



## Castro Valley parents hit \$25,000 mark in donations for schools

By Kristofer Noceda  
The Oakland Tribune

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**CASTRO VALLEY** — More than \$25,000 has been raised by parents to help the school district as it tries to offset millions in state funding cuts.

The total donation to area schools is the result of a three-month campaign by Save Our Schools Castro Valley!, a nonprofit formed earlier this year.

In addition, this month the organization will launch a "Remember in September" fundraiser by teaming with area retailers, who will offer a portion of their sales proceeds to help the district restore cut programs.

"The only people who suffer at the end of the day, if nobody does anything, is the kids," said Allen Mueller, Save Our Schools president and co-founder. "We need to step up and help the district."

More than 100 donors — ranging from businesses to families with and without children in the schools — have contributed to help the group reach its goal of raising \$3.2 million for the school district, Mueller said.

"We feel good about what we've been able to raise so far," he said. "But we still have a long way to go."

A majority of the donations have been made through installment plans featured on the organization's Web site, [www.soscv.org](http://www.soscv.org).

More information on this month's fundraiser is also available on the Web site.

Mueller and Brett Pletcher — both fathers of students attending Castro Valley schools — founded Save Our Schools Castro Valley! in March, shortly after district officials announced massive cuts would be needed to balance reductions in funding from the state.

The district this school year made \$4.1 million in cuts in response to the state budget crisis, said Mike Bush, assistant superintendent of business services.

The district currently operates under a \$70.6 million budget.

In addition, the district was notified in July that the state's revised budget calls for another \$589,000 in funding reductions.

Those cuts will be made up through district reserves to avoid additional layoffs, Bush said.

However, next school year the district may be forced into more reductions if projections hold because most of its reserves have been exhausted.

Last school year, the district used its reserves to absorb \$3 million in midyear cuts.

Schools probably will face another \$3 million in cuts next year, Bush said.

District officials this month will begin work on how it plans to address next school year's projected deficit.

**Reach Kristofer Noceda at 510-293-2479. Follow him at [twitter.com/Noceda\\_Reports](https://twitter.com/Noceda_Reports).**

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