



Queen Creek School District No.95

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Learning Is Our #1 Priority!

The Truth Behind the Numbers

Data and quantitative numbers are a great way to monitor progress, success, and failure. However, it is clear that data can be used to defend different perspectives, depending on which comparisons an author chooses to highlight. Within the context of Governor Ducey's budget proposal, it is important to look at the data and ask the right questions. Consider the following questions surrounding classroom spending.

What does classroom spending refer to?

One might think classroom spending includes all funds spent within a classroom setting. In some cases, this is partially correct. Classroom spending indeed includes teachers, aides, instructional supplies such as paper and software, activities and even athletics. However, classroom spending does not include the electricity necessary to turn on the lights, power up the computers, or heat and cool the classroom. Classroom spending is defined by accountants and auditors, not educators. This is an important distinction since educators truly see the direct link and implications of these funds to classroom instruction.

It is difficult to find anyone who feels that maximizing classroom dollars is a bad idea, regardless of how it is defined. After all, that is where the teachers work, instruction happens, and student learning occurs. Therefore, some may see Governor Ducey's proposal as a positive plan that considers the best interests of our kids at heart. After all, the Governor calls on public schools to maximize classroom spending by increasing it by five percent! However, there is truly no budget increase recommended within his proposal that uses educational fund cuts to increase classroom spending by five percent. Although this may seem clever, there is a good chance that there will be no additional dollars that reach the classroom. In reality, this proposal will result in additional responsibilities landing in the lap of teachers within districts who strive to maintain a quality focus on instruction. Many support functions would be drastically cut and these are the very services help teachers maintain a focus on instruction.

What does non-classroom spending refer to?

It is also important to ask about the nature of services that would fall within the non-classroom spending cuts? Of course, everyone knows that administration would fall within these cuts. But did you know that librarians, counselors, nurses and speech therapists are non-classroom expenses? Transportation, food/nutrition, custodial, etc services would also be in jeopardy. Also, don't forget about the lights, HVAC, and the power necessary for the 21st century technology our students are using every day. It is important to realize that our district cannot truly function without the services provided by non-classroom monies.

Together We Make A Difference!
Dr. Perry Berry, Interim Superintendent of QCUSD Schools

What would the impact of moving an additional five percent into the classroom be?

For many districts, that would be a multi-million dollar question, depending on how the magical five percent is calculated. Queen Creek USD could be required to reduce non-classroom spending by approximately \$700,000. It is important to realize that districts cannot truly function without the aforementioned services and additional dollars would not end up in the classroom. The money would just be gone.

How does Queen Creek USD Schools stack up to others in budget management?

- **CLASSROOM SPENDING:** Queen Creek USD puts **51.2%** of all spending into the classroom and charters dedicate 45% to the classroom.
- **ADMINISTRATION:** Queen Creek USD spent **11.2%** percent in FY13. Charter schools average 21% for administration.
- **STUDENT SUPPORT:** This non-classroom category includes librarians, counselors and therapists who work with students all day, every day. Queen Creek USD dedicates **8.5%** ; the state average is 7.7%; and the charter school average is 4.9% .

These budget facts are important because they expose the truth that is not revealed in the rhetoric surrounding the Governor's budget proposal. That is, Queen Creek USD does quite well with classroom spending.

How will the Governor's budget proposal impact students?

Many will say the Governor's proposed budget protects the classroom and will not impact student achievement. Nothing could be further from the truth. The truth behind this proposal suggests that the "New Classroom Spending" budget proposal does not add money into the classroom. In fact, it shifts money around for different purposes and calls this an increase to the K-12 classroom setting. This proposal would transfer into a significant cut to Arizona public education and comes too soon after economy-driven and illegal cuts dealt by recent legislatures.

Finally, How can we be heard and express our viewpoints?

Your plates are extremely full and, while I do not want this to detract from the important work you do in the classroom and campuses, I hope that you will consider using your non-district time and email to join my effort. Take action by learning more about the budget proposal and sharing the unintended consequences this proposal with your legislators, lawmakers, ect. I have included contact information to your lawmakers within our school district below.

Sincerely,



Perry Berry, EdD

Encl.

CONTACT YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

Governor, Superintendent of Public Instruction and Legislators who serve within the Queen Creek Unified School District



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Queen Creek Unified School District falls within legislative districts 12 and 16. If you do not live in the district boundaries, you can find your legislature on <http://azredistricting.org/districtlocator/>

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Photo Not Available

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