

FAQ's

2/10/10- v 2.5

1. What programs at Stevens Creek were affected by the first \$5 million of cuts from the District?

Please see the District Website for information on what was announced at the Mon. Jan. 11, 2010 District Board meeting <http://sites.google.com/a/cusdschools.org/cusdbudget09-10/> . Of the cuts which were voted on and ratified (Group A), the 30:1 primary classroom size adjustment , the nightly custodian reduction (50%) and the GATE funding cut directly affect Stevens Creek. Since some of the options for mitigating these cuts involve increasing PTO expenditures, other PTO programs may also be affected.

2. What programs at Stevens Creek are affected by announcement of \$3.8 million in additional cuts (for a total of \$8.8 million) from the District?

Please see the District Website for information on what was announced Fri. 1/15/20 <http://sites.google.com/a/cusdschools.org/cusdbudget09-10/> . At this time (1/19/20), we do not have information about what the District will cut from the District budget to make up the extra \$3.8 million. Items which appeared in a Group B and Group C of their previous analysis (but were not implemented under the \$5 million cut scenario) included cutting 2 hrs. of elementary library funding (the PTO already pays for the other 4hrs of library time we have) and various choices which would need to be negotiated with bargaining groups (including furloughs and pay cuts, among other choices). The District and bargaining groups will be meeting on Feb. 10th to discuss the total \$8.8 million cuts. The District plans to vote on the \$8.8 million cuts at their Mar. meeting. Please see the District website for more information as the rules of engagement around the negotiations are complicated.

3. How will the PTO decide how to respond to and mitigate District Budget Cuts?

We are monitoring the District's Budget Cut choices and planning relative to the information they are releasing. Due to the timing of personnel contracts and the need to show a District Balanced Budget (and many legal requirements for them), they have a set timeframe with dates which they must meet (see the District website for more information- Please see the District Website for information on what was announced at the Mon. Jan. 11, 2010 District Board meeting <http://sites.google.com/a/cusdschools.org/cusdbudget09-10/>). The dates that the District is working with also affect when we need to have our personnel requests in to the District (historically this has happened in the spring for requests for the following fall). All of this means that if we need to mitigate cuts by hiring personnel, we need to be evaluating and planning now.

The Board called together a group to evaluate money saving ideas and cut mitigation strategies in Oct. of '09 when we first heard that these cuts (\$5 million at that time) were coming. We call the group the Budget Advisory Team (BAT) and they will be going through and analyzing the ideas from

parents and teachers and looking at our overall solution space in order to present data to the PTO Board. Please see the slide set which was presented at the Jan. 14th PTO Board Meeting for more information about the process and Idea List (see the Idea List link off of the PTO home page under the Budget Mitigation section).

The short answer on process is that the BAT team will investigate 8 areas:

- A) What new personnel do we need to hire to mitigate cuts?
Hire primary aides, pick up Music, maybe pick up 5th grade aide, etc
- B) How much can we cut from our current personnel budget?
Are small cuts necessary and if so where?
- C) How much can we cut from our current non-personnel budget?
This year we have \$74k of non-personnel expenses (\$84k including the tech reserve).
- D) How much of our reserve can we spend down per year?
Our spring commitment to CUSD and the tech reserve drive our requirements. The duration of the 'spend down' also affects dollars per year.
- E) How fast and increase in parent donations can we sustain in this economy?
- F) Where can we be more efficient?
Go paperless, cut costs of fundraisers, etc
- G) Where could we put parent volunteers to help reduce or eliminate costs?
In primary classrooms, as art docents, primary PE, copy center, etc
- H) Do we need to make changes to our fundraising or expenses for the remainder of this year?

The BAT will also evaluate all of the ideas which are added to the Idea List for cost savings and feasibility.

4. Can the PTO hire teachers?

No, not directly. See FAQ #9 below for a discussion on pooling district wide funds.

5. Can the PTO hire aides?

Yes. This would be a strategy for mitigating the 30:1 ratios in the 1st through 3rd grade classrooms. We have asked Mrs. Franklin and the teachers to let us know how many hours of aide help would be helpful in these classrooms. We hope to have those numbers soon.

6. How can I follow news about the Budget Cut Mitigation?

Watch the District Website for new information

<http://sites.google.com/a/cusdschools.org/cusdbudget09-10/> . We will be responding to the specific cuts which they make (as we are doing with the announced cuts for the first \$5 million). Also check the PTO website for specifics about what we are doing or considering at Stevens Creek. We will be putting blurbs in the weekly newsletter as well (these have to be ok'd by Mrs. Franklin and the District Lawyer, so they will be short and simple). We will also have updates and discussions at our PTO meetings (the second Thurs. of each month at 7pm).

7. How can I let the PTO know about my ideas?

Please email (sc@vangregory.com or louises@comcast.net), call (408-863-1252) or write (put a note in the PTO box in the school office) to Julie van Gelder or Louise Schie. We will add your idea to the Idea List for analysis by the BAT (Budget Advisory Committee). See the Idea List on the PTO website (use the Idea List link on the home page under the Budget Cut Mitigation area).

8. Who can work or volunteer at Stevens Creek?

If the District has a described position, then District personnel must be hired (examples are librarian, tech lab support and instructional aide). These positions cannot be filled by a volunteer but volunteers may help the personnel or teachers in these positions. Even if a school does not have a District employee in these positions, but it remains a position on the District's list, volunteers cannot run the programs. In this event, the volunteers could not run the program but would be able to help the teachers who would ultimately be responsible for these programs. If the District does not have a position defined, then the PTO can hire contractors to do the work. The District sets up the contract for the PTO and manages it for a small administrative fee (which is good as we do not have the structure to manage employee wages, taxes, etc). Examples of contracts are the art, primary music and primary PE programs. These positions can be filled by volunteers.

