

Thor's Hammer

Valley High School

2839 S. Burnham Avenue

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Teachers ARE Magnet Busing Needed! Needs to Stay

By Alexa Ard

Budget cuts are threatening to deprive the Clark County School District of magnet programs, sports, bus transportation, classes, and the list goes on and on, thanks to a proposal by Governor Sandoval that plans to cut \$400 million from education. This plan will take effect next school year. Another devastating factor of the budget cuts is the amount of teachers who will lose their jobs.

This is an unfortunate event for the hardworking teachers who are responsible for educating Nevada's future generations. Teachers are vital to society, and it is sad that they do not receive more recognition or praise. Think about it, there are professional athletes and celebrities out there making millions of dollars. They do not really give any true development to society.

I strongly believe that teaching should be one of the highest paid jobs. A teacher undergoes teaching classes where they are outnumbered by thirty, sometimes more, students and work to educate all of them and make sure they understand. A teacher's work is never done, and some days they are even present after school to offer help. Teachers contribute to the future by educating the adolescents who will someday be responsible for organizing Nevada's society.

Firing teachers and increasing class sizes will obviously hurt those that are teachers, but it will also have negative effects on the students who will receive less help because of the large class size. All in all, the budget cuts will harm the future of Nevada.

By Nicole Rouhani

Las Vegas is currently in a big debate over what aspects of the public school system the Clark County School District will cut in the budget cuts. One thing budget cuts will have a serious impact on is the magnet programs.

Magnet schools have specialized programs emphasizing a consistent theme or method of teaching, facilitating students' and teachers' commitment to the school. I am currently in the eleventh grade, attending Valley High School for the magnet program, which is the International Baccalaureate Program.

Magnet schools increase the choices available to parents and students in urban school districts, but let them remain in the public school system. Las Vegas needs magnet schools to stay! With the proposed budget cuts for next year, students might not be able to attend magnet schools anymore, because the budget cuts may cut all magnet busing. Most magnet students are not zoned for the magnet school they attend; therefore they need transportation to school.

There are many people who agree that there are just certain things that we cannot cut for next school year. Magnet schools offer so much to students, so it would be devastating to see so many students not be able to attend these schools, because there will be no more busing.

Las Vegas needs magnet busing! Anyone reading this letter can make a difference. The first thing we need to do is let our voices be heard.

Education Budget Cuts: Death Sentence

By Jamie Goodman

The education budget cuts that are on course to affect Nevada are completely and utterly alarming. As a current high school sophomore, I am appalled and terrified at the thought of what my education might become due to unnecessary funding reductions.

I understand that some money must be cut back, but \$400 million is not an option. We already face less than satisfactory conditions (e.g. large class sizes, lack of supplies), but to cut our clubs, sports, and honors classes is a death sentence. These activities are what capture the attention of colleges and give our students, your children, a much higher chance of getting accepted into a good school. Our classes are already forced to compromise and these extra activities are all we have left.

Education is no small matter and it costs an astronomical amount to run properly but no one is willing to pay. The money must come from somewhere and the obvious solution is to raise taxes. While most people will run for a bomb shelter when they hear this phrase, it is the best compromise available. Otherwise, you condemn us to a classroom of sixty students with one overworked teacher, thirty desks, ten books, and a creatively stunted education.

The final question is, "How can the country expect the best from us if we don't have the opportunity to grow?" The answer is, it can't. You can't. So hit me with your best shot and fire away, because I will fight for my education.

How to Cut Back Without Cutting Out

By Anne Underwood

Personally, I believe that school funding should be the last place for budget cuts. Without an educated youth, this country loses its foundation.

Although I do understand that we are in serious debt and the only way to fix it is to make sacrifices, but cutting education funding is not an option. Before we take drastic measures and cut programs, teachers, and activities completely out of the picture, we should observe previous budgets and decide where money is being lost. For example, many schools were recently provided with new smart board and Elmo cameras which all, without a doubt, are more convenient than older technologies but these electronics are not truly a necessity. In many classes they are sitting unused—I can think of three classes off the

top of my head. I'm not saying that the classroom should be an antique show, but technological advancements should only be purchased when there is a definite benefit from their presence.

