



The Nevada Policy Research Institute

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NPRI analyst: Proposed education ‘cuts’ would still increase spending over last biennium

LAS VEGAS — Despite lamentations over alleged “cuts” proposed for K-12 education spending during the current special session of the Nevada Legislature, the reality is that even the lowest spending amounts proposed would, when all funding sources are included, *increase* overall education spending over the previous biennium, says an education policy analyst at the Nevada Policy Research Institute.

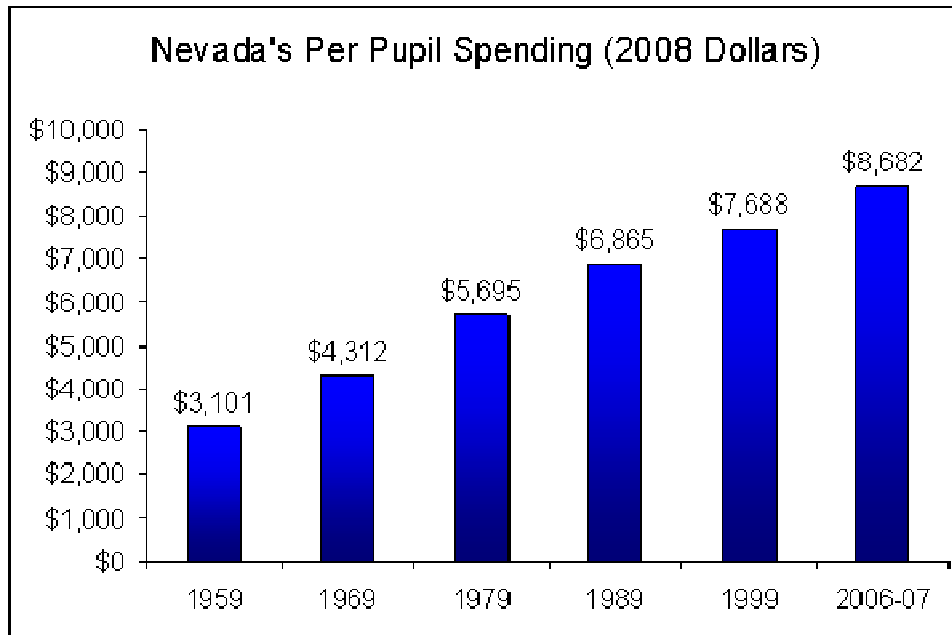
“The current debate over education spending has, unfortunately, been characterized by a combination of misleading rhetoric and a fundamental misunderstanding of Nevada’s education budget,” said NPRI analyst Patrick R. Gibbons. “In the private sector, where businesses have had to prioritize and reduce expenditures, a ‘cut’ is an actual reduction in spending. When it comes to government-run education, however, what get labeled as ‘cuts’ are actually mere reductions in the size of proposed spending *increases*.”

Gibbons noted that during the 2009 Nevada Legislative Session, lawmakers approved an overall operating budget for K-12 education that was 4.9 percent larger than that of the previous biennium. The proposals being discussed today would not actually reduce education expenditures, but would simply *lower the increase* in education spending to a level below 4.9 percent.

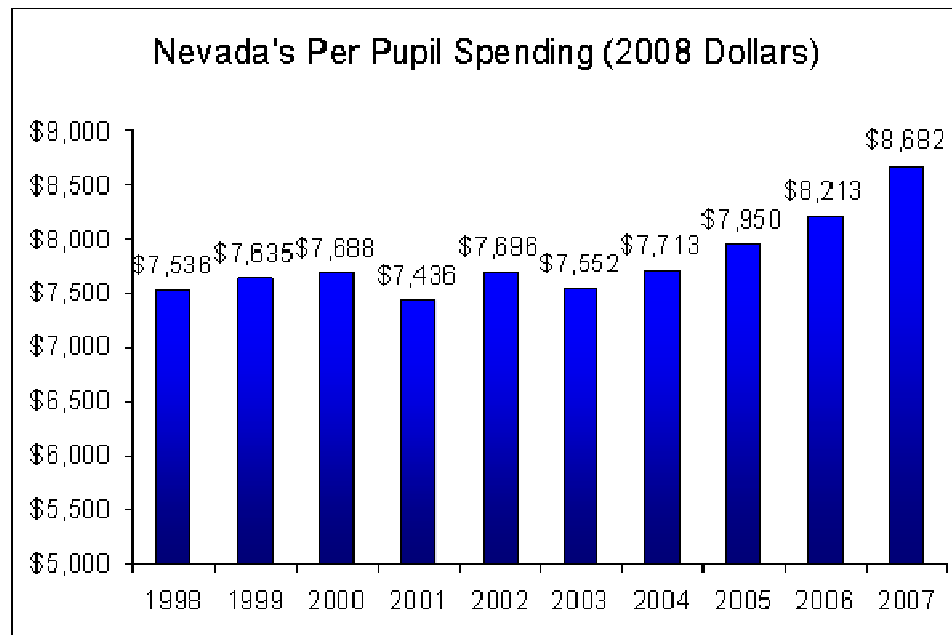
“Whichever of the current proposals the legislature ultimately ends up passing, when all funding sources are included, Nevada’s K-12 education system will still have at least \$135 million more than it did during the 2007-09 biennium,” Gibbons said. “The supposedly draconian ‘cuts’ to education would, depending on which proposal is adopted, amount to either a 2, 2.8 or 3.5 percent *increase* in total education funding. Even future decreases in local tax revenues, should they occur, are unlikely to lead to actual reductions in education spending compared to the last biennium.

“This increase would come in addition to the near-tripling of inflation-adjusted, per-pupil spending Nevada’s public K-12 education system has already received over the past 50 years,” Gibbons added. “Instead of trying to scare parents and teachers in order to score political points, Nevada’s elected officials need to hold the education establishment accountable for the tremendous investment Nevada has already made in its public education system. True reforms that inject accountability and parental choice into our education system would increase student achievement

far more than the incessant hyperbole that so often plagues discussion of Nevada's education challenges.”



*Source: http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d09/tables/dt09_186.asp



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