



VERY IMPORTANT—PLEASE READ!

SunRidge Charter School 487 Watertrough Road, Sebastopol, CA 95472 • 707-824-2844
www.sunridgeschool.org

5/22/08

Dear SunRidge Parents,

As the 2007-08 school year comes to a close, we have much to be proud of, not the least of which is our highly successful pledge program. Once again, the parents of SunRidge School have made the education of their children a family budget priority. Through monthly pledge donations, our specialty classes and teaching assistant costs will be supported this year with close to \$200,000 in essential funding, approximately 13% of our entire expense budget. Without these funds, we simply could not offer what we do for the children.

Next year we face new challenges. The State budget is in severe deficit and, though recent changes in the Governor's plan may mean less severe cuts to education than were originally announced back in January, we are nonetheless faced with rising costs and declining state funding. We will simply not be able to offer the classes and services we offered this year without additional funding from sources other than the State.

Because of this budget crisis, the charter council and I have had several meetings to review our school budget and consider what can be done. The first step was to identify spending cuts that could be made without changing programs for our students. These cuts—now a part of our budget plan—include significantly reducing our use of consultants, reducing some maintenance and supplies expenses, and no longer renting a storage barn for storage needs. We have been able to reduce projected expenses with these “least painful” cuts, but our budget is projected to be between \$40,000 and \$60,000 short next year, even with all classes at full enrollment.

The next step we have taken is to go through our budget, line item by line item, identifying where we would have to cut next if our income does not meet our expenses. These cuts—in teaching assistant and office assistant hours, and teacher hours/classes in Gardening/Cooking, Eurythmy, Life Skills, Instrumental Music, and Choir—are not cuts we want to make. We have identified this next level of cuts if they are necessary, but our message to the SunRidge community is clear and unified: *we must avoid needing to make these cuts by working together to increase funding, and we must increase this funding as quickly as possible if we are to start the 2008-09 school year with the programs and services we have now.*

In the long term, we will need to develop strategies that bring in funding from sources other than the State and our parents. For this coming year, however, we don't have time to wait to develop other sources. We must ask our families to help us avoid making cuts in programs in September, and have identified several different ways parents can help us accomplish our goal of a balanced budget for 2008-09:

Option 1: If every family contributes some portion of the “Federal economic stimulus rebate” they will soon receive to SunRidge School. This would be the quickest and least difficult way to raise the additional funds. For example, if 100 families each donated \$300.00 of their \$1,500.00 rebate, we would quickly raise \$30,000. Or, we could raise the same amount if 100 families each donated \$200.00 and another 20 families each donated \$500.00. Obviously, the more each family

donates and the fuller participation from all our families, the more likely we could quickly eliminate any need to look at cutting programs and services.

Option 2: If every pledging family were to continue their monthly pledges during the summer months (July and August), we could also raise between \$10,000—\$15,000 in additional funds. Many families already pledge throughout the summer, but most do not.

Option 3: If every family were to increase next year’s pledge amount by \$20-\$25 per month, we could raise an additional \$25,000-\$35,000. For reference, the amount we are now asking families to pledge is \$200 per month per child.

We ask that you consider the three options presented above, and choose one or more of the ones that would work the best for you. We fully understand that economic times are difficult for many right now, and that not everyone can do more at this time. We do know, however, that if everyone keeps in mind the choice we are faced with, and does their part to the degree they are able, that we will succeed in this community effort.

With this in mind, please complete the 2008-09 pledge commitment form below and return it to the office or the driveway drop box no later than Friday, June 6. Because having this information by June is so vital this year, expect a follow-up phone call if we don’t receive your returned form by June 13. We would prefer not having to make those calls, so please return your form!

Thank you in advance for helping us avoid needing to make cuts to our educational program.

Sincerely,

Mark Rice
Director

2008-09 Pledge Commitment—complete and return to the office or driveway drop box

Parent Name(s): _____

Child Name(s): _____

I/we will pledge the following amount for the 2008-09 school year:

\$ _____ per child for a total of \$ _____ per month (if this is an increase please check here: _____)

My pledge commitment will be on the following schedule (please check one):

- July -08 through June '09 (12 months) September '08 through June '09 (10 months)

• *Payments in advance for the full year, or some portion of the year, are welcomed and appreciated.*

I/we also want to help us avoid needing to cut programs by making a one-time donation from part of my “Federal Economic Stimulus Rebate” in the amount of: \$ _____ .

• *Pledge donations are voluntary, tax-deductible, and non-refundable.*