

March 27, 2017

Office of the Governor

490 Old Santa Fe Trail, #400

Santa Fe, N.M. 87501

Dear Governor Martinez,

Please accept this correspondence as a most sincere and respectful request that you protect our public education funding from any further budget cuts while you attempt to resolve New Mexico's fiscal problems.

Our District has been struggling through a dramatic student enrollment decline for more than a decade, as our entire regional adult population has grown significantly older than the statewide average, resulting in fewer school age children residing in our community each successive year.

Modest, but infrequent, increases in funding from the State have not been enough to help us avoid having to close and repurpose two elementary schools, steeply reduce staff, eliminate important support programs for struggling students, and see our District's Bond Rating downgraded.

The FY18 budget proposal recently passed by the Legislature will likely result in yet another year-to-year reduction in State funding of approximately \$600K for MESD; while statutorily mandated expenditures will increase by another \$400K, leaving MESD facing a \$1 Million shortfall next year.

Our plight is further exacerbated because we are concurrently dealing with FY17 mid-year Legislative reductions that wiped out most of our already meager Cash Balance- literally two thirds of our roughly \$1M "savings."

Simply put, we- and likely many other Districts- cannot endure any additional budget cuts, despite what anyone may have suggested to the contrary. Any additional cuts at this point will directly –and adversely- impact students in the classroom, potentially eliminating reasons students stay in school and become engaged learners, and parents become advocates and supporters of our schools.

Whether you choose to approve the budget the Legislature has sent to you, or convene a Special Session to revise that version, we would implore you to ultimately keep education funding levels as your top priority and prevent any further hardships for our students, staff and communities.

Sincerely,



MESD Board of Education, Elizabeth Howells, President