

Governor Jim Gibbons



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GOVERNOR GIBBONS PROPOSES SWEEPING CHANGES TO EDUCATION Governor wants to give power to parents and teachers, save money

Carson City -Governor Jim Gibbons today proposed bold changes to Nevada's education system designed to tear down Nevada's public education bureaucracy and give parents and local governments more control over how billions of dollars in state tax money are spent educating Nevada's children.

"This is all about choice and efficiency," Governor Gibbons said, "We must give more control over our children's education to their parents and take back power from bureaucrats, unions, and other officials," Governor Gibbons added, "We MUST start asking the question, if this dollar is not spent helping a child learn, then why is it being spent? Billions of dollars are already being spent on education in Nevada and it is time for fundamental change to let parents and teachers at the local level decide how that money will best help Nevada's children."

Governor Gibbons championed the "Education First" Initiative in 2004 that requires the state legislature to fund education in Nevada first, before funding other government agencies and programs. Unfortunately, this has not stopped legislators from micromanaging local school districts with meddlesome mandated programs and pet projects. Governor Gibbons believes the best people to determine the best course for educating Nevada's children are in the local communities.

Despite 20 years funding class size reduction, the Department of Education recently announced 142 public schools in Nevada qualify as low-performing for the purposes of receiving federal grants for the "worst" schools on the nation. This is unacceptable.

Governor's Proposals:

- Cut through the enormous multi-level multi-district administrative bureaucracies at larger school districts. Allow smaller districts to consolidate. Streamline school funding and create LOCAL empowerment school districts. Delete special earmarks. Local school districts would be empowered to use their basic school support dollars at their own discretion, depending on the needs of the students and the individual schools. This will end big government interference in our children's education and return control of the education system to parents, students, PTA's and school boards in the local communities.
- Eliminate laws requiring local government and school district collective bargaining agreements. Unions do NOTHING to help educate our children. The unnecessary tax money expended for union negotiations and special benefits can be used in classrooms to help our children learn, not pay for union officials or promote costly and often hostile negotiations. There is simply no need for laws requiring local school districts to "consult with teacher

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associations” for any reason. Teachers and parents should be empowered to determine how our children are educated and how our tax money is spent.

- Adopt a statewide school voucher program for all parents and students to have school choice. Establish a system where local school districts, boards of charter schools, and private schools can set enrollment caps at the local level to prevent overcrowding.
- Eliminate the elected body known as State Board of Education. Establish a five member advisory State Board of Education with three members appointed by the Governor and one each by the Speaker of the Assembly and the Majority Leader of the Senate. The Superintendent of Public Instruction would be appointed by the Governor, report to the Governor and serve at the pleasure of the Governor. The Superintendent would receive advisory input from the State Board of Education. Eliminate unnecessary education boards and task forces, and combine functions into fewer boards with a very narrow focus.
- Eliminate statutory requirement for class-size reduction. This action alone would save about \$127 million in FY 2011. Twenty years of class size reduction in Nevada has not created results to make it cost effective. Let local teachers and parents determine how a portion of the savings should be spent. Remaining funds can help the offset Nevada’s crippling budget deficit.
- Eliminate statutory requirement for full-day kindergarten. This would save around \$28 million in FY 2011. School districts would have the option to provide full-day kindergarten where and when appropriate from their basic school support funds.

These and other proposals will save money and will pry our children’s education out of the hands of government bureaucrats and put it in the hands of parents and teachers. These proposals will also help us through this unprecedented economic crisis.

Nevada’s future depends on providing the best education possible for our children. We need to stop using education funds to pay for unions and layers of bureaucracy. Our K-12 education system funding is too precious to be used for anything other than educating our children.

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