

# End education budget uncertainty

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**P**EOPLE AROUND the country are celebrating a historic event and a demonstration of the power of individuals united in a vision for hope and change. This is not about one man, President Barack Obama, but in what his daring to do the seemingly impossible represents for us all.

This time of national hope and optimism is blunted for many here in California as we face one of the worst budget deficits on record. Among the hardest hit are the children — for whom funding for education, health and social services will be cut. To alleviate a projected \$41 billion budget shortfall, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger proposes cutting \$2.5 billion from public schools alone.

Scarcely adjusted to the decrease in last year's budget, California's schools are now bracing for yet another round of cuts. Speaking out against further cuts to education and advocating for new resources to fully fund our public schools is a fundamental strategy to turn the tide.

However, this crisis deserves extraordinary consideration and effort. We need to begin setting the stage for what to do with those resources — to make a shift in our thinking about what constitutes a quality education and how to ensure that we provide one for every child.

SHEILA JORDAN

My Word

nity members to show shining examples of what is possible when we dedicate the right resources to the right things.

It's disingenuous to assert that passion and good will alone will be enough to improve our schools; adequate financial resources must support the work. However, it is through the passion that we can work together to bring those much-needed resources to the table.

It is also through our collective efforts that we can rally to reform our state's dysfunctional budget process to allow passage by simple majority.

Combined with a new mission that serves the needs of the whole child we have a winning formula: to improve students' academic achievement; capacity to learn and grow as healthy individuals; and to make positive contributions to the well being of their peers, families and communities today and in the future.

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Using the recent success of Obama, I have the following recommendations: We think big; we stand together unified by a common goal to support and educate children; and we act. Our many years of riding on a roller coaster of budget crises in public schools have conditioned us to a mindset of scarcity. While it is true that we lack the funding needed to do the job right, we still have a wealth of resources at our disposal.

In tough economic times, it comes down to giving new purpose to our existing resources — the great wealth of human capital and creativity to work together across districts, cities and throughout the region to solve tough problems.

We have an abundance of innovative strategies to improve teacher practices and student engagement, a wealth of passionate teachers and advocates, and the political will to demand that our legislators break down partisan politics as usual to identify new funding sources for education and support a new vision for public education.

Our legislators need examples of best practices to point to. It is our job as educators, parents and commu-