

Superintendent's Message – January 5, 2011

The news has been full of stories about California's budget deficit of an estimated \$28 billion. If you watch the news, read a newspaper, or view news stories online, you cannot fail to have seen information about the state's financial crisis and the potential impact on funding for education in 2011. Unfortunately, cuts have been made to state-funded programs since 2008. The cumulative affect is being felt by school employees, students, and communities statewide.

Moreland School District has weathered these cuts by implementing ways to increase revenues and conserve expenses. Our auxiliary programs, transportation, and fingerprinting services, along with currently installed solar panels at three school sites, generate revenue for the district. The district has made additional reductions to programs and services with the goal of impacting student learning as little as possible.

Governor Jerry Brown is required to submit a proposed state budget (budget year July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012) on January 10, 2011 for consideration by the legislature. He has stated that, "We will do everything we can to minimize cuts to public schools. I can't promise you there won't be more cuts because there will be." Approximately 40 percent of the state's general fund pays for education. In order to reduce the staggering \$28 billion deficit, cuts will have to be made to many programs. State Treasurer Bill Lockyer stated, "It's time to make cuts, deep cuts. I'd do 25 percent across the board."

California ranks 15th nationally in taxes and fees; has the fourth-lowest number of state employees per capita; has the worst student-to-librarian ratio and the 49th-worst student-teacher ratio in the country; and ranks near the bottom – 43rd – in spending per student, according to information published by the UCLA Newsroom, January 3, 2011.

At a community forum on the state's budget crisis in Los Angeles in December 2010, educators responded to the projected loss of \$9 billion for California's K-16 public education system by calling for an end to cuts. Educators requested greater discretion in determining how money is spent, urged the state to seek more federal funding and requested legislation that would allow them to increase local property taxes with 55% of the vote rather than two-thirds.

Moreland continues to search for ways to reduce expenses and increase revenues while ensuring that all students receive the highest quality educational programs possible. The Board of Trustees will conduct a Budget Work Study on January 25, 2011. Please submit any ideas that you would like to share in advance to tdelacruz@moreland.org. On the subject line, please mark "Ideas for Reductions."

Thank you,

Glen Ishiwata
Superintendent