



League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces

Unit Meeting – July 18, 2011 – 10:00-11:30 a.m.
Good Samaritan Social Center, Small Conference Room
3011 Buena Vida Circle, Las Cruces

STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS AND HOW THEY IMPACT LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEM

1. Introduction
 2. School Funding – Bonnie Burn
 3. Curriculum Development & Application – Sue Cain
 4. Teacher Preparation & Ongoing Education – Jane Asche
 5. Mandated Testing of Students – Erika Graf-Webster
- Schools in New Mexico are unique in that 57% of students live in poverty. There are many who speak no English, and we have an immigrant population that is transient. Some students will be first generation high school graduates and some will be first generation college students. The state has a population of 2,059,179. There is a large rural population, and distances are great. The state raises the majority of its general funds through gross receipts tax, personal income tax, and taxes on the oil and gas industry.
 - New Mexico Education Formula
 - Developed in 1974
 - Among the top 3 funding models across the country; now among the top 10
 - In 1983, the education formula provided 51% of General Funds for education throughout NM. Now it provides 41%.
 - 1990 state legislators began changing the formula making it less equitable and not keeping pace with the needs of the schools
 - NM Educational goal: to ensure access to a “sufficient” education that is afforded to all school age children.
 - Current Funding Process
 - All funds collected by the state go into the General Funds
 - School funding is based on a formula of averaged indexed costs.
 - Ex: Grades 4-6 least costly students to fund; therefore, index is 1.0. High school students, most costly, are indexed at 1.25.
 - Special education and other programs and services are indexed as well.
 - Smaller districts that are more expensive are funded through a size-adjustment index.
 - Other funds are available (e.g., supplementary adjustment funds).
 - American Institutes for Research (AIR) Study – 16 month study in 2008
 - Commissioned by the Funding Formula Study Task Force appointed by the NM State Legislature and Governor Richardson and under the direction of the Legislative Council Service (LSC).

- State school funding should be increased by 14.5% (achieve a level of \$750 million dollars to fully fund “to ensure access to a ‘sufficient’ education that is afforded to all school age children”).
 - No school districts would lose money.
 - Special education would be funded based on a flat rate of 16% to discourage districts from over identifying special education students.
 - End results: Defeated by the NM Legislators.
- Las Cruces Public School Budget
 - Operating Budget
 - \$170 million – (90% of formula funding)
 - \$22 million – Federally funded programs. For example:
 - IDEA Part B, Special Education - \$6.2 million
 - Title I - \$6 million
 - USDA Cafeteria - \$5 million
 - Other costs: For example, Bus Transportation \$4.2 million
 - Capital Outlay – repair, remodeling, and maintenance of buildings and grounds
 - Equipment – 6 year depreciation (preferred would be 3 years)
 - Vehicles – turned in when mileage 100,000. LCPS vehicle are 140,000-150,000 (13-15 years old).
 - Building maintenance = \$2 million; another \$2 million would be helpful.
- Cost Savings Measures
 - Consolidation of Schools – In Superintendent Rounds opinion, this measure does not achieve much savings; NM is rural and distances are great. Once schools are closed, the small towns disappear.
 - Coordination of administrative services (e.g., using CPAs for accounting and services such as human resources and social services can be shared). NM Regional Education Cooperatives (REC) already established. Services provided include teacher and staff training, information, data gathering and analysis, technical assistance and resource library, to name a few).
 - Cost savings best achieved with districts between 20,000-30,000 students
 - LCPS – 25,000 students
 - Gadsden – 13,000 students
 - Hatch – 1,300 students
 - Cost per student in NM is \$7,235; not including busing; National average is \$11,000+/student
- Funding Wish List
 - Intervention with students (truancy, academic support, social work services)
 - Reducing class size
 - Kindergarten capped at 20 students (between 15-20 students gives teacher an educational assistant)
 - Grades 1, 2, and 3 – average is 22 (a class of 21 entitles the teacher to a full time educational assistant).
 - Grades 7-12 the teaching load should not exceed 160 students except for
 - teachers of required English courses in Grades 7 and 8: not exceed 135, with a maximum of 27 students per class.