Also, the wealth within schools that is gained through fundraising should be distributed. This means that clubs or sports teams should not be able to claim the vending of a specific item or the running of a specific booth throughout the year. Once a club or team earns enough money to cover the basic price of competing, any extra money should go towards supporting the school they represent.

If we start cutting before going through the budget with a fine toothed comb, we will just continue to cut until education is available only to those who can afford to pay from their own pockets.

Budget Cuts: Less Teachers, Little Education

By Zandra Fernandez

With Governor Brian Sandoval's proposed budget cuts for schools, an increase in class sizes and vast teacher layoffs will be an evident outcome. As of the moment, you may not care that teachers will be laid off, however, you need to realize that this will cause a significant impact not only to the class size, but the students' academic performance as well.

Increasing class sizes will decrease the amount of time for student-teacher interaction. This interaction between student and teacher plays a very important role when it comes to the students' acceleration and mastery regarding the lessons. Smaller class sizes are also helpful for teachers because they can easily keep track of the students who are experiencing trouble keeping up with the rest of the class; therefore teachers can adequately provide them extra help. Strategies like these are the reasons why smaller classes show better performance and lower drop-out rates.

So why are teacher layoffs that will result to larger classes and eventually poor performance from students even an option? Why is the governor obstinate in refusing to raise taxes despite the effects that it will have on children? Like what late President Ronald Reagan said in his Jan 20, 1981 inaugural address, "For decades, we have piled deficit upon deficit, mortgaging our future and our children's future for the temporary convenience of the present."

Hurting the Future

By Teara Ford

Although the economy is not progressing at this time, limiting education isn't the answer. The Clark County School District wants to cut teachers, staff and certain programs to meet the budget requirements. Little do people know this cut is going to affect many people and children in the school district. Kindergarten to junior high are the most important years of growth.

Certain programs that the district is going to cut may be the programs that inspire students to learn and think of their future.

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Budget Cut Edition

Do Not Support Budget Cuts !!!!

By Fabian Meraz

The budget cuts being proposed regarding education are heinous. Nevada should be investing in its future, not cutting it. Governor Brian Sandoval seems to be punishing public education for a pledge he made; a pledge that stated he would not raise taxes! I believe most Nevadans would not mind having a minimal tax raise in order to save education.

Most people seem to disregard the fact that the cuts in education will also affect higher education. Colleges have to cut many programs; there have also been talks of eliminating some colleges altogether. I am currently in the STEP-UP program studying to become a teacher. As I was reading the newspaper, I saw an article that stated Nevada State College, the college participating with the STEP-UP program, might be forced to shut down due to the education cuts. I believe the STEP-UP program is excellent because I have wanted to be a teacher ever since I was a small child; teaching is my passion. If Nevada State College were to close, the STEP-UP program might also disappear. That means many students who have a passion to be teachers might not have the opportunity to become one if these colleges are closed due to financial difficulties.

I believe it is better to have teachers that have a passion for teaching rather than teachers that are just teaching for the money. Nevada's youth needs to get together and tell the government not to take away from education. We are the future. Unless the government would like to have an uneducated citizenry, it should not cut education.

Honest Questions

By Aide Neri

There is no perfect way to deal with the budget because a compromise takes more than one to give up just a little bit of something. However, how much of a compromise is really offered for students when all that they, those who are the future of this great nation and world, do not have the resources necessary to carry on and excel? Or when everything they strive for is taken away?

Magnet programs help to create a balance and raise the bar for the education here in Southern Nevada, and by cutting transportation for those students enrolled in these programs, slowly, they will begin to disintegrate. So where is the compromise? Who, other than the students and teachers, are giving up something for the sake of the city, district, and state? The group to suffer the most is the most important of all; as students are the basis for the near and distant future.

With the help of society and a real compromise, these budget cuts may not come so heavily on only one group of society, but lightly overall. Students are already discouraged enough to participate in voting, so why discourage them more? There is no perfect compromise, but together, we can make it pretty close!

Get Your Budget Off My Back

By Vernice Ollano

Education, nowadays, is the worst that it has ever been. Children are so ignorant of reality that now they are being reckless, and them being reckless means that Nevada is in for a reckless future. In order to change this, we need to educate our children on a higher level.

