

Dear Parents and Friends of Public Education,

We need your help! The bills to address unfunded school utilities are making their way through the legislative process, and we need them to garner the attention of our elected officials and get put into the budget. We need you to e-mail your legislators and let them know that these bills (HB 2388 and SB 1446) are of the utmost importance to you. In particular, Tom Boone- District 4 Republican, needs to hear from us that funding the real costs of running our schools is a top priority for us. Your notes can be brief, but please write something in your own voice. Here are some points for you to consider:

- 1) Adequate funding of school utilities is a top priority for you. Our students need the lights on, the computers clicking, and the air conditioning running while they are in class. We need to work with legislators to make this a reality in our schools.
- 2) Schools should conserve energy, but rate increases are outstripping the benefits of conservation in school utility bills. If there is no political will this year, Deer valley School District will have to find an extra \$2.5 million in our Maintenance and Operations budget to pay the utility bills. That's money that will have to come out of our classrooms.
- 3) These bills are not adding any new money to school budgets. Schools have been paying the real utilities bills by going to the local tax base to supplement the State funding, frozen at 1985 levels. Taxpaying homeowners should not bear the financial responsibility for basic school needs. This funding needs to be addressed at the State level, for all students, in all public school districts.
- 4) Even though funds are not needed this year, a solution is. Schools will be crafting their budgets for 2009-10 at the end of the next school year BEFORE the Legislature completes its 2010 budget. Without a solution in place this year, schools will be forced to assume there will be no solution. Districts will budget accordingly, namely will look for ways to cut millions of dollars from the M&O budgets including laying off teachers and cutting programs.

Please take few moments right now to e-mail your legislators by logging onto www.azleg.gov. In a deficit budget year, we need to make a lot of noise to make sure that our children's education is properly funded, and our legislators need to know that this is the one really important issue to us this year.

Thanks for making a difference!