

District Budget and You

Background for Mesa School Employees



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The Arizona Legislature continues to work on balancing the current year's budget: a process that will likely mean the loss of school district funding this school year. With no relief in sight, the Legislature then must come up with a state budget for fiscal year 2010. The chairs of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees recommended massive cuts to the state education program: from kindergarten all the way to the universities. What will this mean to us?

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Impact on Mesa. MEA and MESPA committees met with district administrators last Monday, January 26, to learn what the proposed cuts could mean to our schools. It's not a pretty picture. We're looking at the possibility of a \$70 million loss to the district – 15% of the operating budget. That's not counting the additional cuts we must make due to a loss of enrollment of more than 2,000 students. Take away another \$10 million.

Think about the budget cuts we went through last year: staff transfers, elimination of positions, stipends that were cut, the Board imposing an unsatisfactory salary decision. Now multiply that experience to make it four times worse.

Everyone will feel the impact. Your teaching job may be safe, but will you be able to stay at the same school? Can the district afford the elective that you teach? How many office jobs will be cut? Will our maintenance folks be stretched further than they are now? Can we get by with fewer administrators, counselors, nurses? Will we ever buy new textbooks or software? How long will salaries be allowed to stagnate? What happens to class size and case load?

For too many years Arizona was 49th in the nation for per-pupil spending. How will it feel to be dead last? Cutting taxes and cutting education are the wrong solutions.

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They're Beginning to Feel the Heat. It's not all bad news. Educators, parents, students, and many other thoughtful citizens have raised their voices. The calls, cards, and emails are pouring into the Capitol. The majority party is not unified behind the Appropriations Committee chairs, Russell Pearce and John Kavanagh.

Remember what we've asked you to do:

1. **Register to be a Cyber Lobbyist.** Give MEA or MESPA your home email address so that you can be part of our rapid response network.
2. **Keep sending emails and making phone calls.** See last week's Bulletin Number 3 for our targeted senators and representatives. Use your home phone and computer!
3. **Sign up to go to the Capitol** to work with our AEA Lobbying Team
4. **AND ... Talk to your friends and neighbors and community** so that they will also make calls and send emails.

On the back – an Enrollment Form in case you're not yet a Member

mea

MESPA

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