



## Funding for field trips fading

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A recent report by the advocacy group People for Education shows public school budgets appear to depend more on the financial contributions of the community to make field trips available to students.

As a result, field trips for middle and high school students to art and history museums or other educational venues are disappearing.

But many charter schools have no problem making them a priority and ensuring the funding is there.

Lacy Monroe of Hesperia is a member of her son's Parent Teacher Association and said 80 percent of her school year has been spent fundraising so the school's students can go on trips.

"It's terrible but what else can we do?" she asked. "We want our kids to have a full and well-rounded educational experience. If the schools aren't going to step up to the plate, then I guess we'll have to."

School funding — or lack thereof — is what many of the Victor Valley school districts blame on field trips falling by the wayside. The issue is most prevalent at the middle and high school level.

"I don't think they really go on a lot of field trips. They go on some year end activities," said George Landon, Hesperia Unified School District assistant superintendent of business services.

He said the district allocates annual funds to each school site based on enrollment, and it's up to them to set money aside for educational field trips.

But some charter schools are taking a different approach.

With less funding than mainstream public schools and no transportation funding, many charter schools are finding ways to send their students on several interesting and educational field trips throughout the year.

“It is a budgeting issue. But we put our priorities in other places,” said Chuck Gehrke, executive director of Excelsior Education Center.

Throughout the school year, his students have visited numerous enlightening destinations including the Museum of Tolerance, art museums and the Pantages Theater where students were treated to plays.

**The same holds true for the Lewis Center that also budgets for field trips in full and then relies on their parent group to assist.**

**“They offset that so we can stretch the dollar that much further,” said Rick Piercy, Academy for Academic Excellence director.**

**His approach to out of the classroom lessons is embraced throughout his campuses.**

**“It makes more of an impact on students when they go experience and see first hand other than reading a book,” said Lewis Center spokeswoman Cheryl Thompson.**

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