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Dear Staff and Parents:

Happy New Year! I hope that your holidays were filled with joy and happiness.

We open the New Year with a heavy dose of disconcerting news. As the nation's economy continues to slide, so too has California's economy. Despite the efforts of a fiscally conservative and intelligent Redondo Beach Board of Education, as well as a slight increase in our average daily attendance over the last several years, even the Redondo Beach Unified School District (RBUSD) will be negatively impacted by the recent State budget cuts. It is discouraging to note that RBUSD's strategic, proactive, and prudent budgeting over the last several years is ultimately compromised by the State's lack of fiscal planning and foresight. In other words, we did our job at the local level; the State did not.

There are no easy solutions. For the 2008-2009 school year, we were able to cut approximately \$1.2 million through staff attrition, tighter class scheduling, program consolidation, an early-retirement incentive, and only two formal lay-off notices. With the newly proposed mid-year reductions, it appears we will have to cut another \$2 million. The annual RBUSD budget is \$65 million. As is the case with nearly all of the 1,000 California school districts, approximately 85% of RBUSD's budget is consumed in total compensation to staff (salary for all RBUSD employees, health & welfare benefits, and statutory benefits). Don't get me wrong, every little bit helps, but this is a far more significant issue than turning off the lights to conserve energy and purchasing fewer books.

In December, I met preliminarily with our administrators, our teacher and support staff union leadership, and our Parent Teacher Association leadership. I explained that the State's budget is in peril and we, more than ever before, will need to unite to combat this reality. I promised to meet, face-to-face and in one room, with these stakeholder groups, to address the budget shortfall and how we will implement cost-savings immediately and for the future. There will be no Wizard behind the curtain, making cost-cutting recommendations to the Board of Education. The goal is to have a shared voice and a united front to ensure the best for (y)our students, staff, parents, and learning community.

Here is what you/we can do to help:

- 1) Parents and Staff: Encourage all students to attend class every day. RBUSD loses approximately \$36 each day a student misses school.
- 2) Staff: Minimize your own absences to the best of your ability.
- 3) Parents and Staff: Support the Redondo Beach Education Foundation (www.rbef.org).
- 4) Parents and Staff: Support RBUSD as we manage this fiscal crisis together.

Board of Education

Carl Clark
Jane Diehl
Drew Gamet
Todd Loewenstein
Arlene Staich

Teresa Tenfelder
Student Member

Dr. Steven Keller
Superintendent of Schools

In closing, I want to share my absolute trust in our collective focus. I have personally seen the transformation of this school district over the last several years. We have worked hard, very hard, to provide a model educational program for each and every student. Although the process will be painful, we will tackle this crisis as we have tackled the last several—with respect, care, focus, intelligence, and professionalism. Please work with us as we navigate this crisis.

Sincerely,

Steven E. Keller, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools