



San Francisco Board of Education
Parent Advisory Council

Report to the Board of Education

February 23, 2010

This report focuses on community engagement in the district's budget process. We know that during this meeting you will be consider items related to next year's budget. The PAC – and the SFUSD school community – is eager to learn more details about the proposed budget, and to better understand what the district's priorities are as the drastic cuts imposed by the state are implemented here in our schools.

We understand the looming deadline for issuing layoff notices, as well as upcoming audits related to issuing new bonds, and know that school sites need time to adjust their programs in response to the budget cuts. At the same time, we believe it is essential that the process is as transparent as possible – so that parents, students and educators, as well as the Board Commissioners, have the opportunity to understand the implications of the proposed budget.

We urge the district to make more detailed information about the budget available to the public, to ensure that community participation in the process over the next month can actually inform your decisions – and so that you have the opportunity to consider alternatives to the proposals currently on the table.

We want to let you know what the PAC is doing to engage school communities in this process. The Parent Advisory Council and Parents for Public Schools are working in partnership with SFUSD staff to convene community forums about the budget process, which will be held during the first two weeks in March.

The PAC doesn't typically conduct large-scale events like these, because it's more effective for us to engage parents through smaller, community-based conversations. But given the urgency of the timeline, we felt this would help make information available to students, parents, educators and the community – before final decisions are made about next year's budget.

There will be three forums, in three different neighborhoods. They will take place in the evening, starting at 6:00pm, with childcare and interpretation provided:

- Wednesday, March 3, at Horace Mann MS
- Wednesday, March 10, at Thurgood Marshall HS
- Thursday, March 11, at Francisco MS

Flyers for the forums will be posted in English, Spanish and Chinese on the district's website, as well as the websites of the PAC and PPS.

Our objectives with these forums are to:

- Provide information to the community about proposed budget cuts, and the district's priorities for funding, and
- Based on the conversations at these forums, inform the Board's decision-making process.

We are getting the word out about these forums through community partners who participated in the community conversations about student assignment, as well as members of the Parent Involvement Coalition, the Coalition to Close the Achievement Gap, as well as youth leaders and the Student Advisory Council.

We will report our findings from these forums to you as part of your meeting as a Committee of the Whole on March 16th, so that community voices can inform your decision-making process.

We look forward to working on these issues together, and hope to see you at these community forums – where you can hear directly from students, educators, and parents.

If you have any questions or comments about this report, or the PAC's work in general, please contact the PAC at (415) 355-2201, or at pac@sfusd.edu. You can also visit us at www.pacsf.org