



Mark A. Tolley  
Head of School

January 24, 2017

Dear Families and Community of Corrales International,

I am writing to you today to provide answers to some questions I have received recently.

▪Yes, we will be open next year and for years to come! Currently, Corrales International is stronger financially than we have ever been.

▪No, we don't need to own our building to have our charter renewed next fall! The law actually has been altered in the last few years and we are currently meeting all requirements.

▪Yes, our charter will be renewed. We are a strong, high performing school that offers a program that no other school in New Mexico offers.

▪Yes, fundraising is still important to meet our goal to be in a publicly owned facility.

Interest in our school is greater than ever and our waiting list grows every day.

Legislative Issues:

The State is facing great deficits in this year's and next year's budgets. Proposals are being made that could greatly diminish educational funding. As you may know, the New Mexico Legislature took action last fall during a special legislative session to cut the budgets of schools and districts across the state in an effort to address revenue shortfalls. These cuts resulted in a just over \$28,000 reduction in our State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) monies which we utilize to operate our school. These budget cuts are not projections for future years, these cuts are focusing on our current school year and must be dealt with between now and the end of our 2016-2017 school year.

On top of this cut that has already passed, the New Mexico Legislature is looking to cut an additional 2 to 4 percent from our current budget to address this year's deficit. Currently, Corrales International is stronger financially than we have ever been, and although it will not be comfortable, we can deal with these cuts.

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Of greater concern to our school is what may be cut from the budget to address next year's deficit. The projected shortfall for NM next year is between \$300 to \$600 million. Immediate cuts to the small school size adjustment funding or rent reimbursement money would adversely affect our school.

It is very early in the Legislative session, but we need to speak out against all education funding cuts and legislation that specifically targets charter schools. As bills are proposed that affect Corrales International, I will update our community.

How can we make our feelings heard? I am providing you some information about: 1) how to contact your legislators and, 2) some talking points that you can use when communicating with them. Legislators work for you, their constituents. Please help me in getting the word out and holding the legislators accountable for their decisions.

It is my hope that the information I am sharing with you today becomes a call to action for everyone who receives it and that somehow, someday we will be able to change the trajectory of the effects that this crisis is projected to cause.

Sincerely,

Mark A. Tolley  
Head of School

To Contact your Representative:

Go to: [https://nmlegis.gov/Members/Legislator\\_List?T=R](https://nmlegis.gov/Members/Legislator_List?T=R)

Go to the "Your Address" line and enter your address in the blank provided

Your Representative should pop up.

Click on the link with the Representative's name and you will be taken to the individual contact information page

To Contact your Senator:

Go to: [https://nmlegis.gov/Members/Legislator\\_List?T=S](https://nmlegis.gov/Members/Legislator_List?T=S)

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The major pieces of legislation that we know are targeting our budget (for now) are:

- House Bill 6 – Appropriations Reductions
- House Bill 7 – School Balance Reductions
- Senate Bill 113 – Reduce Appropriations
- Senate Bill 114 – School District Cash Balances

Things to consider when addressing your Legislator:

- Any cuts to the state budget should be spread equitably. These bills are unfairly targeting educational spending. Estimates we have heard articulate that although education makes up approximately 41% of the entire state budget, the cuts in education would make up for nearly 80% of the shortfall. Charter Schools should not be singled out for cuts, they are public schools just like any district school.
- Legislators should not have any "sacred cows." The multi-billion dollar Permanent Fund should not be off the table when it comes to addressing the budget crisis. If there was ever a "rainy day," it is now. The Permanent Fund could be borrowed from and paid back over time without harming the integrity of the fund or the state's future financial situation.
- The Governor and Legislators should be open to looking for some additional revenue sources, including a few cents a gallon gasoline tax that could be removed if prices went to a certain level.
- Legislators should consider providing districts and schools flexibility in spending from certain funds. That is, the Legislature could eliminate certain restrictions from spending categories so that schools could address the shortfalls without reducing services to students and families. Specific examples are: allowing HB-33 monies to be used for some operational expenses and not limited to capital acquisition and maintenance only, and broadening the "allowable expenditures" for Instructional Materials funds to include general supplies, materials, and services.