



500 Laser Road NE  
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February 16, 2017

Dear administrators, teachers, staff, parents and community members:

In my 23 years as Superintendent for Rio Rancho Public Schools, I have never sent a letter of this nature. That said, based on our current state of affairs and the level of cuts that legislators continue to consider for public education, I believe it is imperative that you fully understand the impact of their decisions.

Already this year, Rio Rancho Public Schools has been cut \$3.9 million from funding that was already budgeted. We have done everything we can to make cuts that will not impact our classrooms and instruction including taking our cash reserves down to an alarming level just to finish out the remainder of the school year. This cash reserve will not be available next year which means next year's cuts will be even more significant for Rio Rancho Public Schools and will affect programs that we have all come to appreciate.

The opportunities and services we have provided for the students of Rio Rancho will be impacted based on this year's cuts alone. Should legislators decide to make additional cuts to 2017-18 funding, Rio Rancho Public Schools will experience a setback that we have not seen in our history. Additional cuts will force us to consider options that will affect students, staff and parents. Our district will no longer look the way it looks today. Everything will need to be considered—electives, shortening the school year, specialized programs, activities, athletics, etc.

Not only is Rio Rancho Public Schools near the bottom of the per pupil funding formula, but over the last 23 years, we have tripled enrollment and built and/or opened 14 schools making it difficult to build up our cash reserve. Because of this and insufficient state funding, we are forced to consider cuts that would otherwise be less harmful if we were funded at a higher level.

In my entire career, I have not seen such disregard for public education and the future of our children in New Mexico. Cutting public education and taking away opportunities for students is not the answer. [Our Board of Education is holding a special meeting on Monday, February 20, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. at the District Training Center, 500 Laser Rd. NE to discuss the budget crisis.](#) You are invited to attend.

If you believe additional cuts to public schools should not be an option, please reach out to legislators on the Senate Finance Committee, House Appropriations and Finance Committee, Governor Martinez, Chairman Senator Arthur Smith and Chairwoman Representative Patricia Lundstrom. We believe this is essential to the operations of our district and other districts in New Mexico. Should you speak with our local legislators, please thank them as they are working tirelessly on our behalf to prevent further cuts to our district.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'V. Sue Cleveland'.

Dr. V. Sue Cleveland,  
Superintendent of Schools