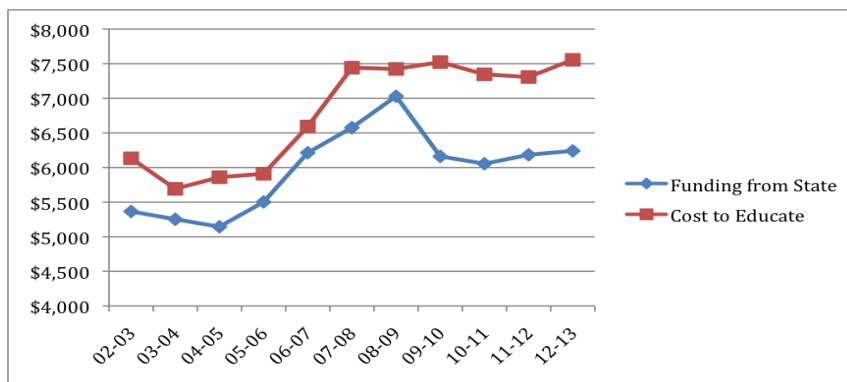


## THE STATE BUDGET CRISIS IS AFFECTING OUR SCHOOL: Now is the Time to Act

### The problem:

1. California is suffering under a huge budget deficit of historic proportions, a crisis it seeks to address by slashing funding to public schools at a rate never before seen. These cuts are not temporary – they are structural and will continue into the foreseeable future. Our state now ranks 48<sup>th</sup> in the nation on per pupil funding and it may drop further. *“This isn’t getting better so don’t wait for the good news to happen,”* says Doug Bower, Asst. Sup’t, Santa Rosa Schools. To put it simply, the funding gap between what the state provides and what it takes to educate your child is widening at an alarming rate.
2. Our school’s funding has dropped more than 20% in two years and will drop more next year. Yet our costs keep going up – despite a salary freeze for all faculty and staff other costs out of our control, mainly health care premiums, continue to rise. There is nowhere left to cut *except* programming.
3. Even with prudent financial management, our school faces a permanent deficit for the foreseeable future of \$150,000 per year. We need to make it up somehow or be faced with choices that amount to cutting the equivalent of strings, Spanish, AND handwork. Yup, all three. We are talking serious budget shortfalls. The gap between what the state provides and what it costs to educate your child is widening.



### The solution:

Here’s a solution that allows everyone to share the burden of making up this \$150K shortfall so that we can avoid such drastic cuts. It is a plan I developed with and is supported by both the Foundation and School Boards. It consists of three parts, all inter-related and all inter-dependent. **Only together can these parts work to make up the deficit.**

1. The Charter Foundation is restructuring its debt so that even more of your pledge money can go directly to programming. By paying off the mortgage on our downtown site, the Foundation will be able to pass on an additional \$72,000 in funding to the school. At the same time, paying off the mortgage will mark a milestone for our school community. We will now own one of our sites outright, a dream our community has held for 15 years, and this incredible accomplishment will allow more pledge money to go directly to the programs your child enjoys.
2. The School is going to make further cuts, to the tune of about \$30,000, for the 10-11 school year. This will affect programming for your child and will mean a greater workload for the teachers and

staff at the school, who have already endured one salary freeze and face another one next year. And if #3 (next) doesn't happen, we'll have to cut more than this.

3. Parents (you!!) need to increase our already strong pledging by an additional 15%. It is imperative that every family examine their situation and increase their contribution to the Foundation starting NOW. If you pay \$100/month, stretch it to \$115. If you pay \$200, you need to increase to \$230. Most families can probably stretch 15%, even if it hurts a little to do so! It simply cannot be an option to allow our school to lose the quality and breadth of education that has made it so strong. (Remember, the equivalent private Waldorf education costs well over \$1000 a month. Waldorf preschool costs \$500 a month.)

**The Charter Foundation suggests \$230 a month per child** to cover what it costs to educate each child above what the state provides (this number reflects the 15% increase). Give what you can, but please make sure you put pledging before extras like ballet, baseball, and eating out. Invest long term in your children; they are worth it! They'll demonstrate throughout their lives the capacities and natural curiosity your pledges help make possible today.

**Our school welcomes everyone** and because we are a public school, we enjoy a diverse community. The Charter Foundation's pledge program only asks that everyone pledge what they can. For some, \$50 a month is a sacrifice, but one worth making. Some can pay \$500. Whatever pledge to the Foundation is right for your family, you can be certain that it will go to support one of the finest Waldorf school, public or private, east coast or west. We have a good thing going, but it cannot, and will not, exist without your continued support.

**Just 86% of our families pledge right now.** That means 1 in 7 of you are letting others take on the financial burden of educating your child. EVERY FAMILY needs to pledge in order to sustain the rich Waldorf curriculum that EVERY CHILD experiences. The *financial* and *social* health of our school depends on every single one of us acting responsibly and with the good of the whole in mind.

**Think creatively** about how you can give 15% more. We have no choice. We have no doubt we can get through the budget crisis, but it isn't going to happen because you assumed someone else would step up and do your part. Put your money where your heart is!

Susan Olson, Executive Director  
Donna Becchetti, Pledge Coordinator

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Zac Douch, School Board  
Nick Sanders, School Board  
Joe Schwall, School Board  
Marc Solomon, School Board

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Bob Haroche, Foundation Board  
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