



CHANDLER UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 80

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"Dedicated to Excellence"

Camille Casteel, Ed.D., Superintendent

Dear Staff, Parents and Guardians,

There are two issues we want you to be aware of that could be critically important to the families of 43,000 CUSD students.

First: Budget - Governor Ducey's proposed budget purports to increase funding to the classroom by five percent. Many have naturally assumed he was increasing the funds available for teachers and classrooms. Does that mean more funds will go to classrooms? No, it does not.

The proposed budget does not add funding. Instead, it actually cuts \$113 million across the state from what is called "district additional assistance" funds. These funds pay for school nurses, bus drivers, mechanics, principals, cafeteria workers, crossing guards, secretaries, air conditioning/heating technicians and custodians.

If the Governor's proposed budget is approved, **Chandler will have to cut approximately \$6 million.**

Second: Calendar - In addition, there is an Arizona House Bill (HB 2303) that would **mandate the school year could not start prior to September 2 and must end before June 30.**

The Chandler Unified District calendar was created in the mid 1990's after the input of committee members, representing parents and staff from all schools. School calendars have been adopted through 2019 to allow families to plan events.

CUSD surveyed our community in 2013 and found that 94% of our parents like our year-round calendar. We are experiencing that the calendar lends itself to improved academic achievement by shortening the summers and providing intersessions during the school year, which serve the purpose of both allowing students and teachers to recharge their batteries, while providing opportunities to help students who are struggling to get caught up. Our calendar also enables us to complete a semester of high school prior to the winter break, instead of students returning after two weeks off to resume the semester.

We believe our calendar helps us attract highly qualified teachers during a challenging time for our industry. Furthermore, cost savings related to starting school after Labor Day are overestimated. The days of closing schools for the summer are long over. We run programs year-round and execute our heavy maintenance during the summer. Plus, with technology investment, we can't shut off or turn up temperatures to extreme heats. Most importantly, our calendar is reflective of our community's collective input. We believe that these types of decisions are best made at the local level.

We encourage you to contact [your state lawmakers](#) and ask them to support our students. Make your voice heard on these important issues. Their contact information can be found at www.cusd80.com/budget

Warm regards,

Camille Casteel, Ed.D.