Albuquerque Public Schools takes very seriously its mission to provide a free and appropriate education for all of its students, including those with disabilities. These students often need additional support and services that we readily provide in an effort to help them succeed in school and life. It’s their right, and it’s the right thing to do.

Since 2009 during the economic recession, the state of New Mexico has cut funding for special education, which has impacted all of our students, not just those in special education programs. Less money means larger classes, fewer resources and less support staff.

We now face the possibility that the federal government will reduce special education funding even more further because the state may have violated a federal law that says it must provide special education with the same amount of money if not more from year to year.

In effort to resolve this issue, Albuquerque Public Schools is asking U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan to work with our state to restore special education funding. We’re suggesting a payment plan that would guarantee that more money goes directly to New Mexico’s schools and students. Restoring these funds could mean pay raises for teachers and other employees; hiring additional social workers, counselors and nurses to work with all students; returning classes sizes to their pre-recession levels; and creating more school choices.

Concerned parents, teachers and community members can make their voices heard by contacting decision-makers at the state and federal level:

New Mexico Legislators: Go to www.aps.edu/legislative-affairs/contact-your-legislator

The New Mexico Public Education Department: www.ped.state.nm.us/ped/contact.php

The U.S. Department of Education: www.ed.gov/about/contacts/gen/index.html

Tonight’s presentation will be posted to APS.edu.