



FUND OUR FUTURE

N E V A D A

Nevada K-12 – The Facts on Funding

Q: Why should we invest additional dollars into education?

A: A well-educated community has a positive impact on its well-being and local economy. Economic development agencies have reported businesses are shunning Nevada because of its underfunded K-12 systems, citing:

- uneducated and unqualified workers unable to meet demands of private businesses
- a subpar K-12 system that employers don't want to subject employees' children to

Q: Didn't Nevada recently invest millions of additional dollars for education?

A: The increased education funds from the last two sessions have increased student achievement, however they are restricted-use funds and cannot be equated with increases in overall funding. Those funds cannot go towards general operating expenses such as increased transportation costs, employee salaries, maintenance etc. Furthermore, restricted-use funds are unreliable, as they must be reauthorized each session.

Q: How do we know Nevada needs additional funds for education?

A: A study commissioned by the Legislature to analyze its funding formula, Nevada Plan (Distributive School Account) found that Nevada needs to invest at least \$1.6 billion additional dollars to meet federal and state mandates. Nevada also ranks 48th in education funding and was given an "F" for funding from the Education Law Center's National Report Card.

Q: Isn't mismanagement the most critical issue?

A: Nevada K-12 funding has only increased by an average of 1.3 percent, not even keeping up with the true inflation rates districts face. This makes it difficult to keep up with increased salary demands, healthcare costs, rising utility costs, unfunded mandates and other growing expenses. Several school districts across the state are facing similar budget shortfalls and are having to make cuts in their budgets, too, as well as enduring increasing class sizes just to balance their budgets. While mismanagement could be an issue, increased costs that don't keep up with revenue can cause a shortfall in any organization.

Q: What assurance do we have that an increase in funds will be used appropriately?

A: The legislature needs to include accountability provisions and proven methods of success that address the needs outlined by the purpose of additional funds.

Q: What steps need to occur to increase an investment in education?

A: One step is to ensure all funds from the IP1 2009 Room Tax and Marijuana Tax go towards increasing education funding since they currently don't. New funds for education should increase (supplement) funding, not replace (supplant) other funds. Lawmakers must acknowledge the State falls short in funding schools while it continues to add unfunded mandates. We must demonstrate that Nevada values public education by appropriately funding students' needs.