



**Orange
County
School
Boards
Association**

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2002-2003

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Page 1:

• *President's Message*

Page 2:

• *Frustration Over Budget*

Page 3:

• *O.C. Budget Report*

Page 4:

• *Dinner Speaker*
• *PAGE*
• *Calendar*

SPOTLIGHT ON NEWS

March 2003 Edition

President's Message By Shirley Carey

After reading *Mackay's Morals** in the February 10 *Orange County Register's Business Section*, I realized that many of these short and humorous sayings apply to the complex life of a board member. As we face difficult budget decisions, many of which impact the lives of hundreds of children and adults, you might want to keep the following ideas in mind.

"Life is like riding a bicycle. You don't fall off unless you stop pedaling." Since the budget process is ever changing and never ending, your challenge is to keep pedaling and keep learning. Change is the only constant in the process!

"Caring is contagious. Help spread it around." Most districts are experiencing loss—loss of programs, people, supplies, and ideals. All of the signs of grief work, such as anger, sadness, denial, bargaining, etc., are visible at different levels and deserve recognition and a thoughtful response.

"People do not live by bread alone. They need buttering up once in a while." The workloads are increasing in many district jobs. The stress associated with change is frustrating and the process of making the decisions regarding budget cuts is difficult. Praise and recognition for completing the process are essential, even when the outcomes are challenging to implement.

During board deliberations some positive advice might include:

- "Err on the side of brevity and you'll rarely come up short." If your answer to a question is "No", then a long discussion explaining why may not be necessary. Just say "No!"
- Remind your colleagues that "every survival kit should include a sense of humor." Delivering difficult points utilizing humor can be a very effective way to get your message across, particularly when board relations are tense. In good times humor helps to keep issues in perspective.
- Remember that "the undeveloped piece of property with the greatest potential is still between the ears." All of us can learn from each other and benefit from life-long learning. In this ever changing field, keeping abreast of what's new and being flexible in implementation is critical to the success of our districts.
- "Some people succeed because they are destined to, but most people succeed because they are determined to." Surround yourself with people who are optimistic and focused on success. We can learn from any situation and we will be stronger in the future for having worked together.

Most important: "The character of your children tomorrow is shaped by what they learn from us today." Our children will learn from the internal and political process that they witness. They will benefit by seeing democracy at work—their parents at board meetings working on legislative issues and talking about the reasons for these budget cuts. They will recognize the efforts by staff and will pickup on the attitudes and behaviors that are evident—both the positive and negative behaviors. Hopefully, they will learn that the adults in their life value education, are advocates for children and are willing to sacrifice on their behalf. Children must remain our focus as we guide our districts through this financial storm, for we all know that the sun will come out soon—it always does!

* Columnist *Harvey Mackay*, *Orange County Register, Business Section*, 2/10/2003.

POLL SHOWS FRUSTRATION OVER BUDGET

“The new year finds Californians in a dark mood — deeply bearish about the state’s economic prospects and acutely resentful of their elected representatives — according to a new survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC).”

That was the opening paragraph of a press release from the Public Policy Institute, describing the results of a public opinion survey conducted by the Institute in February. The press release and accompanying data do much to explain the current budget impasse in Sacramento. It could reasonably be argued that legislators reflect the lack of agreement that exists among California’s voting public. Certainly the poll is clear that the public does not support deep cuts to K-12 education. Following are additional excerpts from the press release and summary.

Politics

“By a wide margin, Californians today say the economy and jobs (28%) are the biggest problems facing the state, followed by the state budget and taxes (15%), education and schools (11%), and war and terrorism (10%). An overwhelming majority (71%) of state residents say they expect bad times financially in the coming year, compared to 47 percent one year ago (February 2002).”

“...more Californians blame Davis (23%) for the budget crisis than any other cause, including population growth and immigration (17%), the state’s economic downturn (16%), and the energy crisis (13%). When asked specifically about the role of government, 43 percent of state residents say Governor Davis and the legislature deserve “a lot” of the blame for the problem, and 38 percent say they deserve ‘some blame...”

Expenditures

“...half of Californians (52%) say K-12 education should be the top priority for state spending, followed by health and social services (25%), higher education (7%), roads and infrastructure (6%), and corrections, including prisons (2%).”

“Although more residents (43%) say they would prefer to deal with the state budget deficit through a mix of spending cuts and tax increases — rather than cuts alone (32%) or taxes alone (7%) — it is not clear what spending reductions would receive public support.

Indeed, despite the budget crisis, majorities still believe the state government should spend more money on K-12 education (65%) and health and human services (52%).”

Tax Increases

“Californians support elements of the governor’s proposal that would affect relatively few people, but reject measures that would spread the pain around:

- “74 percent favor, 25 percent oppose: raising cigarette taxes.
- “52 percent support, 42 percent oppose: reinstating the top rates on the state income tax.
- “44 percent favor, 52 percent oppose: raising the state sales tax from 6 to 7 percent.”

“The same holds for alternative revenue options being considered by the state legislature:

- “56 percent favor, 39 percent oppose: taxing all internet commerce.
- “39 percent support, 58 percent oppose: reinstating the full vehicle license fee (VLF).
- “37 percent favor, 60 percent oppose: extending the sales tax to include services.
- “22 percent favor, 76 percent oppose: raising fees at public colleges and universities.

