



Budget cuts do vast harm to kids, schools

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I'm writing to plead with the Stockton Unified trustees to keep the elementary and high school counseling programs active in our schools. Counselors are youth mentors who are vital to the support, motivation and overall achievement of today's youths. The hope in many of our students is falling, alongside the downfall of the economy. The need for youths to have a channel to rely upon is even greater in the hard times that we face today.

A school system is much like a family that shares good times and bad. When I was growing, my counselor, Mable "Jimi" Choice, was the bond who held countless students together - bridging the gap between peers, teachers, parents and the community.

Counselors act as part-time guardians, bearing the responsibility of listening to the needs of their students and aiding them in following their dreams and accomplishing their lifelong goals. They help mold and shape young people into productive and positive leaders of our society.

My counselor made that difference in my life, and I humbly ask the trustees please to give today's youths the opportunity those of my generation were fortunate enough to have.

Terry a. O'Neal

Author, Elk Grove

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