
**THE FOLLOWING COMMUNICATION WAS SENT VIA E-MAIL
TO ALL BMES PTO MEMBERS ON SATURDAY, JANUARY 23.**

BMES PTO

Dear BMES PTO Families and Friends:

We're writing to inform you that, as it did last year, the Cave Creek Unified School District (CCUSD) will once again be recommending the initiation of a timeline for the potential closure of Desert Arroyo Middle School (DAMS) at next week's meeting of the CCUSD Governing Board, on Tuesday, January 26, at 6pm. The agenda for this meeting can be viewed [here](#).

Should the CCUSD Governing Board vote this coming Tuesday to initiate the timeline for the closure of DAMS, currently available information indicates that there will be a public hearing 30 days later, on Thursday, February 25 (no time or location specified yet), to allow for public comment. In addition, at a subsequent meeting, on Tuesday, March 30 (no time or location specified yet), the CCUSD Governing Board will take action or call for a Board vote regarding the closure of DAMS.

Having preliminarily reviewed [the materials](#) that will be presented at next week's Board meeting regarding the potential closure of DAMS, we believe, but cannot yet confirm, that if the closure of DAMS does take place:

- Black Mountain Elementary School, along with Desert Willow, Lone Mountain and Horseshoe Trails elementary schools, will transition from a K-5 to K-6 elementary school.
- Students currently attending DAMS, or next year's 7th and 8th grade DAMS students, will be given the option to attend Sonoran Trails Middle School. In the future, we assume that 7th and 8th graders might be given the option, via open enrollment, to attend Desert Sun's new K-8 model, when 7th and 8th grade classrooms are added in 2012 and 2013, respectively, or to attend the newly proposed Cactus Shadows High School Prep Academy (grades 7 through 12), which will accommodate 50 students per grade level should it move forward as recently proposed. (More information about the new Desert Sun K-8 model and CSHS Prep Academy can be found [here](#).)

State Budget Crisis

Our State Legislature continues to grapple with a budget deficit this year of \$1.4 billion, and it is projected that the deficit in fiscal year 2011 will be \$3.2 billion. As a result, a number of dramatic budget cuts are being proposed. In terms of public education, the Governor has actually proposed, among other cuts to public education, the elimination of funding for all-day kindergarten. A summary of the Governor's proposed budget for fiscal year 2011 can be found [here](#). (Please take note of the cuts to public education that are addressed on pages 16 through 18 in the Governor's proposed budget.)

Additional Cuts Proposed by CCUSD Hit Elementary School Students Hard

According to CCUSD, the State's budget crisis combines with both the recent failure of the K-3 Override and the erosion of enrollment in our District to create a 2010/2011 budget shortfall for CCUSD of \$1.9 million and possibly more. The District's latest projection is that the closure of DAMS will save an estimated \$500,000 per year.

Additional cuts also being proposed by CCUSD to address these budget reductions next year include, among others:

- The elimination of kindergarten aides
- Class size increases by 1 student in grades K-12
- A 50 percent cutback in elementary art and music teachers
- A 50 percent cutback in elementary PE teachers
- The elimination of elementary school computer lab coordinators

Click [here](#) to see the full list of potential reductions. Click [here](#) to see the District's projection for 2010/2011 budget cuts to education.

We encourage you to attend next Tuesday's Board meeting and to stay informed about these critical matters. The BMES PTO Executive Board strongly opposes the closure of any CCUSD school and will continue to monitor these events as they unfold.

While we are particularly concerned for our families with fifth grade students, these events effect us all, as BMES has long been a clear-cut elementary school portal to DAMS, and the closure of DAMS will have repercussions for the BMES community -- on so many different levels -- for years to come.

The issues that surround the closure of any school, but particularly in a school district as small as ours, are both numerous and complex. We are only able to impart a limited amount of information compared with the information that can be gathered first hand at CCUSD Governing Board meetings. Optimal understanding of these developments, and our best opportunity for intervention, rests with community involvement.

We genuinely regret that we had to intrude on your weekend with this disconcerting news, but this information just became available to us late yesterday, and we felt that it was critical to share it with you in a timely manner.

Please consider attending our next PTO meeting, on Wednesday, February 10, at 9:15 am, in PTO Room 501, if you would like to discuss these matters with us directly.

In the meantime, thank you as always for your ongoing support of Black Mountain Elementary School and its students.

-- The BMES PTO Executive Board