



PO Box 39985 • Griffith Station
Los Angeles, CA 90039
www.friendsofivanhoe.org

Dear Friends and Family,

For those of you who live in the Silver Lake community, you are already aware of the wonderful education and unique community that Ivanhoe Elementary School provides. For those of you who aren't, Ivanhoe is an ethnically and socioeconomically diverse school where seventeen languages are spoken, and the community and administration come together to provide the best possible education for our children.

What other factors make Ivanhoe an excellent school? We are a small school with committed teachers, staff and parents. Teacher turnover is rare at Ivanhoe, which provides students with the continuity that helps ensure their academic success. While the average elementary school API (academic performance index) score in Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) is 727, Ivanhoe's API score is 911. For elementary schools in the district, Ivanhoe ranks #14 out of 484 schools.

Our excellence however, does not immunize us from challenges. Due to the ongoing California state budget crisis, which includes an \$800 million cut to LAUSD of which our school is a part, Ivanhoe's programs and services have been and will continue to be directly affected. Ivanhoe does not qualify for many of the federal funds that help keep most schools afloat in times of fiscal crisis. In addition, property taxes do not fund education in California the way it does in other states. On average, less than half of our taxes relative to other states make it to a general fund in Sacramento, where they are distributed to schools based on a set of complex formulas. We cannot rely on our tax base in the way other states do.

So how has Ivanhoe been directly impacted? In 2008, the initial layoffs at Ivanhoe were to include three, key academic coaches whose mentorship to and support of our teachers has been elemental to our success. Astonishingly, through the generosity of the immediate Ivanhoe community and beyond, we were able to raise over \$191,000 in six short weeks. This allowed us to preserve the positions that are integral to Ivanhoe's success – at least for a year! That was just the tip of the iceberg, however. More layoffs and cutbacks will follow in the years ahead. In addition to layoffs, some school districts have resorted to increasing class sizes in order to retain teachers, something that can inhibit both learning and efficiency. We hope this is a path that Ivanhoe does not have to take. But, if it does, our academic coaches will be more important than ever.

In addition to assertive fundraising, in the spring of 2008, parents formed a grassroots organization known as the Committee to Preserve Ivanhoe's Excellence (CPIE). CPIE's goals are to raise awareness about issues facing public school education and to advocate for the needs of all students. We want to raise the bar in public education, bring accountability back to our school district, and to mobilize parents when the quality of our children's education is threatened.

While communities and families suffer during the nation's economic crisis, we are still committed to preserving what is wonderful about our local school. Therefore, we are reaching out to you, our family, friends and neighbors. If you are an advocate of public school education, which can encompass all the great things a diverse community school provides, please help! Our children appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brigid M. LaBonge".

Brigid M. LaBonge
President, Friends of Ivanhoe

Please send your tax-deductible donation to
Friends of Ivanhoe, P.O. Box 39985,
Griffith Station, Los Angeles, CA 90039.

You can also donate online at www.friendsofivanhoe.org via PayPal or any major credit card. Friends of Ivanhoe is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established to support Ivanhoe's excellence. An acknowledgement of your tax-deductible contribution will be sent to you.



**Committee to Preserve
Ivanhoe's Excellence**