

Working Together to Achieve Academic Excellence in a Difficult Economy



Carlsbad Unified School District

... a world class district

October 2011

Dear Carlsbad Unified School District Families, Friends and Community:

This fall, as we celebrate our 40th anniversary as a unified school district, our 90th anniversary as a multi-site (Carlsbad Union) school district and nearly 140 years of educating students in Carlsbad, beginning with the first one-room schoolhouse established in 1872, I am proud of the partnership that has always existed between the community and its schools. I am grateful to our close-knit school families and the wider Carlsbad community for supporting our efforts as we strive to continue improving student achievement.

Together, we have shared many good times and great accomplishments. Together, over the past few years, we have faced difficulties and overcome obstacles. Today, we are confronting a great financial challenge. Once again, we must work together to prevail.

Mired in the national "Great Recession" and impacted by the State's continuing budget crisis, Carlsbad Unified has taken advantage of many creative solutions to continue providing an exceptional education to our students. To date, our District has been able to avoid draconian actions experienced by many other public school districts. Although we had to increase class size in grades 1-3 this year, we have been able to minimize other adverse impacts such as truncated school years, cuts to key programs and widespread layoffs.

We have accomplished this by combining a prudent fiscal approach with creative re-allocations of monies. Despite State-imposed cuts and a flat local economy with no increase in property tax revenue, we have balanced our FY2010-11 and 2011-12 budgets by using our reserves: \$1.62 million in 2010-11 and a projected \$11 million in 2011-12. We also have reduced expenditures wherever and whenever possible. We have enjoyed certain unexpected revenues from State and Federal programs. We have aggressively sought and utilized numerous ways to re-allocate monies from programs to apply to the deficit. In everything we have done, our focus has always remained on retaining our people and continuing to provide an exceptional education to each of our approximately 11,000 students.

We hoped that our efforts would enable us to maintain sufficient reserves to outlast what has become the Great Recession. They will not. We are facing a shortfall of nearly \$11 million for FY 2012-13. We must cover this shortfall and balance the budget.

With no more one-time fixes available and no strong economic recovery on the horizon, we are asking all of our staff – including management – to take a substantial reduction in salary and benefits. A 20% across-the-board cut would cover the \$11 million shortfall. A lesser cut will significantly reduce the shortfall, but require unpalatable yet necessary deep program cuts. We are entering negotiations with unions while meticulously scrutinizing all operational areas and options to ascertain cuts that will have the least negative impacts on students. **We may not always agree on the best way to proceed, but all of us at the District agree that our overarching priority is always our kids. Educating Carlsbad's children is our reason for being; we will never lose sight of that.**

Despite unsettling financial circumstances, our District and our great staff have kept the focus on students. This year's Districtwide Academic Performance Index (API) marks our highest yet: 867. That number is 38 points higher than our 2007 API and 89 points about the 2011 Statewide average of 778. All our standard schools achieved "passing" APIs of more than 800. Five are above 900.

These academic attainments, and all student successes daily taking place quietly in every classroom in every school, are a tribute to all of us working together. I am hopeful that, with the dedication of our staff, bolstered by the incredible support we enjoy from our school families, District partners and the Carlsbad community, we will continue to provide the world-class education for which Carlsbad is famous. More information will be forthcoming on our website at www.carlsbadusd.k12.ca.us and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/carlsbadunifiedschoolsdistrict. I also invite you to follow me at www.twitter.com/suptroach, read my blogs at <http://carlsbadunified.blogspot.com/>, and email me at roach@carlsbadusd.net. Thank you.

Sincerely,

John A. Roach, Ed.D.; District Superintendent