



Pasadena Unified School District
Message from Superintendent Brian McDonald
March 16, 2018

Dear PUSD Community,

As we prepare for spring recess, I want to share with you some positive news.

With the transformation of schools like Jackson and San Rafael, Pasadena Unified has proved that by tapping the potential of our extraordinary staff, teachers, and community, we can create a mix of vibrant academic programs that accelerates our students' progress and attracts more families to our schools.

I am pleased to inform you that yesterday, after hearing recommendations from the School Consolidation and Boundaries Committee at a special meeting, the Board of Education opted to indefinitely postpone discussions about school consolidation so that we can first explore ways to maximize our district's capital assets. We will move quickly to develop a facilities asset management plan that makes the most of our existing properties.

Members of the Committee completed their difficult task with diligence, commitment, and care for children in our schools. I am grateful for their work and look forward to our continued partnership in providing excellent educational opportunities for all our students.

Our work to address the budget shortfall has yielded positive results. The reductions and savings of more than \$6.9 million during 2017-2018 and more than \$12 million in reductions for 2018-2019 has allowed us to replenish our district's state-mandated reserve and end the year with a balanced budget.

At yesterday's special meeting, the Board approved the Second Interim Financial Report that upgrades our district's fiscal certification from negative to qualified. This means that oversight by the Los Angeles County Office of Education will end once the County affirms our qualified certification. To align our resources and reach for higher student achievement, we're examining the way in which we currently allocate federal Title I funds to high schools. We are already becoming more effective and efficient with the resources and funding we have.

The immediate and courageous action of the Board of Education ensures our district's solvency, protects our schools' vibrant academic programs, puts in place greater program and operational efficiencies, and focuses on right-sizing our district to match our student enrollment. As we put into effect tough decisions to reduce the size of our staff at both schools and the central office, I want you to know that the Board of Education and I are committed to doing everything possible

to retain as many of our talented and passionate teachers as possible, and to ensure that their knowledge, training, and skills continue to serve Pasadena Unified students. Although we have not yet reached agreement with our labor partners on teacher retirement incentives, we remain hopeful that a compromise can be reached in time to recall teachers and other staff who are receiving reduction-in-force notices.

We have made great progress in addressing our budget shortfall, but there is more work ahead. Statewide, large increases in pension and health care costs are expected to continue, Special Education remains underfunded despite federal mandates, and state funding is expected to remain flat. If nothing changes in the way we are funded, by 2019-20, our District is projected to make further reductions of approximately \$8 million in 2019-20. Additional reductions will also need to be made to maintain solvency in 2020-21 and our District's 2018-19 budget adoption this June will include those discussions.

We are getting through these current fiscal challenges. The Pasadena Unified team is made up of smart, passionate, and extraordinarily dedicated individuals who make a positive impact on the lives of our students every day. Together, we're tackling our fiscal challenges and are emerging more accountable and better equipped to continue delivering quality academic programs that serve our students well.

With appreciation,

Brian McDonald, Ed.D.
Superintendent