I believe that the state of Nevada needs to make budget cuts, but it does not need to be from the education department. Whenever Nevada is put into a situation where they need to make cuts, we always take it from the education department. Why not take it from landscaping? I see projects all over Las Vegas that look beautiful, but are they necessary? I drive on the I-15 everyday and I see the walls that are engraved and painted and the large random turtles with colorful rocks in the spaghetti bowl. I am not saying that it does not look nice but we probably spent thousands of dollars paying for equipment, workers and supplies. We could have taken that money and put it towards education.

In conclusion, I do think that there needs to be budget cuts in Nevada, but do not just cut education.

CONSEQUENCES of the Proposed Cuts

By Lenora A. Valdez

The direct consequence of budget cuts will be a lot of students dropping out.

Due to the overcapacity of kids in classrooms, no one will want to come. If there are 45 or 50 kids per class, no one will have the time to get the help they need from a teacher, so they will get mad and not even bother to come to school.

If sports are cut, students will lose what keeps them motivated. The main reason kids are in sports is to get accepted to a great college. When involved with sports, maintaining good grades is necessary and without that the athletes who normally pass to keep a spot on the team will no longer see a reason to try in the classroom.

The cuts to magnet programs are going to cause a lot of students to change schools which means a lot of time and paperwork. These students are not interested in going to their zoned schools so attendance may be affected here as well.

Budget cuts will kill us slowly and they will cause a lot of students to drop out or be unsuccessful.

Dear Governor, Get Your Priorities Straight

By Alexandria Malone

It seems to me that education has taken a backseat to petty politics. Instead of doing what is best for students, the same students who will soon shape this country, we focus on how much money it costs to give our children a decent education. Instead of making sure the teachers educating our students are fully qualified and content with their jobs, we focus on how many jobs we can cut to fulfill some kind of quota.

In the sense of budgeting, we do not have our priorities straight. How can we say we are doing what is best for our country when we do not put education on the forefront of our agendas? How is our future going to be if these cuts go through?

As a student, I can tell you what I see. I see overcrowded classrooms, unhappy teachers who do not care about their students, and students who mirror this complacency.

Unfortunately this will become what our students have to experience everyday. How can our country be proud of this?

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Budget Cut Edition

The Consequences Are Endless

By Maria Lee Camargo

I understand that there are many different opinions about the budget cuts nowadays, but I would like to take this time and share mine. It is clear to me that cuts must be made within our budget due to the current state of our economy, but I do not know if those in charge of making the cuts are aware of the damage they are causing. It is clear that this will cause havoc among the students now, but it will also affect the future of many more. By taking so much money from education, we are setting ourselves up for failure with no means to take back our errors. It is our students that are the future of our world and what may become of it, and if people are not able to pursue an education, our future will suffer.

This is why I would like to take the time to tell everyone to rethink their decisions, and think of the good of the whole, in place of their own well being. It is important for everyone to realize that although cuts in our education may fix one problem, cuts will cause more problems in the future. As a student myself, I know that all the programs I have been involved in have made me the person that I am today. Without them, I would not have received the well rounded education my parents always wanted for me. It would be a real shame to stand and watch while these programs are taken away from others who need them as well. Cuts from the budget, such as these, are going to be the downfall of education as we know it.

We Care, Don't Cut Us

By Berenice Angulo-Garcia

Budget cuts are a really bad idea and it affects the students, the teachers and the rest of Clark County. The things you suggest cutting are important to us because our lives will be forever changed if they are taken away. It is important for us as students to have magnet programs in our school. We also need activities and sports to get credits and to have fun. Without budget money, we also won't be able to get the books and supplies we need to be successful.

Budget cuts are important to me because I want a good education and the right supplies for my school. I think most people think students don't care about school, but we do care! Most students want to learn and have a good education and that requires money for schools.

Budget Cuts Will Be Devastating

By Michael Ellis

If the budget cuts happen, it will devastate both teachers and students all over Nevada. Students that like fun things such as art, physical education, and after school activities will be destroyed because all of them will be gone. Lots of students might drop out because many students come to school for sports and sports are what motivate students to keep their grades up.

If budget cuts actually happen, teachers will not be able to help students because there will be 50 kids in one class. When there are that many kids in a classroom, the teacher will not have time to help them or have the time to get to know them. Too many students in a class can cause students to fail.