“Overall, Californians are divided about whose approach they prefer in balancing the state budget: 33 percent say they support the approach of the Democrats in the state legislature, 30 percent support the Republican approach, and 13 percent favor the governor’s plan. But the split is even more fundamental: While 49 percent of residents would pay higher taxes to support a government that provides more services, 45 percent would rather pay lower taxes for a smaller government providing fewer services.”

To view this report in its entirety you can visit the PPIC’s website at: www.ppic.org and select: Crisis of Confidence: Public Clashes With Leaders On Budget, Economy, Iraq.

Article from: *CLUE UPDATE*, Monday, March 3, 2003.

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ADDITIONAL GOLDEN BELL AWARD

OAK VIEW SCHOOL, PRESCHOOL AND EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTER

The Oak View School families Learning Together program provides extensive learning and literacy resources and promotes high expectations and pride in success. The spirit of learning has infused the neighborhood’s residents with hope for themselves and their children. Families are learning together at Oak View School!

HOW ARE ORANGE COUNTY DISTRICTS REACTING TO BUDGET CUTS?

Mary Fuhrman, Newsletter Editor

In response to the state budget crisis, Orange County school districts have been studying and making budget cuts for this current year, plus evaluating plans for FY 2003/2004. A survey conducted prior to February 24, 2003, provided this sampling of cuts being made or seriously considered by our school districts.

Travel

- Cut this year's budget expenses for conferences/travel and staff development
- Travel freeze
- Hold/watch on all conferences/travel

Program and Services

- Eliminate summer school enrichment
- Limit the number of courses a high school student can take
- Cut instrumental music
- Cut "Welcome Back to School" program
- No new textbooks
- No after school sports for junior high students
- Cut programs for at-risk and also high achievers

Revenue

- Recapture deferred funding
- Reduce site discretionary funding for FY 2003-2004
- Raise facility-use fees
- Increase bus fares and walking distances
- Freeze less essential expenditures and develop priority lists
- Place 10% freeze on all general fund discretionary spending
- Suspend matching PTA fund-raising amounts
- Cut teacher spending for discretionary funding
- Freeze on all expenditures (must be reviewed at Cabinet level)
- Study recommendations in April with staff and community leading to final decision cuts by May 16, 2003
- Reduce school improvement program allocation by 25%
- Will not define any cuts until State budget cuts are definite

Class Size Reduction

- Study elimination of K – 3 class size reduction classes
- Increase class size by one or two
- Abandon class size reduction at high school level
- Cut class size reduction at third grade level

Staff Development

- Freeze on staff development
- Cut general fund use for staff development
- Cut curriculum labs from five days to three days

Personnel

- Reduce music and physical education specialists
- Reduce instructional assistants
- Reduce clerical, custodial, technical positions
- Cut any new hiring this year
- Teaching-Assistant Principal reorganization
- Reduce the number of classroom aides
- Reassign resource teachers to the classroom
- Release temporary teachers
- Reduce some site administrators
- Cut one nurse
- Cut a number of positions at the district office
- Reduction in force of some positions by March 15 deadline
- Reduce clerical extra hours
- Selective hiring freeze
- Hiring freeze
- Teachers on Special Assignment moved to classroom
- Cut custodial service and clerical substitutes
- Cut one vice principal at each middle school
- Cut health aides
- Reduce support/administrative positions at district office
- Eliminate elementary library media support
- Custodians clean three days a week rather than five days reducing some part-time hours
- Study ways to encourage retirement

Guest Speaker

SCOTT PLOTKIN

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
California School Boards Association (CSBA)

Wednesday, March 19, 2003 — 6:00 p.m.
at the Irvine Marriott Hotel

Topic:

Sacramento Circles the Wagon

Scott Plotkin sheds light on Sacramento's budgetary battles and how to work within stringent fiscal constraints. Before becoming executive director of CSBA, Scott Plotkin served four years as chief of staff consultant of the Senate Education Committee. He also served as director of Governmental Affairs for the California State University.



Political Action Group Effort

Topic:

Engaging Community Support in Tough Times

Wednesday, March 19, 2003 — 5:30 p.m.
at the Irvine Marriott Hotel

A panel of your colleagues will share their insights and strategies to engage community support during trying times.

- ✦ *Marilyn Buchi*
Fullerton Joint Union High School District
- ✦ *Sheila Benecke*
Capistrano Unified School District
- ✦ *Don Sedgwick*
Saddleback Valley Unified School District

❧ OCSBA BYLAWS ❧

*If you would like a copy of the newly ratified bylaws,
please contact Catherine Graham at 714-966-4313 or catherine_graham@ocde.k12.ca.us*

OCSBA Calendar



FINAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING FOR THE 2002-2003 SCHOOL YEAR

April 9, 2003

The meeting will be held at:
Orange County Department of Education
Board Room — 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

OCSBA ANNUAL DINNER MEETING

April 30, 2003

Presentation of Marian Bergeson Award

✦
Election of OCSBA Board of Directors

5:30 p.m. PAGE Meeting
6:00 p.m. Social
6:30 p.m. Dinner

Irvine Marriott Hotel
18000 Von Karman Avenue
Irvine, California
(949) 553-0100

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE DATES

May 2, 2003

Please email article ideas to:
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