

TEXT OF TALB PUBLIC COMMENTS AT FEBRUARY 1, 2011, LBUSD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING REGARDING PROPOSED LBUSD BUDGET CUTS

The budget cuts presented tonight are scary for all of us who care about our local schools. They represent a loss of jobs for hundreds teachers, nurses, and librarians. They represent a diminishing quality of education for thousands of students.

These cuts are premised on a speculative funding reduction that will occur if existing temporary tax increases are not approved by the voters in a June election. If the election is successful education cuts will be mitigated and many of these cuts will not occur.

So here's the bottom line: We will all need to work together to save our schools by passing this initiative, which we hope will make it to the ballot in June. It is our lifeline.

TALB...teachers, nurses, and librarians... will commit to joining with you, with parents, and our community in this effort; and providing volunteers and resources so we can win this urgent election and save our local schools.

But we do have other concerns (about LBUSD decision-making)...

Teachers, nurses, and librarians, have worked in collaboration with you to keep programs going and keep our schools strong despite the budget cuts. TALB members have taken pay cuts and reductions in health benefits.

Many of the cuts on tonight's list are ones that the District already approved last year and that were intended to balance the budget...but they were not carried out this year.

TALB members agreed to personal sacrifice with the expectation that the District would do its part to balance the budget. We didn't agree to pay and benefit cuts only to have the District come back for more after a year in which District funding actually wasn't cut as expected, and even increased (albeit temporarily) due to

Federal one time money. We expected the District to take advantage of the one-time money and the better than expected funding to balance the books this year.

Instead it appears the cuts you approved last year, and the resulting upheaval, has had little impact on the budget deficit. In fact, we appear to be slipping into the a cycle of annual layoffs and cutbacks – in part caused by the State, and in part caused by our own local spending patterns.

So we have a few requests of you (as School Board members)...

Ask questions and put all the information out there... find out why cuts made last year were not implemented – and when they were restored why that wasn't a discussion for these (school board) chambers.

Find out why non-classroom positions take priority over a nurse, a classroom teacher, or a librarian.

Get specifics about large cuts that have no detail, were part of last year's cuts, and are showing up again this year (item #9 - \$10M in central office reductions).

Ask where and how the millions in one time Federal aid was spent.

Ask about our actual funding for this year and why we continue to show dramatic deficits despite the decision you have made over the past year that should have balanced our budget.

None of this is intended as criticism, rather a reminder about how important your role really is. We know this is very tough business, we know that and we want to continue to work with you to solve these difficult problems.

Thank-you.