

State threatens to take \$850,000 from LTUSD

By Kathryn Reed



It was a universal look of disbelief and bewilderment upon the faces of the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board members as they learned \$850,000 is likely going to be taken away by the state in the 2010-11 fiscal year.

Chief Financial Officer Deb Yates delivered the news about Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's proposals this week.

California is facing a \$20 billion deficit. Schools are just one of many entities feeling the belt be squeezed even tighter.

As in past years, what comes out of the Capitol in January may not resemble what the Legislature negotiates and the governor ultimately signs off on. But often times the numbers just get worse and not better.

For the current fiscal year the state reduced what it pays districts for average daily attendance. It was promised to be a one time take-away. Now the governor wants to make it permanent.

It wasn't so bad this year because federal stimulus dollars backfilled what the state took away. The same scenario will not exist in the next fiscal year.

This is \$201 per student for LTUSD.

The governor in his address this month said he would fully fund the statutory cost of living allowance. But he failed to disclose that amount was a negative number — minus 0.38 percent. This is another \$24 per student take-away.

The total loss of \$225 per student for LTUSD equals \$850,000. That is the amount the district will need to trim from its nearly \$30 million budget.

With education, though, most of the money that comes in is designated toward specific areas. The discretionary allocations are minuscule.

Schwarzenegger also this month said districts need to cut — central administration costs — and not from classrooms.

— There would be no one left standing in this building, — Yates said Tuesday night of that idea.

Central admin for Lake Tahoe Unified is the superintendent's office, finance and human resources.

The school board plans to schedule a retreat soon to discuss the budget. They all looked shell shocked Jan. 12 as Yates gave her presentation.

It's possible the district could reduce its 3 percent reserve. What hasn't been trimmed from flexible accounts, likely will be.

The governor proposes changing state law so districts could layoff teachers without regard to seniority, not give laid off teacher preference in regards to substitute positions, and changing the March 15 notification to a 60-day period. He also threw out the idea of doing away with classified positions and having districts contract out that work.

“The governor said he was going to protect education and he didn't,” Superintendent Jim Tarwater told *Lake Tahoe News* before Tuesday's meeting. He said the district will be

watching what Sacramento does so the district can plan accordingly.