

LTUSD suffers another financial blow from state

By Kathryn Reed



Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger said his May revise did not take away money from K-12 districts. But it's a lie.

At Tuesday's Lake Tahoe Unified School District board meeting, CFO Deb Yates will explain how another \$160,000 in cuts is coming to the district for 2010-11.

It's more of the funny math Sacramento likes to use as well as twisting the language a bit to confuse people.

The governor's budget calls for reducing the per pupil allocation by 3.85 percent on undeficitated revenue. Part of the change from what Schwarzenegger had said previously is going from a flat reduction of \$201 per pupil to the percentage. And the key word in his proposal is "undeficitated".

The state should be sending LTUSD \$6,376 per student for the next school year. Instead, the amount is budgeted at \$5,185.

The May revise is taking the 3.85 percent off the \$6,376 – an amount that in reality doesn't exist. That cut is \$160,000 just for LTUSD. Add a few zeros to get the statewide take-away to K-12 education.

"I have no doubt education coalitions will fight that vigorously," Yates told *Lake Tahoe News*. "We were hoping for better, obviously."

At the May 25 6pm board meeting at the district office in South Lake Tahoe, Yates will tell the board that reserves is the logical place to dip into for the latest state take-away. She plans to give a more detailed budget update at the June 8 meeting.

Yates said education fared better than other areas in the budget, but she isn't sure how much more the state could cut. She was at a meeting on May 20 in Sacramento with peers to discuss the ramifications.

It's likely the May revise will look nothing like what the governor came out with. Although a state budget is supposed to be adopted by June 30, that hasn't happened in years.

With it being an election year, it's likely more creative financing will be found to solve the \$20 billion state budget deficit instead of real answers.

"They have gone about as far as they can go without completely decimating the system," Yates said of lawmakers and the K-12 system. "At the end of the day the kids are the ones who suffer."

The California School Boards Association and Association of California School Administrations, to get lawmakers to revisit how education is funded, filed a lawsuit last week against the state.

Secretary of Education Bonnie Reiss on Thursday issued the following response, "The governor will oppose this lawsuit and believes the state will prevail. The funding of public education in California has long been and continues to be a top priority of California, even in bad economic and budget times. We will continue to fight to keep education a budget priority as well as fight for the other reforms essential to ensuring a great education for all our students regardless of where they live or their race or economic background."