9. Is 30:1 a done deal?

This is a very hard question to answer. As far as planning in the short term goes, the answer is yes, because the District has deadlines it is legally obligated to follow (see the District website for more details (<http://sites.google.com/a/cusdschools.org/cusdbudget09-10/>)). One example of this is the March 15, 2010 deadline for notifying individual teachers that they may be losing their jobs. There are several groups of parents trying to change this decision or change the impact of the decision. One example is looking at the possibility of pooling parent's funds into a District wide \$1 million fund to hire back one first grade teacher per school. There are other examples where parents are encouraging the bargaining units (unions) and District to open discussions about the Group C negotiable items (furlough or 1% salary cuts are examples here). Given the additional \$3.8 million cut which was just announced, it is possible that both the 30:1 cut and one or more Group C cut will have to be implemented in order to make up the full \$8.8 million budget cut. We will see how the District and bargaining units go about resolving the full cut (there will be a meeting on Feb. 10). Again, please see the District website for all of the numbers, Groups, etc referred here.

10. What is the penalty associated with 30:1?

At a recent set of District meetings, a penalty which is associated with going to the 30:1 student teacher ratios was mentioned. This is a rule which was passed some time ago (and has been recently relaxed) which assess a penalty to primary ratios over 20:1. It is a sliding scale up to a maximum of 53% at 32:1. This penalty does affect the Group A 30:1 budget cut. The \$3million savings number which is in Group A is a net (after penalty) number. The penalty money goes back to the state. When the penalty rule was decided on, it was supported by both the State level PTA and the State level teacher's union. At the time, no one foresaw the extremely drastic cuts that we are now facing.

11. When will the District know what it will cut to get the \$8.8million savings?

The District has not committed to a date. We do know that by 3/15/10 the District is legally obligated to send out notification to individual teachers that they may lose their job. Final 'pink slips' will be sent to teachers on 5/15/10.

12. How are funds directed towards upgrading the computer lab?

In previous years, the PTO has set aside \$10,000 each year for computer lab upgrades in what is called the Tech Reserve. During the 2008/2009 school year, the Board voted to use the reserve to upgrade the lab the following year. So, in 2009 we completed a full upgrade of the computer lab. Due to the current fiscal crisis, we looking at the options for this reserve (ie. reducing the annual amount put into this reserve). This will be determined by the PTO board, parent input, and relevant staff based on projected needs for the lab.

13. How would a parent volunteer-run program work for art, music and PE?

Parent volunteer(s) with relevant experience would be assigned as a program "docent". The docent(s) would organize the program to meet state and federal guidelines for that subject and work out schedules for other parent volunteers. In order for these programs to be successful, numerous parent volunteers would be needed and they would be needed on a weekly basis.

14. What areas and programs does the PTO fund?

Currently (2009/2010) the PTO fully funds the following: art for all grades, primary PE, two Teacher Aides (we pay for 2 aides at 3 hours each) and the Computer Lab clerk (we pay for 5 hours a day). As well, we partially fund the Librarian (we pay for 4 hours a day and the District pays for 2 hours a day). There is a possibility that we will be asked by the school to consider hiring enough aides to have **one** aid per grade level each for 3 hours. We currently do not fund

primary music, 4th and 5th grade music, 4th and 5th grade PE but, in light of the cuts the District is making, they are things that the PTO may consider funding.

15. How does the idea of furlough days work?

Last July the state voted to make it permissible for school districts to lower the minimum number of required instructional days from 180 to no lower than 175 days. This amendment is good for four years until the end of the 2012-13 school year. However, this revision does not waive any local legal contracts that districts have with bargaining units. Therefore, it is not something that the district can just mandate. The bargaining units' contracts are not formally open for negotiation until this summer. However, the district and the bargaining units are engaged in informal discussions about all the ways in which we can work together to solve the budget crisis, including length of school year. The state approved districts to reduce the number of days for this school year. The board's priority this year was to maintain instructional programs and to prevent layoffs of any certificated or classified employees which was successfully achieved. At this time there isn't consideration to reduce the number of instructional days for the 2009/10 school year.

16. Can the hours of a Classified District employee that the PTO funds either fully or partially (ie. Computer lab tech, Librarian, Teacher's aide) be reduced?

Yes, though based on seniority, they may choose to accept the original hours at another school within CUSD if available.

17. Can the hours of a Classified District employee that the PTO funds (either fully or partially) be increased?

The hours of a classified position can be increased but a requisition would have to be opened with the District. So, the current employee may get "bumped" by another employee with more seniority and entitled to those longer hours.

18. Can the PTO choose the rate of pay for a Classified District employee that they decide to fund either partially or fully?

No. The rate of pay is set by the CSEA (California School Employees Association). The PTO can only choose if and how many hours it would pay for that position.

19. When does the PTO have to let the District know which personnel it will be funding and for how many hours?

The Director of HR for Classified Services, Terry Nolan, stated that the PTO needs to let her know by March 15, 2010 of our intent to hire. In the event that some major crisis occurs and it turns out that we would not be able to fund what we originally thought or, if we want to hire more personnel to mitigate District cuts, we would have the opportunity to make an addendum to the original agreement made with the District.