**\*\*Update highlighted areas\*\***

Dear Superintendent and Board,

I am a former graduate of ------ Elementary and proud my son/daughter gets to learn in this great district as well. It is unfortunate that the district is dealing with financial challenges due to the Covid 19 situation. My son/daughter has always received great support at his school, but I am writing to you concerned about the current budget plan proposal. Part of the proposal is the elimination of counseling and physical education positions at the elementary level. Elimination of these positions would be detrimental to the health of students and works against the vision of the district…

*“Working together with families, the community, and a highly qualified staff, the Buckeye School District ensures that each student masters the knowledge and skills needed to maximize his/her academic and personal success in a global society.”*

In the middle of a pandemic that is affecting people’s physical and mental health, this proposed plan sacrifices children’s social, emotional and physical health. Movement is good for the body and the brain. In the book “Brain Rules” it is actually the number one rule. My son needs to move and he needs to learn how to do it properly. He is building movement skills that will be the foundation of lifelong fitness right now. He can’t get these years back…and in physical education he is learning how to work with classmates in a setting where he has to follow rules and work together to resolve conflict and solve problems. These are critical skills in helping the district reach their vision. A physical education specialist is “highly qualified” to teach him and yet this plan denies that.

Loss of elementary counselors will also have a negative effect on the student learning environment. My son/daughter’s elementary counselor has helped him learn valuable social emotional skills such as mindfulness and self regulation that help the classroom environment and him to learn better. The small groups have helped him develop strategies that extend beyond the classroom and lead to better life skills. The skills he is learning will maximize his academic and personal success.

When looking at Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, one can see that basic needs must be met, needs such as physical, social and emotional health, before academic success can occur. Physical education teachers and counselors at my son/daughter’s school are critical to ensuring that my son and all other students in the district are academically and personally successful. The state agrees with this, which is why CA board policy requires 200 minutes of physical education every 2 weeks. The law is currently waived while distance learning is in place, but once crisis learning ends the law will probably go back into effect. If the district does not have physical education specialists in place they could be setting themselves up for a lawsuit. In 2013, 37 California school districts were sued for not meeting the physical education minutes requirement. This is because the state and parents know that it is important. If our students do not have their mental and physical health they cannot learn. While this is an extremely challenging situation and their will be changes and losses to meet the budget requirements I want to encourage you and the board to look at other solutions rather than the elimination of elementary physical education teachers and counselors. Thank you for your consideration.

-Dan DeJager