

# Subcommittee OKs Budget With Deeper School Cuts

*From the June 5, 2009 edition of NCASA's Legislative Link*

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Education on Thursday approved the chamber's proposed education budget that now makes even deeper cuts to public school funding for the next biennium. The education proposal, which next will be considered by the House Appropriations Committee on Tuesday June 9, **trims \$1,328,074,318 or 16.1 percent** from the current year's state funding for public schools and would provide an operating budget of only \$6,917,267,509 for 2009-2010. The funding total increases to \$7,320,687,073, **when \$403,419,564 in federal Education Stabilization Funding is factored in, leaving a total cut of \$924,654,754 or 11.2 percent.**

. The proposed public schools' budget for 2010-2011 is even lower at \$6,831,523,175 and would make total **cuts of \$1,527,275,048 or 18.3 percent, before the federal stimulus funding offsets that amount to leave a total cut of \$1,123,855,484 or 13.4 percent.**

The current public school budget proposal is expected to have a detrimental impact on classroom operations statewide and result in the loss of approximately 15,000 public school jobs.

"These unprecedented cuts to public school funding are likely to roll back almost 20 years of progress our state has made in public education," said Katherine Joyce, Assistant Executive Director of the North Carolina Association of School Administrators (NCASA). "Every classroom in our state will feel the negative impact of these cuts, and unfortunately, so will each of our state's 1.4 million students and many of our dedicated educators."

Among the toughest cuts included in the public school budget proposal are the following:

## **Impact on School Personnel**

- Increasing class size by two students in all grades to cut 6,005 classroom teachers in 2009-10 and save roughly \$322.7 million. An additional 2,613 teaching positions would be cut in 2010, when class sizes for all grades would increase by one additional student for a total class size increase of three students over the next two years.
- Cutting all Grade 3 Teacher Assistants to eliminate 4,663 positions and save \$130.1 million.
- Cutting 354 Instructional Support positions (counselors, media specialists and social workers) to save \$19.4 million.
- Changing the Assistant Principal allotment from 1:799 to 1:942 to eliminate 278 10-month positions and save \$17.6 million.
- Decreasing other categorical allotments that will impact personnel, although no estimates have been provided on numbers of personnel to be affected:
  - Reducing the Non-Instructional Support allotment by 5 percent to save \$20.2 million.
  - Cutting the Central Office allotment by 7.5 percent to save \$9 million.
  - Eliminate the Improving Student Accountability allotment of \$38.3 million.
  - Reduce the At-Risk Student Services/Alternative Schools allotment by 22 percent to cut \$70 million.
  - Reduce the Transportation allotment by 15 percent for \$29.4 million in savings.

## **Other Proposed Reductions**

- Reducing the Low Wealth Supplemental Funding to cover only counties that are 90 percent or below on the qualifying requirements. As revised, this proposal would cut 25 percent of the funds expected for 13 counties in 2009-10 and 50 percent of their funding for 2010-11. The affected counties include Craven, Cumberland, Davie, Gaston, Lincoln, Madison, Mitchell, Onslow, Pender, Perquimans, Union, Warren and Yancey.
- Cutting Small County Supplemental Funding by \$4.5 million.
- Reducing More at Four funding by 11.6 percent to save \$10 million and calling for a study on consolidating the program with Smart Start by 2010-11.

- Eliminating Learn and Earn Online to save \$1.4 million.
- Converting the state funding of application fees for National Board Certified teachers into a three-year loan program.
- Eliminating 200 Literacy Coaches to save \$12 million.
- Cutting \$48 million from Textbooks and limiting textbook purchases to those needed for new students or replacements for lost or damaged.
- Cutting all state funding for Staff Development for two years to save \$12.6 million annually.
- Redirecting \$60.5 million in school construction funds from the Public School Building Capital Fund to public school operations in 2009-10 and redirecting another \$64.5 million in 2010-11.
- Cutting the Department of Public Instruction budget by 10 percent to cut 45 positions in 2009-10 and cutting an additional 5 percent and 25 positions in 2010-11.
- Eliminating the funding for high school students who are dually enrolled at community colleges to save \$14.6 million. Funding would continue for students in Early or Middle College High Schools.

Other line item details of the proposed public schools' budget may be viewed at <http://ncasa.net/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=199>. This budget proposal will get the scrutiny of the full House Appropriations Committee before going on to the House floor, where all 170 representatives are expected to debate and vote on the complete state budget proposal next Wednesday and Thursday.

**All NCASA members should be contacting your own House members now to discuss how detrimental many of these cuts will be for your schools and your students and to urge them to find new revenues to head off these cuts!** Contact information for all House members is at <http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/members/memberList.pl?sChamber=House>.