

Member News

WINTER, 2008



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Letter from the President

Just as we were looking forward to an exciting new year, the Governor announced that K-12 would have to submit 4.5% budget cuts. On several occasions the "Education First Governor" promised to hold K-12 harmless from the statewide agency reductions. The superintendents were notified by letter on December 14th. Neither the Governor nor his staff met with superintendents prior to the letter to discuss the possibility of reductions and the impact the reductions will have on districts.

On December 20th, I attended a meeting in Carson City with Governor Gibbons, Andrew Clinger, the Governor's director of administration, 16 school district superintendents and an audience of approximately 20 individuals. The superintendents attempted to provide the Governor and his staff with specifics of how the reductions will devastate their districts. They were patient, polite and passionate. They asked many questions. Most went unanswered and seemed to fall upon deaf ears.

Sharla Hales, President of the Nevada Association of School Boards (NASB), spoke from the audience and stressed the fact that all other agencies were given months to work with the Governor's staff to reduce the impact of reductions. She questioned why K-12 was given such little notice and asked for time to work through the budgets.

It was understood that reductions would be made at the local level. Giving school districts, boards of trustees autonomy in the decision making and involving the public.

The meeting found no solution and only left more questions.

Mary Jo Parise-Malloy

Nevada Department of Education

A January 24th letter to superintendents ordered districts to make 100% reductions to all one shot funding for the biennium (2007/08). Districts will also have to make further reductions from the DSA totaling \$28,838,349. This is the money that directly affects the classroom and students:

ONE SHOT FUNDING LOSS:

Full Day-K Expansion: \$13,631,760

Empowerment: \$8,897,200

SB185 Grants: \$10,780,000

Educational Technology Commission: \$10,780,000

Career and Technical Program Increase: \$4,000,000

Gifted and Talented: \$670,172

Magnet Program for Deaf/Hard of Hearing: \$273,000

Performance Pay Program: \$10,000,000

Utilities Shortfall Funds: \$7,636,160

TOTAL for the next 2 years = \$63,888,292

K-12 will still need to cut 28,836,349 million

NQE has a number of concerns:

1. We are questioning the legality of the above cuts as many of these were bills that were passed as law in the 2007 Legislative Session.
2. Education was supposed to take a 4.5% reduction, yet these programs are cut 100%.
3. It was understood that any and all cuts would be decided at the local level allowing school boards autonomy in making decisions and allowing public input.

NQE is considering ways to prevent further cuts today and in the future. Budget cuts are nothing new in this state. K-12 endured reductions in the 80s, 90s and in 2000. We are looking to the future and weighing our options. We will keep you informed and value your thoughts and opinions.

NQE WORKING TO STOP BUDGET CUTS

On December 19, 2007, NQE organized and held 4 candlelight vigils in Reno, Carson City and Las Vegas in order to draw attention and terminate the budget reductions. Over 300 parents, students, teachers, administrators and concerned community members attended statewide to support our students. The vigils garnered great media support that reached throughout the state.

Over 130 attended a town hall meeting held at Spring Valley High School on January 16, 2008. Jon Ralston donated his time and expertise to moderate the extremely informative and sometimes lively discussion. Jeremy Agüero with Applied Analysis, Speaker Barbara Buckley, Lisa Mayo-DeRiso of Mayo and Associates, Assemblywoman Debbie Smith and CCSD Board Trustee Sheila Moulton presented information regarding education funding, the budget cuts and the impact they will have on our students and society. The panelists also donated their time. The public had the opportunity to share their thoughts, concerns and ask questions.

Governor Gibbons was invited. We never heard from his office as to whether he would be attending. To see the invitation to the Governor go to our website: www.nevadansforqualityeducation.org

NQE thanks and appreciates all of those who participated in both events.

EDUCATION SPENDING IN NEVADA

School Fiscal Year	U.S. Average Current Expenditure Per Student	Nevada Current Expenditure Per Student	Nevada vs. U.S. Current Expenditure "Gap"	Percent Increase Nevada Expenditures to Close "Gap"
FY1994	\$ 5,327	\$ 4,664	\$ (663)	14.2%
FY1995	5,529	4,730	(799)	16.9%
FY1996	5,689	4,892	(797)	16.3%
FY1997	5,923	5,084	(839)	16.5%
FY1998	6,189	5,295	(894)	16.9%
FY1999	6,508	5,587	(921)	16.5%
FY2000	6,912	5,760	(1,152)	20.0%
FY2001	7,380	5,807	(1,573)	27.1%
FY2002	7,727	6,079	(1,648)	27.1%
FY2003	8,044	6,092	(1,952)	32.0%
FY2004	8,369	6,454	(1,915)	29.7%
FY2005	8,707	6,750	(1,957)	29.0%
FY2006	9,058	7,060	(1,999)	28.3%
FY2007	9,424	7,276	(2,149)	29.5%

Source: NCES

Budget Cuts Survey

Governor Gibbons is requesting reductions in spending from state-supported agencies, including education. As a result, the Clark County School District is facing the loss of approximately \$66 million. Parents, community members and CCSD staff are invited to take a survey to help the district determine the areas in which to make reductions. Go to:

<http://ccsd.net/budgetSurvey.php?s=3>

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