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Governor Schwarzenegger Blasts Public Schools

Governor Schwarzenegger blasted public education in his State of the State Address January 5. He further ripped attacked teachers and education in budget remarks January 10.

The California Teachers Association will continue to protect public school funding. The following are statements published by the Education Coalition.

BROKEN PROMISES FAIL CALIFORNIA'S STUDENTS.

- The Education Coalition thinks it's unconscionable that the Governor's budget proposal breaks the promise he made to California's schools and six million students and takes even more money from schools. Last year, public schools and students sacrificed \$2 billion in ongoing cuts with the Governor's promise that our schools would receive their fair share of any additional state revenues and that more harmful cuts would be avoided in future years.
- The Governor's budget proposal breaks the commitment to students and schools despite the fact that state revenues are actually higher than what was projected when the agreement was approved.

GOVERNOR'S PROPOSALS ARE A SMOKE SCREEN. SCHOOLS HAVE ALREADY SUFFERED \$9.8 BILLION IN CUTS.

- The Governor's proposals are a smoke screen designed to divert public attention from the real problems facing our schools. They add new requirements without any commitment to adequate and stable funding.
- In the last four years, California schools have suffered more than \$9.8 billion in cuts. Statewide, these cuts translate to school closures, increases in class size, lay offs of teachers and support staff, and a devastating shortage of librarians, counselors and nurses.

CALIFORNIA SCHOOL SPENDING IS AMONG THE LOWEST IN NATION.

- A recent "Quality Counts 2005" report by *Education Week* notes California ranked 44th in the nation in per-pupil funding.
- A recent study by the RAND Corporation corroborates these findings and notes California's K-12 school system has fallen from a national leader 30 years ago to its current ranking near the bottom in every objective category, including per-pupil funding, class size and teacher salaries.

STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO MEET THE HIGHEST EXPECTATIONS IN THE NATION WITH INADEQUATE FUNDING.

- Nationwide studies list California's academic standards among the highest in the country. *Education Week's* "Quality Counts 2005" report gave California a B-plus for its standards and accountability system.
- A report by the Public Policy Institute of California also identifies California as ranking highest in academic standards and accountability systems, but lowest in financial resources.

The Governor Attempts to Erode Our Pension Plan

- The proposal would affect all public employees, whether they are in CalPERS or CalSTRS, hired after July 1, 2007.
- Teachers and other public employees do not earn Social Security. STRS and PERS are the equivalent of Social Security for public employees.
- It would replace the current defined benefit plan with a 401(k)-style retirement plan. Employees would not be guaranteed a set level of monthly retirement benefits as they are now.
- It does not impact current PERS or STRS members, but creates a two-tiered retirement system, giving different benefits to existing workers and those hired after July 1, 2007.
- Under the proposal, the state would stop paying its 2% share of total CalSTRS payroll (about \$469 million) each year and would shift those costs to local school districts.

What Are the Real Issues Regarding Merit Pay?

- All teachers merit good pay. According to the RAND Corporation report that was released earlier this week, California teach-