



## BUCKEYE EDUCATION FOUNDATION

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Dear School Families,

As the Buckeye Education Foundation enters its first Annual Back-to-School fundraising drive, we want to update you on the Foundation; its objectives, fundraising activities, funding plans, and the results of the recent community survey. This letter will also update you on what we know about the current budget issues facing the Buckeye Union School District.

First and foremost we would like to thank the many volunteers and donors, families, businesses, and private foundations, who have contributed time and money to get the Foundation off to a rolling start. We also appreciate the support and endorsements we have received from the Buckeye Union School District and the Buckeye Teachers Association. We enter our first Annual Campaign with approximately \$90,000 committed to the Foundation.

Many of you may have first become aware of the Buckeye Education Foundation last Spring when it was announced that because of a serious budget shortfall and state law dictating timelines, the district was being forced to consider elimination of elementary PE and music specialist positions. To address community concerns, the Foundation accelerated its launch plans in an attempt help maintain these important programs in our schools.

In order to maintain these programs at a most basic level, we had set a fundraising goal of \$170,000. While we got significant support for this early effort, the community did not commit enough money to reach this fundraising goal for the 2010-2011 school year. The Foundation has raised approximately \$90,000 - enough to perhaps fund one teaching position in the district for one year. (By comparison, the Davis Schools Foundation has raised over \$1.4 million since March. [www.davisschoolsfoundation.org](http://www.davisschoolsfoundation.org)).

Despite not hitting this initial objective, we are encouraged by the early support of the Foundation. As we enter our Back-to-School Annual Campaign period we are asking you to make an annual donation of \$250 per child or \$500 per family. While our district, so far, has been spared the big program cuts many other districts in the state are already seeing, let us explain why it is critically important for the community to support this effort.

Do not be misled by the fact that to date our district has been spared major hits. The financial outlook for the Buckeye Union School District is dire. The district has filed paperwork with the County Office of Education reporting that without significant changes, the district will not be able to meet its financial obligations within two years. Given the statewide budget crisis, the outlook for increased operating revenue from the state is dim. Private funding of our public schools through the Buckeye Education Foundation is the best way you can help spare our schools from what is expected to be a drastic shortfall beginning with the 2011-2012 school year.

At present, and until the legislature finalizes a state budget that currently projects a \$19 billion deficit, the district does not have a final operating budget for the 2010-2011 school year. All calculations being used to operate our schools are based on the May budget revision proposed by the governor - which is not likely to be approved by the legislature without major changes. It is anybody's guess whether the final budget will provide more, less, or the same amount of funding as proposed in May.

What we know for certain is that 2 of 4 elementary PE positions initially eliminated have been retained in exchange for two furlough days from the teachers. We applaud this agreement, but from a financial perspective, it represents a net zero change to the overall budget. Currently, no elementary classroom music positions are being funded for this year.

The district has warned us that they expect the 2011-2012 funding situation to be far worse than anything we've seen so far. The district's reserve funds will be drying up and 1x federal stimulus dollars will have been spent. These are funds that for this year provide a needed cushion but that won't be available again next year.

### **Your help is needed!**

The district tells us that we are looking at the likelihood of the having approximately \$1.8 million less to operate the schools next year than this year. This means over \$1 million will be needed to bridge the shortfall in order to maintain the educational programs in place today.

In order to help measure community interest in and support of the Foundation's efforts and to get feedback on programs of most importance to school families, the Foundation recently fielded a survey. We had over 375 responses, which provided tremendous feedback. Here are some of the key findings:

- Each school was well represented in the survey results.
- 96.5% of respondents are aware of at least some of the effects the state budget crisis is having on the Buckeye Union School District.
- 92.8% are Somewhat or Very Concerned about budget cuts.
- 79.5% are willing to donate \$15 or more each month to support at risk programs (the Foundation is asking for \$21 per month).
- On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being Essential and 5 being Insignificant, the following shows relative concern for key programs/positions:
  - Class Size Ratio – 1.4
  - Computer Education – 1.5
  - PE Instructors – 1.6
  - Middle School electives – 1.7
  - School Librarians – 1.7
  - Arts Education – 1.9
  - School Counselors – 2.0
  - After School Sports – 2.1
  - Band Program – 2.3
  - Classroom Music Education – 2.3

**The range of results is very narrow showing that the community values all of these programs.** However, there is very broad range of costs associated with these different programs.

Some programs may require the funding of 1 or 2 teachers where maintaining class sizes could require the funding of many teachers costing hundreds of thousands of dollars - an order of magnitude more than anything the Foundation can afford to do without considerably more families making contributions to the Foundation. **With budgets likely to get much tighter your help and contributions are needed.**

The Foundation needs to raise \$1 million this year to maintain all at risk programs. We are waiting for the district-funding picture to crystallize before specific funding decisions will be made.

These subjects and more are discussed in our board meetings each month. You are certainly invited to attend and/or get involved. Board meetings are the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7PM at the district office in Shingle Springs. **We also are looking for more people willing to volunteer a few hours each month in support of the Foundation's efforts.**

Please feel free to share your feedback. We hope we can count on your support in our drive to help maintain our schools at the level we currently enjoy and to ultimately improve the educational opportunities for every child in the Buckeye Union School District!

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors  
Buckeye Education Foundation