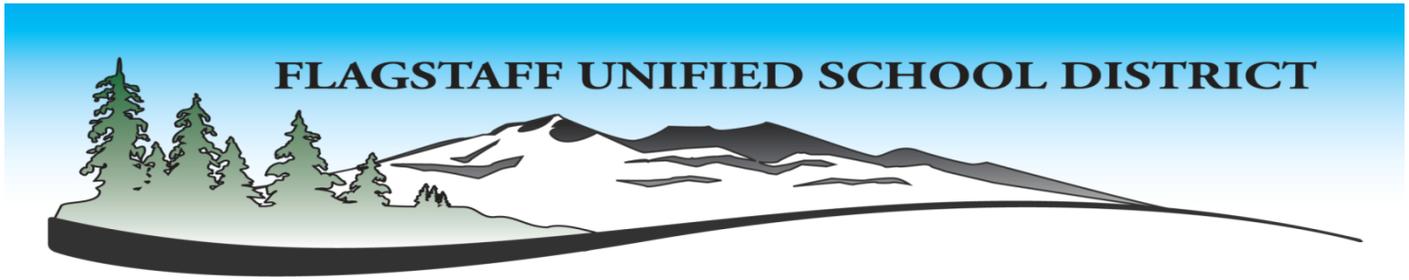




Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD) - Legislative Concerns in 2015

House Bills - Annual Impact on FUSD

1. HB 2190 — Common Core - The major objection is forbidding district Governing Boards to utilize standards already adopted. FUSD has spent considerable time and resources on implementing enhanced standards over the last five years and should have the option of continuing if choice of open development of standards is authorized. Not having consistent standards in the State or Nation is a problem, but removing local control or choice for one set of standards is a complete invasion of local governance.
Please note that SB 1305 was signed by M. Reagan for the Governor this weekend. It moderates the change process for standards and may make HB 2190 and other Common Core bills irrelevant. SB 1305 sets up a 12 member committee appointed by various elected officials to recommend annual changes to the standards that would then come to the State Board of Education for adoption.
2. HB 2246 and SB 1458 — Testing/Opt Out - The removal of a consistent State assessment that can be used to measure improvement and provide accountability will be a problem; however, an even more significant concern will be the requirement from the Federal level that 95% of the students must be tested to receive most federal funds. **FUSD will have \$5,000,000 in jeopardy if more than 5% of our students opt out.**
3. HB 2303 — School Calendars - This bill will take away local control in a State with considerable variation in terrain and weather conditions. Maximum temperatures in Flagstaff the last ten years are between 82 to 87 degrees on August 10th, whereas June 25th high temperatures are between 88 to 90 degrees. Schools in Flagstaff are not air conditioned (cost of A/C for FUSD is estimated at \$40M to \$50M). FUSD needs to plan in 6 snow days per school year. Being relatively on the same break schedule with NAU is essential. **The school calendar is a work of art in the district and always has some critics - it is established with local community input. This will bring major protest from parents.**
4. HB 2449 — Student Transportation - Removing a consideration for miles in the transportation formula eliminates reasonable cost relationships associated with transporting students to school. The peer groups selected for Dollars in the Classroom are totally inappropriate for deciding how much a district needs for transportation. Having a Peer Group with urban and rural districts and a range of per rider budget capacity from \$627 to \$1,750 means someone loses severely in funding. In FUSD's case, depending on how the legislative language is interpreted, we would have a **cut in transportation revenue of \$700,000 to \$1,100,000.**
5. HB 2616 — Tax Credits - FUSD families have a varied income level by school, but our staff and community are very conscious of equalizing tax credits in our schools. Our two lowest income schools, Leupp (on the Reservation) and Killip, actually receive the highest per student tax credit amounts. Community and district taxpayers who have no children in school ask us where help is needed, and a tradition has developed of many giving to areas with low income. Some sources are making an issue about statewide equalization, but the very nature of tax credits depends on local school/district incentive and control. Tax credits will diminish rapidly if the local school incentive is removed or contributions halved, as would be the case in FUSD. Parents use tax credits to pay athletic/extra-curricular participation fees. This will be interrupted and some athletic programs may have to be eliminated. **This will be a \$400,000 reduction in FUSD revenue.**
6. HB 2250 and HB 2174 — Expanding Empowerment Scholarship Accounts - The original, very limited use of such funds for Special Education students who needed a special boarding school arrangement had checks and balances. The expansion of this funding to all parents, grandparents or guardians in a major portion of the State with no accountability or assurance that funds will be spent on education will be expensive and is an open invitation for the misuse of public funds.



Budget Proposals – not necessarily in legislative draft form:

Reduction of District Additional Assistance (DAA) Funds: By FY 2015 the State was already reducing these funds by 60%. The additional \$113M reduction proposed for FY 2016 represents another 25% cut from the original formulae; only about 15% of these funds will remain. **For FUSD this will mean another reduction of \$1.2M.**

Student Success Funding (SSF): This is also being taken from districts. **FUSD will lose another \$155,000** with the removal of these funds. The claim that 5% of Non-Classroom spending can be moved to Classroom spending in accordance with the Dollars in the Classroom definitions without harming students is totally false. Legislation will be incorporated in the State budget bill that is aimed at moving spending from Non-Classroom to Classroom. The definitions of these categories are arbitrary and do not provide any reasonable manner for demanding a shift of spending from one category to another. Locally elected Governing Board Members know best - leave them the flexibility to serve all students. Most of Non-Classroom spending is Direct Services to students.

Senate Bills – Annual Impact on FUSD

1. **SB 1223** - This is a bill designed to penalize school districts if they have to lower the percentage of spending in the Classroom and are below their peer group spending average. With huge amounts of funds lost from DAA, Career Ladder and other cuts, many districts, including FUSD, will have a changing classroom spending percentage. Each year the peer group comparison would place about half of the districts below their peer group average. The penalty in the bill is \$50 per weighted student. **FUSD could be subject to a \$700,000 reduction of funds.**
2. **SB 1371 – Desegregation Funding** - These are funds that come from property taxes levied without an election which local voters have an opportunity to oppose. Locally elected Boards can decide to curtail or eliminate this funding. Desegregation funding occurs in 18 Arizona districts and came about because of local petition/court action to the Federal OCR. The agreements and settlement are with Federal courts or OCR. They call for special efforts to assure equality of education for diverse groups on an ongoing basis. **The State is asking for unnecessary additional litigation which presently involves NO STATE BUDGET money.** They can be assured the districts will bring this back to Federal Court, costing State and Districts unnecessary time and resources. These orders are unique – Flagstaff, for example, has a 26% Native American and 27% Hispanic student enrollment. The District has to assure assimilation of these students and provide opportunity equal to that for others in the District. Also, the Leupp school (100 students, but the District doesn't qualify for any small school funding) is small and inefficient to operate, but the District is under order from the Federal level to operate. This is a complicated, federally involved issue that has been funded since FY 1998 in FUSD. At a time when all districts are struggling to keep a balance in serving all students, it will be a no-win situation for the State and Districts. **FUSD would lose \$2.3M over a five year period if this bill is enacted.**
3. **SB 1131 – Online Charter Students - Participants in Public School Interscholastic Activities** - This legislation would force public schools to allow online charter students to participate in all AIA type extra-curricular activities, and fixes in a maximum charge of \$200 for participation. It is a contradiction to be able to choose one education solution for your student and then have the right, with limited charge, to participate in activities within the other school option. Limiting the charge is especially wrong, because a charter school draws all the ADM dollars for their students. The Districts' activities supervisors have no academic or other student accountability factors available to them, and these activities are mostly funded from the Districts' ADM dollars.