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## **PARENTS AND STUDENTS RALLY AT THE CAPITOL, URGING LEGISLATORS TO “FLUNK THE BUDGET”**

**SACRAMENTO, CA** - California State PTA President Pam Brady led parents, students and educators in a rally at the State Capitol today, urging legislators to oppose the Governor’s proposed state budget cuts to education and children’s services.

“California’s future depends on our Governor and state legislators doing the right thing and investing more in our children, not less,” Brady said. She called on legislators and the Governor to use a balanced approach to solve the state’s budget crisis.

Representatives from communities across the state, including: Riverside, San Diego, Los Angeles, Alameda, Contra Costa, San Mateo, San Francisco, Marin, Yolo, Sacramento and others joined in delivering the message: “Flunk the Budget, Not our Children.”

The group’s message comes in response to the proposed \$4.8 billion cut to K-14 education in the governor’s 2008-09 budget, as well as cuts to foster care programs, child welfare services, CalWORKS programs, children’s services health care programs, Medi-Cal, early childhood education, and juvenile rehabilitation and crime prevention grants.

“California’s schools already don’t have the resources they need to meet these challenges; how can we expect them to survive these massive cuts?” asked Douglas Bell, a junior attending Aragon High School in San Mateo County. Bell also serves as a student representative on the California State PTA Board of Managers. “We are here today because we understand that if these cuts are made, California’s students will not receive the education that they deserve in the 21st century, and that will hurt the future of this state and our country in irrevocable ways.”

“In our schools, class sizes will increase, counselors are being cut, and we will lose reading specialists and other important student interventions,” said Lorene Joosten, Vice President and Director of Legislation for Ninth District PTA which includes San Diego and Imperial Counties. “In the few districts that still have them, we will likely lose art and music classes which keep at-risk and other students engaged academically and have a direct correlation to graduation rates. For these students, these cuts will last a lifetime.”

“If we support our students now, generations to come will benefit,” said Mary Helen Ybarra, past president of the Corona-Norco PTA Council in Riverside County. “Our message to legislators is: Don’t cut our future.”

“Student progress is due to many factors: employee commitment to raising student achievement; strong family and community partnerships; and leadership which maintains its focus on ensuring the success of every student. The proposed budget reductions by our Governor threaten the forward momentum of student success in Sacramento Unified School District’s schools and in schools throughout the state. We must have a spending plan that enhances, not threatens the future of our students,” said M. Magdalena Carrillo Mejia, Ph.D., Superintendent of the Sacramento City Unified School District.

Following the rally, participants visited their elected officials at their Capitol offices. Tomorrow, on Friday, April 25, PTAs throughout the state will also hold a series of local “Flunk the Budget” rallies and events.

“We are delivering our message directly to legislators today in Sacramento, then, we’ll follow them home on Friday to deliver the message again locally in their districts,” said California State PTA President Pam Brady. “We will not stop raising our voices on behalf of California’s children until we get a state budget that does not undermine our children or the future of California.”

*The PTA is the nation’s oldest, largest and highest profile volunteer organization working on behalf of public schools, children and families, with the motto “Every child, one voice.” PTA volunteers work in their schools and communities to improve the education, health and welfare of all children and youth. The PTA also advocates at national, state and local levels for education and family issues. The PTA is non-profit, non-secretarian and non-commercial.*

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