



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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Dear Vail Parents:

I am taking the unusual step of writing to you about political issues because there are things happening in Phoenix of which I think you — as a parent and community member — should be informed. How you choose to respond to the information is up to you.

The Governor of Arizona, the Speaker of the Arizona House, and the President of the Arizona Senate have come to an agreement on a budget for the State. Reportedly, they are pushing to have both the House and the Senate vote to approve their budget in the next day or two. Since the majority of members in both the House and the Senate belong to the same political party as the leaders referenced above, their budget has a good chance of being approved.

IMPACT OF BUDGET IN VAIL

Special programs often require special funding. It takes more money, for example, to operate an auto shop class than an English class. The proposed budget would phase out funding for many highly successful special programs in Vail.

Special funding for our district-sponsored charter schools would be completely eliminated. Affected programs include:

- Chinese Immersion Program at Mesquite;
- The unique, small-class, K-12 structure at VAHS at the UofA Tech Park;
- Special technology programs at Acacia;
- The award winning, “green,” and community-connected Civano Schools;
- Full-day kindergarten classes at several of our charters.

Funding would also be phased out for Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes funded through the Joint Technology Education District (JTED). This would eliminate the additional funding used to operate a wide range of career-orientated programs including:

- Construction trades at Cienega;
- Health Occupations at Empire;
- ROTC district-wide;
- Bioscience at Andrada.

“Where Education is a Community Effort”

web site address: www.vail.k12.az.us email: bakerc@vail.k12.az.us

An especially troubling impact would be on the expansion to Andrada High School. Voters in Vail recently approved bonds to expand the space for career-orientated programs at Andrada. The proposed budget would cut the funds necessary to operate those programs.

MORE MONEY FOR CLASSROOMS?

You may have read news reports about the Governor's plan to increase spending in classrooms. Almost all of that "increase" is simply a requirement that schools shift 5% of funding from "non-classroom" expenditures to "classroom expenditures." It is somewhat like to telling someone that he must move \$10 from his left pocket to his right pocket. It doesn't make him any better off.

The other problem with this "solution" is that districts have little control over major portions of "non-classroom" expenses. We cannot, of course, call Tucson Electric Power, Southwest Gas, or our insurance companies and tell them that we are reducing our payment to them by 5%. Nor can we cut "non-classroom" services for special education students. That means other non-classroom expenses like busing and counseling must be cut by even more than 5%.

POLITICS — YOUR CALL

I recently attended a meeting with the Governor where he stated that his top two priorities were economic development and education. He went on to explain his position that economic development must occur before funding for education can be increased.

I wish success for both our new Governor and Arizona. However, I would like to respectfully suggest that investing in education is the path to economic development.

Arizona ranks 49th in per pupil funding for education. After the recession in 2008, Arizona cut education more than any other state. The Arizona Legislature has also refused to pay the \$317 million dollars per year in inflation funding approved by voters and upheld by court rulings. Perhaps these are the realities that are turning top quality employees and employers away from Arizona.

I raise these issues because part of my responsibility is to advocate for students and education.

You, of course, must form your own opinions about these issues. And, I strongly encourage you to do so. Please don't sit on the sidelines and just accept what others decide. And, don't delay. Today is the time to speak.

My plea to our state leaders has simply been to let us continue our success in Vail. It is bad enough that we are not getting the inflationary increase approved by voters — but please don't choke our highly successful district-sponsored charters and career-orientated programs.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Most of the Vail School District is within Legislative District 14. Contact information for District 14 legislators is attached. (You will note that one of the three leaders referenced earlier is from District 14 — David Gowan, Speaker of the House.) Also attached is another list of legislators who hold key votes.

If you have an opinion about this proposed budget, I urge you to call (you can just leave a message with office personnel regarding your opinion) or send an individual email to each person you wish to influence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Calvin Baker', with a stylized, cursive script.

Calvin Baker
Superintendent