

MONICA GARCIA, PRESIDENT
MARLENE CANTER
YOLIE FLORES AGUILAR
TAMAR GALATZAN
JULIE KORENSTEIN
MARGUERITE POINDEXTER LAMOTTE
RICHARD A. VLADOVIC



Administrative Office
333 South Beaudry Avenue, 24th Floor
Los Angeles, California 90017
Telephone: (213) 241-7000
Fax: (213) 241-8442

RAMON C. CORTINES
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

January 8, 2009

Dear Parents, Families or Guardians of Los Angeles Unified School District Students,

As your Superintendent and on behalf of the Los Angeles Board of Education, I am writing you about the financial challenges we face. These are tough times for the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) because the State is not giving us enough money to pay all of our bills. For the current school year, the District has already been forced to cut \$427 million—that's the equivalent of closing down eight senior high schools though not a single LAUSD campus was shut down. We delayed buying books, eliminated 650 jobs at the downtown headquarters; we postponed purchases and did whatever we could to spare your child's classroom.

Now, the State Legislature is expected to ask for another round of deep cuts, at least \$250 million, for this academic year, 2008-2009. In California, schools depend mostly on State funds to pay for: teachers; books, computers, supplies and educational programs. These expenses cost a great deal for LAUSD because we are the second-largest school district in the nation with 688,000 students in kindergarten through the 12th grade. Our bills are also getting higher—like your bills for food and other necessities—but the State funding is not keeping up. California is near the bottom in per-pupil funding, 46th out of all 50 states.

Because the future does not look bright, LAUSD must prepare for the worst. In the next few months, we will all be asked to make sacrifices. We will continue to focus on making cuts as far away from the classroom as possible, but if the State continues down the current path, we will be forced to make cuts at the classroom level. Many employees may lose their jobs or take pay cuts. Many programs may be eliminated. Your child may lose a favorite teacher or be assigned to a larger class.

As we face these difficult choices, we need your help in supporting our students, teachers and schools. Make sure that your children attend school every single day because maintaining a consistent routine is helpful during periods of change. Also, daily student attendance helps bring in State money. Talk to your child about the possible changes and why they are necessary. Find out how the budget cuts will change your school.

Most importantly, please join us in letting your state representatives know how they can help your child and your school by passing a budget that is fair to education. To find your local legislator, go to <http://www.legislature.ca.gov/> and tell friends and family to call on Sacramento to come together for the good of all students. Until Sacramento acts, we won't know exactly what, when or where we will have to cut. However, we promise to keep you informed and to do our best to spare your child and your school.

Sincerely,

Ramon C. Cortines

Every LAUSD student will receive a state-of-the-art education in a safe, caring environment, and every graduate will be college-prepared and career-ready.