

School cuts survey results

In October L.A. Youth asked readers about budget cuts at their schools and more than 1,850 teens responded. I could relate to the students who took the survey because I've seen similar bad conditions at my school. We don't have working light bulbs in some overhead projectors and when the Internet stops working there's no one in the school to fix it. And all but one of the restrooms have been closed because we don't have enough custodians to clean them.

When my school opened two years ago students in Koreatown were happy to have a neighborhood school. But we didn't have any AP classes because there weren't enough teachers. I wanted to take AP biology and world history but couldn't. This year there are only four APs. Also, we have only one science teacher for the entire high school. He has a credential for chemistry but he's teaching my physics class. He shows physics videos and we teach ourselves from our textbook.

I used to blame the bad conditions for my bad grades, like failing history last



year and a getting a D in journalism. I felt that the school wasn't doing enough for us, so there was no point for me to do well in school. Now I realize that I can still learn even without properly trained teachers and the best resources. But not everyone has the motivation to do that so they stop coming to school. From sophomore year to junior year we've lost about 30 students out of 120. Some transferred but some dropped out.

Despite how they answered the survey, I was surprised that almost all of the students planned to go to college. That's good, but unless schools fix these problems, students could lose hope.

—Felix Ruano, 16, Ambassador School of Global Leadership

Here are the answers from the teens who responded to our survey (thank you for helping us out). We randomly chose three people to win \$100 for participating.

Congratulations to: Matthew Alvarez from L.A. Leadership Academy HS, David Baltazar from Belvedere MS and Trevor Ryan Ramirez from Redondo Union HS. Note: Some percentages do not add up to 100 because respondents checked all the answers that applied.

RESPONDENTS WERE:

Gender:

Female56% Male44%

Ethnicity:

Latino79% Black 7%
Asian 9% Other 8%
White 9%

ANSWERS:

Do overcrowded classrooms make you feel like your teachers don't have enough time to teach?

Yes67% No33%

Have you been unable to participate in a program or class because it's no longer offered at your school?

No71% Yes29%

If yes, please list all the programs/classes that apply to you (here are some of the responses):

AP classes	Gymnastics
ASL (American Sign Language)	Journalism
AVID	Leadership
Art	Metalshop
Band	Nursing
Choir	PE class
Cosmetology	Physics
Culinary Arts	Saturday School for SAT
Drama	Soccer
Field trips	Softball
Football	Web Design
	Woodshop

If your school had to make cuts to save money, what should they cut first? (They are listed in order starting with what respondents would cut first.)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. School newspaper or broadcast outlet | 8. Sports |
| 2. Summer school | 9. Guidance counselors |
| 3. Field trips | 10. Other |
| 4. Security guards | 11. Administrators (like principals and assistant principals) |
| 5. Custodians | 12. Teachers |
| 6. Libraries | |
| 7. Arts and music | |

Have you experienced any of the following in your classroom in the past two years?

Copied information from an overhead because there wasn't enough paper to make copies of a lesson for everyone57%
Not enough computers or enough working computers52%
Students had to share textbooks because there weren't enough for everyone51%
Not all the students had a desk to sit at. 37%
None of the above19%

What have you or your family had to pay for in the last two years at your school?

None of the above 42%
Sports uniforms34%
Supplies in art class 22%
Buses for a field trip21%
Participation on a sports team18%
Music program like band/choir12%
Lab fees for science classes 8%

Has your school cut any of the following journalism programs in the past two years?

My school doesn't have any of the above43%
No, none of the above has been cut in the past two years 40%
Radio11%
Television station 9%
Newspaper club 7%
Journalism classes 7%

How many students are in your English class?

The highest number was 50 and the lowest was 14

How many students are in your math class?

The highest number was 50 and the lowest was 11

Do any of the following need repair at your school?

Restrooms 64%
Graffiti-covered walls 49%
Air conditioning/heating 48%
Classrooms/desks47%
Cafeteria 36%
Public address/bell system19%
No, all of the above are in good condition.15%

Have you left or thought about leaving public school because of the budget cuts?

No78% Yes22%

Have budget cuts affected your ability to get the classes you need to graduate?

No87% Yes13%

Are you planning to attend college?

Yes97% No 3%

If yes, where are you planning to apply? (Respondents could check up to three choices.)

Four-year public university in state 64%
Community college 36%
Private college or university35%
Four-year public university out of state31%
Trade school 4%

How do you expect to pay for college?

Scholarships73% Loans39%
Work60% Military 7%
Family54%