Schools don't need money taken away from them; they need money given to them for books. Teachers do not need to be laid off and classes do not need to be taken away. Schools are good the way they are and budget cuts would change them.

Everyone needs to help schools and something needs to be done about these budget cuts so we can continue to learn!

Drastic Budget Cuts Hurt Us All

By Susana N. Perez

By Jeanette Lagunez

You may not see the budget cuts a drastic action; but I, as a student, do. The budget cuts could very well be the reason why students are dropping out of school. Cutting programs and making kids pay to play sports contributes to the disinterest students have in school. Paying for sports would probably be one of the hardest things for students because not everyone has money. Many of the students that currently play sports will not be able to continue once they are required to pay to play because they do not have the money for it. The arts are another example. There are so many talented kids that can act, sing, draw, and perform but they will not be able to showcase their talent if their programs are cut. These budget cuts affect more than just the schools; they affect the students who belong to these schools.

The budget cuts will affect me and many others because if we lose Read 180, it will affect me and people who are struggling with the fundamentals of reading and writing. Also, it is not fair to cut Read 180 and other remedial programs. It is important to keep those types of programs because people have not developed their skills yet. If it does happen then we will not have the levels and skills we still need to succeed. So, if you can leave Read 180 alone, then that would be excellent. It will give us more abilities to learn how to read and write, and it will be improving the knowledge of students all around us enrolled in the program, too.

Save Read180

By Gregorio Aguilar

The budget cuts will not just affect a few people that care, it will affect everyone. It will affect teachers, students, parents, and families. It will also affect many good programs like Read 180. Many students need help with their reading and English. Once that program is taken away, many students will start falling behind. Some students will fall so far behind that they give up.

Lost Chances

By Vanessa H.

If they end up doing budget cuts to the tune of \$400 million, it's going to affect a lot of people. I think it is a bad idea because if we don't get our education, it's going to be hard to get a job. I don't think it is fair that other people got to make their dreams come true because they got their education, and now they want to take ours away. If they don't cut the budget, that would be amazing because that means we still have a lot of chances to get our education. I have a little brother who wants to get his education, go to college, and be successful. Please don't take away his dreams.

Budget Cuts Hurt Us All

By Susana N. Perez

The budget cuts will affect me and many others because if we lose Read 180, it will affect me and people who are struggling with the fundamentals of reading and writing. Also, it is not fair to cut Read 180 and other remedial programs. It is important to keep those types of programs because people have not developed their skills yet. If it does happen then we will not have the levels and skills we still need to succeed. So, if you can leave Read 180 alone, then that would be excellent. It will give us more abilities to learn how to read and write, and it will be improving the knowledge of students all around us enrolled in the program, too.

Students really do care about their grades but some need Read 180 to help them get the skills they need. Same thing with the school activities, like sports and clubs. Many students see sports as their future. Many people go to after school clubs and activities to keep themselves out of trouble. Clubs are a distraction from the bad things they can do. Once there is no way of getting involved in school, students might just not care anymore and drop their grades. The budget cuts should be stopped, they will only cause more trouble.



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BUDGET CUTS: The Bottom Line

By Zahn Okuda-Lim

I have been involved in the budget process since 2009, and I have spoken with many Nevadans and fellow students who have asked about raising taxes and having a state lottery. This letter is to explain the process of each.

In order to raise taxes, at least two-thirds of the members of both the State Assembly and the Senate must vote to raise taxes. Then, the bill to raise taxes must go to the Governor for approval, and if the Governor vetoes the bill, at least two-thirds of the members of both the State Assembly and Senate must vote in favor of overriding the veto for the tax increase to take effect.

There are 42 Assemblymen and 21 State Senators; a two-thirds majority in each house is 28 Assemblymen and 14 State Senators. Currently, in the State Assembly, there are 26 Democrats and 16 Republicans; and in the State Senate, there are 11 Democrats and 10 Republicans.

The Nevada Constitution prohibits a state lottery except for charitable purposes. An amendment to the Nevada Constitution would not establish a lottery, but rather would amend the language to allow the Legislature to establish a lottery. Amending the state Constitution takes about five years—the measure must pass two sessions of the Nevada Legislature and a referendum by the people. Only then may the legislature consider establishing a lottery in law.

