

## Sequestration Hits WUSD

Although it has taken a while, the federal government's sequestration actions (budget cuts) are finally having an impact on Wickenburg Unified School District's finances. As part of the planning process for the 2013-2014 school year budget the District assumed a 5% decrease in federal funding, primarily in the areas of Title I (support for disadvantaged students), Title II (teacher training) and Special Education (support for students who are deemed in need of Special Education services and receive an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)). WUSD receives approximately \$250,000/yr. in Title I funds, \$68,000/yr. in Title II funds and \$342,000/yr. in Special Education funds which are used to serve students in the areas identified above and to provide teacher training and support.

In a recent communication from the Arizona Department of Education (ADE), WUSD learned that the actual decrease in federal funding will be 8.5% for Title I, 8.1% for Title II and 9.1% for Special Education and that after the first academic quarter of the year we are likely to experience an additional cut, on top of the first reduction, in the range of 16% - 21%. Thus, worst case scenario, our 5% assumed cut in each of these areas may grow to be as large as 29.5%.

Sadly, almost all of these funds are used to support employee salaries so on top of taking the largest budget cuts of any state in the nation (22.8%) over the past five years, Arizona districts, such as WUSD, may be absorbing up to an additional 29.5% cut in federal funds.

WUSD has carryover funds from the previous year which should buffer the impact of these reductions during the current 2013-2014 school year, but the cuts will definitely impact our ability to provide programming during the 2014-2015 school year. As time progresses and we learn more about the impact of the federal government's sequestration cuts I will provide updates to the community on this subject. Clearly additional cuts to WUSD's budget at a time when so much has been reduced already will not be easy, but as always we will attempt to make thoughtful decisions as these reductions are considered.