

Committed to Youth Despite Challenges

By Gail Malay

Superintendent, Lake Havasu Unified School District #1

Lake Havasu Unified School District has started budget considerations. At this time there are factors that are known and factors still to be decided. One fact we do know...our average daily membership is down. Another way to say that is we have lost over three hundred students. A second fact we know is... an additional one-third of our Override is going away.



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The State of Arizona and the voters of Lake Havasu City said to live within our reduced budget . . . that means changes for next year. One is Kindergarten . . . we will continue to offer full day Kindergarten but tuition will go up. The business director is working on the cost, and as soon as we have that amount we will let the community know. Tuition for the 2011-12 school year will have to be paid up front. Tax credit may be used for tuition. -This change is necessary if we are going to stay within our reduced budget.

We will be reducing our art and music teachers at the elementary level. Instead of students having a full year of music and art they will receive one semester of each. Art and music are both valuable subjects for our students. Art develops creativity in our young. Our nation has always depended on innovation to keep its' economy strong. Music and math are patterned subjects. Development in music often helps with math skills. Both Music and Art help develop one's understanding and appreciation for humanity.

In addition, we will be reducing three elementary teachers throughout the district. One of these positions will be from our Accelerated Learning Program housed at Starline. Some people refer to this program as gifted. The other two positions will come from schools that have lost the most enrollment.

At the secondary level both the high school and middle school will reduce two teachers each.

At the district level we are cutting or combining positions. In educational services, we have combined a full-time position that handles travel and the performing arts center with another position, thus eliminating one full-time position. This year we have two full-time staff members at the front desk...next year we will have one full-time position and one part time from existing staff. We are reducing our tax credit person from a 12-month position to a 10-month position.

As we move forward with our planning we will do the best we can for our students with the resources we have available. We are not anticipating having to lay off any teachers; we have teachers leaving so attrition will take care of the reductions.

The State has not yet settled on their budget; when they do we will hold another Governing Board special meeting to discuss the State budget and what that means to our district.

Leadership is committed to moving into the future with hope. We will get through challenging economic times by all working together. We have many great partners along with a caring community. All of us have a goal of preparing our children adequately for the 21st Century.

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