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Waco ISD educators headed to Las Vegas for conference

By: Bonnie Gonzalez

An online government watchdog recently reported that 68 educators from the Waco Independent School District would be traveling to Las Vegas for a conference next month, amid the district's \$200,000 budget shortfall.

ARTICLES

[Despite budget shortfall, Waco schools spending \\$84,000 on Las Vegas seminar](#), *Texas Budget Source*

[Waco ISD moves to fill hole in budget](#), *The Waco Tribune-Herald*

The organization, [Texas Budget Source](#), provides information on state and local budgets.

"My understanding is there is no shortfall at the current point, and that these were lose-or-use Title 1 funds," Waco ISD Board member David Schleicher said.

That means the more than \$70,000 the district is spending on the trip comes from federal funds, which can only be used for professional development and must be used by June 30 or they lose the money.

"It still doesn't look good in tough economic times to be sending a lot of people to Nevada for a conference," Schleicher said.

District spokesman Dale Caffey said people who are going to the conference will be training for a new teaching model adopted this year. He said it is not a glamour trip.

"People hear the name of the city and they think, you know, 'Is this really a good use of the money?' But I think a lot of organizations hold conferences there because they figure people are more likely to go and they can get cheap hotel rates," Schleicher said.

Schleicher said the trip should be given a second glance.

"I would like for the board to look at that to make sure that was good decision-making that went into it," he said.

The seminar is scheduled to take place at more than one location across the United States, including San Antonio.

Caffey said the reason they are going to Vegas is the training session fits into their schedule. He said they want to have it done before school starts in the fall.