
NSEA ASKS LEGISLATORS TO DIG DEEP TO ADDRESS BUDGET CHALLENGES

Date: January 20, 2021

To: Legislative Commission Budget Subcommittee

Re: FY2021-2023 Executive Budget

While there is much good news reflected in Governor Sisolak's proposed budget with state revenues stronger than previously anticipated and additional federal support, Nevada is still in desperate need of new state revenue. After sustaining difficult cuts in the 31st Special Session last summer, K12 public education is threatened with another hit—a \$50M cut in state general fund alongside hundreds of millions of dollars in increased costs over the biennium.

Since its introduction, NSEA has expressed concern about the Pupil Centered Funding Plan created under Senate Bill 543 last session. With no active educator voice on the Commission on School Funding, teachers and education support professionals have had limited opportunity to get concerns adequately addressed. After more than a year of meeting, the Funding Commission has yet to recommend the required revenue plan to achieve optimal funding. NSEA has been requesting a delay in implementation of SB543 since the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic and related economic crisis. We believe delay is the only responsible course of action, as it will provide additional time to develop a revenue plan to get us out of the economic crisis and on our way to optimal funding. While we are pleased Governor Sisolak recommended a phased implementation of the new plan, much more needs to be done.

Faced with cuts to education, as well as a corresponding educator morale and retention problems, new revenue is even more desperately needed. Emergency assistance from the Federal government is certainly helpful, and we applaud the National Education Association for their work to help secure the \$450 million in CARES Plus K12 aid Nevada is projected to receive to assist with learning loss and infrastructure and technology. At the same time, Nevada needs new, ongoing state revenue. NSEA believes AJR1, passed in the 32nd Special Session, is a good start. AJR1 would generate \$485 million in new revenue for Nevada annually. While only a part of what is needed for our educators and students, we see it as a critical step toward building a funding plan to achieve optimal education funding.

Like the first day of that Special Session last summer, when hundreds of educators donned red face coverings and lined the street from the Legislative building to the Capitol, it is time to listen to educators. As you dig into the details of the Governor's budget proposal, NSEA asks you to dig deep to address our budget challenges. Nevada's public schools and other vital services deserve new state revenue, not just continued austerity.

With the Legislative Session approaching and the COVID-19 pandemic still raging, we know we are in a critical period for Nevada students and educators. Public education in Nevada has never received the respect it deserves. Now during this time of crisis we need courageous legislators more than ever. Be brave. Be Bold. Thank you.