

## **Summary of Recent PAUSD Budget Cuts**

Over the past two years, PAUSD has made \$6.5 million in program cuts and spent \$3.4 million of reserves in order to cover operating costs. If Measure A fails, an additional \$5.5 million would have to be cut beginning in the 2006-2007 school year.<sup>1</sup>

Starting with the 2002-03 school year, the PAUSD has:

- Reduced each school's general use funding (money used for site-specific needs such as reading specialists, aides and supplemental instructional materials) by an average of 27 percent
- Reduced middle school and high school course offerings, including sections in Advanced Placement Physics, Shakespeare, American Literature, World Literature, German I, Computer Applications and many others
- Increased class size in middle school and high school non-core subjects (some secondary school classes now have almost 40 students in them)
- Reduced hours for elementary school librarians
- Reduced art programs in elementary schools
- Reduced hours for middle and high school counselors (now at 400 students per counselor, well over the recommended ratio of 250 students per counselor)
- Reduced school maintenance levels and staffing
- Reduced programs in staff development and technology support
- Cut 13 percent of administrator positions

For a full list of the items cut, see:

[http://www.pausd.palo-alto.ca.us/community/downloads/brd\\_ed/brd\\_packet/pkt\\_020805.pdf](http://www.pausd.palo-alto.ca.us/community/downloads/brd_ed/brd_packet/pkt_020805.pdf) at pages 32 through 37.

### **Examples of the Impact These Cuts Have Had at Our Schools**

#### **Elementary Schools**

At the elementary schools the impact of recent budget cuts is apparent each day:

- Each classroom now receives an average of only 60 minutes per day from a classroom aide (meaning the aide can spend, on average, only three minutes per day with each student), leaving many students without the individualized assistance they need so that all children in the classroom can be given the best opportunity to learn. Reading specialists, who provide crucial support to struggling students, have been cut or, at some schools, eliminated entirely.
- School psychologists' hours have been reduced.

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<sup>1</sup> Assuming current revenues and expenditures remain constant. The school district's 2004-05 projected budget is \$112 million.

- Librarians have less time to direct a five-year-old through books appropriate for young children or to guide a 10-year-old through various on-line and hard copy resources that set the foundation for their independent learning. Cuts in librarian hours leave some school libraries closed for a day each week.
- Arts specialists' hours have been cut significantly.
- The costs of supplemental classroom instructional materials and teacher supplies, previously paid for by the school district, are now funded by parent donations.

### **Middle Schools**

About 20 teaching periods have been eliminated in the middle schools, including special math and reading classes aimed at students who struggle in those areas. Some foreign language electives, including German and Japanese, are no longer taught at each school because the district cannot afford to staff classes for which demand is lower than the demand for more popular classes.

Other electives have been combined into large classes with high enrollment (up to 39 students per class). With fewer class sections taught, students find it more difficult to fit a subject of particular interest into their daily schedules and have less opportunity for direct interaction with their teachers.

### **High Schools**

Recent cuts have resulted in the loss of class offerings. Our high schools' strong reputation has been earned in large part because of the rich class offerings, which allow students to fine tune their interests in preparation for life after high school and provide them classes which match their interests. This allows many students to take coursework in subjects that they are passionate about and, as a result, in which they can become fully engaged.

#### Examples of Classes Lost at Gunn or Palo Alto High School

- Advanced Placement Physics
- Advanced Placement Art History
- Shakespeare
- German I
- American Literature
- World Literature 12
- American Classics Honors
- American Studies
- Introduction to Business Communication
- Computer Applications

In addition, the number of Advanced Placement (AP) classes offered in a subject has been reduced. AP classes allow students to get a more in-depth understanding of a specific subject matter and help students gain entry into competitive colleges. In addition, more than 90 percent of the colleges and universities in the United States provide college credit for high scores on AP exams; this can help reduce the ever growing cost of a college degree.

In addition to canceling courses, the school district has increased enrollment in certain classes in order to reduce costs. Many high school math, writing, literature and AP classes now enroll over 35

students each (Advanced Journalism at Palo Alto High School seats 62 students), and several foreign language classes have close to 40 students in one classroom. Thus, not only has the breadth and depth of courses been reduced, but the individualized attention students receive has been impacted.

Guidance counseling services are strained. Students have shorter conferences and must wait longer to see a counselor, whether they are seeking help to navigate through their school day or through the hectic and often confusing process of college selection.

Despite increased enrollment, one-quarter of high school administrators have been cut, leaving fewer administrators to tend to student absences, student conflicts, or other student needs. Now a staff of three at each of the district's two high schools, including the principal, is solely responsible for the daily tasks of managing all aspects of the school, including hiring teachers, managing their careers, interfacing with the community, supervising all extracurricular sports and student social events that can extend a working day to midnight, attending district meetings, completing compliance reports required by the district, state and federal governments, and being the administrative point person for each of the 1,600 or so students (and their parents) under their charge.