If you believe that raising revenue and/or having a state lottery in the future would assist our education, it is vital that you contact your Legislators and the Governor to show them how you feel about the budget. In the meantime, the budget will have to be hashed out in Carson City by June 6, 2011. Unless it is not hashed out by then.

The Real Meaning of SOS: Save Our Schools

By Alex Blomquist

With these proposed cuts, elementary, middle and high schools will not be the only ones affected. Colleges and universities will be as well.

I am currently a senior attending Valley High School and we are already using books that are almost a decade old! We, the students, are not able to stay informed on actual current issues when the textbooks we are learning from are ten years old. A lot can happen in ten years, and without more current resources to gain knowledge from, the upcoming generations will be behind the rest of society when they graduate high school and go out into the real world.

One of the possible educational budget cuts would be to the textbook and material fund, which is obviously already very low. Sure there are other resources that we can use to stay updated on the current events, however, if there is not enough funds to provide current or updated textbooks how is there enough money to provide enough computers?

There is no way students will be able to gain current worldly knowledge with the already outdated and limited resources we have.

Dear Editor

By Carolina Ramirez

The budget cuts will have bad effects on many students. One way the cuts will affect students is having no sports or extracurricular activities, including after school clubs. This would be bad because students would no longer have anything to do. So, they will get bored and then they start getting into drugs or gangs, or maybe even start shoplifting. This, in fact, is a gateway to prison. This will also have a huge impact on me because I'm in a sport and that helps me stay in shape. If the budget cuts took away sports, I'd probably be at home eating and watching TV. This is just one affect the budget cuts will have on everyone, so imagine what the overall impact will be.

Our Future is NOT for Sale

By Nahom Wolderufiel

Budget cuts are really affecting a student's ability to learn. If the board continues cutting as they wish to do, our ability to learn will be taken away completely. Also, if more students are in each class then the teacher can't give individual help thus ensuring our failure.

Budget cuts also mean electives will be taken away. However, college requirements will not change and electives will still be needed to gain entrance, so budget cuts also ensure students a smaller chance of getting into college.

As it is, drop out rates are a terrible tragedy and with the proposed cuts they will only get worse. Personally, I think without sports and clubs, kids will stop coming to school or get locked up as a result of their choice in recreational activities.

So if you want an incompetent lawyer or doctor in the future then continue to slash our education.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Magnet programs will also be cut, which affect the child's interest in going to college, receive a degree, and have a career which betters our economy.

Staff is another concern because the school's staff is somewhat like police. Their job is to monitor the children and make sure the school is a safe place. The loss of staff may lead to more violence and disruptions by the students.

The important part of budget cuts are the teachers. Limiting the teachers from kindergarten to junior high will really affect the children's education the most. The fact is, between these grades these children are not mature yet, which may mean more disruptions, more failure, and the lack of wanting to learn.

Children are our future and will continue to be our future. Even though the budget cuts may be good for the district, they are bad for the children.

It's Necessary

By Nick Freeman

Budget cuts will be extremely detrimental to our education. While we are focused on how they will negatively affect the future of our students they are absolutely necessary. With a national deficit of over 14 trillion, we have come to the point where every government program will have to suffer and take cuts. With so much opposition against higher taxes, the funding for education has gone dry.

As a student, the cuts that hit home the most are the programs and activities we are involved in. As a student attending a magnet program, there are many things that could be cut due to the fact that many people consider them as superfluous. A common one is magnet busing. If magnet busses are cut from our International Baccalaureate program here at Valley High School, it would be less diverse and contain less of the advanced students, the students that are the backbone to the program. Swimming is also on the chopping block. One of the sports with the most dedicated athletes could go down the drain. After dedicating 3 hours a day to swimming, it would be extremely saddening. Cuts like this on the other hand need to be made. As a member of the swim team, we pay nothing to swim in high school meets. These meets require officials, renting a pool, technological equipments, and also buses to and from the meets. We do not pay a penny for this.

Taxpayers who do not have any children, or have children in private schools, provide strong opposition to funding these budgets. This means that a raise of taxes is out of the question and we have to find another way to fill the deficit. Budget cuts, at this point, are necessary. They will hurt public education, but the deficit is at the point where it needs to be fixed. We should look at alternatives like pay to play.

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