

[Schools, The Neighborhood Files](#)

Students and Teachers Speak Out to Save Programs

Students, teachers and concerned parents flocked to the ABC School Board meeting to ensure music and adult school programs are safe from budget cuts.

By [Terence Calacsan \(/users/terence-calacsan\)](#) | [Email the author \(#\)](#) | March 13, 2011

When the ABC School Board gathered for its first regularly scheduled meeting in March, there were more people in attendance than usual.

Filling the [district building \(http://cerritos.patch.com/listings/abc-unified-school-district-3\)](http://cerritos.patch.com/listings/abc-unified-school-district-3) were concerned teachers, students and parents, who were there to ensure that music programs and adult education classes were saved from Gov. Jerry Brown's proposed budget proposal, which is impacted by the state facing a \$25,400,000,000 budget deficit over the next 17 months.

Two contingency plans - called Plan A and Plan B - were proposed to the school board during the Feb. 22 school board meeting.

Brown's budget proposal extends the four taxes (Personal Income Tax, Sales Tax, Vehicle License Fee and Dependent Exemption Credits). Plan A will be implemented if this extension is approved by voters keeping cuts at a minimum level.

Plan A results in \$9,000,000 in cuts and generally the same funding as last year if Legislature approves a special election and if the voters approve the tax extension. Plan B results in about \$15,000,000 in cuts if Legislature approves a special election and if the voters reject the tax extension. Plan B includes the cutting of funding towards music and adult programs.

"We're not starting from scratch," Superintendent Gary Smuts said. "We don't have as much money now as we did five years ago. The board is here because they have to make the hard decision."

With signs held close expressing the need to save band and adult education programs, teachers, students and parents piled into the district building to the point where additional seating was needed.

Brennan England, a music teacher at [Whitney High School \(http://cerritos.patch.com/listings/whitney-high-school-3\)](http://cerritos.patch.com/listings/whitney-high-school-3), spoke to the board on behalf of his school and program.

"It seems irresponsible that music would be cut alone," England said. "I am not saying that you should save music to save my job; you should save music for the students."

Whitney High School senior, Kevin Yang, stood before the board and explained how his elementary music program experience benefited him growing up. Despite already being in high school, Yang spoke on behalf of students who might not be able to experience the impact of being a part of a school band.

"We're here tonight because we care," Yang said.

Do you think music and adult education programs should be saved? [Tell us in the comments. \(#comments\)](#)



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COMMENTS (2)

Frank X. McGrath (</users/frank-x-mcgrath>)

5:35pm on Sunday, March 13, 2011 (http://cerritos.patch.com/articles/students-and-teachers-speak-out-to-save-programs#comment_382318)

The ABC Adult School is essential to the community because it provides a niche to those who do not fit into the conventional education modes. It is the community's GI Bill and returns revenues many times over for the amounts invested. It also represents tax dollars contributed through taxing the community for use by its taxpayers. Dismantling this educational opportunity will be a disservice to the whole community and the eventual cost of reassembly will be enormous and possibly prohibitive. As a part-time ABC Adult School teacher and US Department of Veterans Affairs retiree, I have seen the enormous good education does for self esteem as well as the economic benefit to students and commerce.



</users/michael-brown-6>



Michael Brown (</users/michael-brown-6>)

9:12pm on Thursday, March 17, 2011 (http://cerritos.patch.com/articles/students-and-teachers-speak-out-to-save-programs#comment_405748)

Great points Frank. I read somewhere recently that for every dollar we spend on education we receive nearly several back. If not several, somewhere in that area. This war on education is a nationwide epidemic unfortunately. Our children can't hire lobbyist at the state and national level so unfortunately, schools and their ancillary programs are first on the chopping block. Salute to the parents and students who attended this meeting that night. Good reporting Terence.