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Remarks to Assembly Taxation Committee  
Submitted by Mary Beth Scow CCSD Trustee  
March 20, 2003

Chairman Parks and Committee, my name is Mary Beth Scow, and I serve as Trustee for the Clark County School District, representing the southeast area of the county. I appreciate your time in holding this hearing in southern Nevada, and I appreciate the great task before you.

I have served as a Trustee for six years, and have lived through as many budget cycles. Dependant on the state for our operational budget, we are required to submit a balanced budget each year. I might add that our community has been very supportive of bond funds for construction and modernization of schools, which monies cannot be used for operations..

Nearly 90% of our budget is in salaries—for some 16,000 licensed employees and 10,000 support staff. Education is a people-intensive business. One cannot place a computer screen in front of a classroom of children. Funding has not kept up with the needs of an increasingly urban district and the explosive growth. Over the last three years we have cut \$97 million. Cuts have touched class size; supplies; transportation; reduction in staff; administrative supplies, staff and budget; custodial services, end fund balance and contingency fund. These deficits rollover into the next budget cycle, so that we begin in a hole.

Annual audits, conducted by the same firm that does most of the state audits, have shown responsible budgeting and money management. The school district receives a budget award from the state annually. We welcome the proposed audit that just cleared the assembly. Chris Whittle, CEO of the Edison schools, which operates five schools in Clark County, publicly stated that he does not know how Clark County school district is able to do all it does with the amount of money it is given.

The iNVEST plan, developed by all 17 superintendents in the state and endorsed by all 17 school boards, shows a plan to raise student achievement, and what funds are necessary to carry that out. Student achievement is the focus of our school board. We see the need to increase funding in order to increase achievement. We can't cut our way to excellence.

Please work for a stable tax base, so that the education of our children can secure the stability of the future of our state.

Thank you.