantee, Proposition 98.
- Any structural budget reforms must protect Proposition 98, as well as provide the stable funding our students and schools deserve. Voters passed Proposition 98 almost 20 years ago to create stable minimum funding for our public schools. And they strongly reaffirmed their support for the minimum funding law in 2005.
- We can't keep asking our students and schools to do more with less. True leadership means setting priorities and it means implementing a balanced approach of spending cuts and revenue increases to close the \$14 billion budget hole.
- The governor's proposed solution to the state's budget crisis will create chaos in California's public schools. Midyear or across-the-board education cuts will be devastating. An across-the-board cut of 10 percent means \$4.8 billion less for our public schools. That's the same as laying off more than 107,000 teachers, or shutting down every school in the state almost a month early, or increasing the number of students in every classroom by 35 percent.
- Local schools are well into the school year, and any cuts now would have a direct impact on students and vital programs. Midyear cuts to our public schools should be made with students in mind and kept far away from our classrooms. In fact, many districts are still recovering from the budget cuts made to our schools five years ago when thousands of teachers, school counselors and librarians were laid off. California has some of the largest class sizes in the country and currently ranks dead last in the number of counselors, school nurses and librarians per student.
- Our students and schools have been making progress, with reading scores up 25 percent and math scores increasing 17 percent in the last four years. If we want this progress to continue, now is certainly not the time to be cutting funding to our public schools.
- We agree with the governor that "business as usual has been disastrous for our schools." Education Week's *Quality Counts* report released this week gave California a grade of D+ for school funding and reported that California spends close to \$1,900 less per student than the national average. Other recent studies have shown that California seriously underfunds its public schools, with New York spending 75 percent more than California. The typical American school has 30 percent more teachers than the average school in California. Acting boldly on behalf of California means boldly investing in our public schools, not shortchanging our children and the future of our state.