



Legislative Link

A Publication for the Members of the N.C. Association of School Administrators

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Call To Action To Minimize Devastating Budget Cuts!

As work continues on the N.C. House's state budget proposal, it is becoming increasingly urgent for all North Carolina Association of School Administrators (NCASA) members, other educators, parents and all individuals and groups who care about public education to join forces in urging lawmakers to head off the deep magnitude and devastating impact of proposed budget cuts for public schools.

NCASA is joining with the North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE), the North Carolina School Boards Association (NCSBA), the North Carolina Parent Teachers Association (NCPTA) and the Public School Forum of North Carolina to hold a **press conference at 11 a.m. Monday June 1** at the NCPTA Office in Raleigh to decry the roughly \$1 billion in state budget cuts currently proposed for public schools for next school year.

"Now is the time for all our members to get actively involved in educating our state lawmakers about the dangerous path they are traveling in reversing recent progress in our public schools and threatening the future of the 1.4 million students we serve," said NCASA Executive Director Bill McNeal. "While we realize the state budget shortfall is real and severe, we must urge our elected leaders not to try addressing this crisis with cuts alone but instead to also find the courage to identify new revenue that can offset the negative impact on public schools and the children of this state."

All NCASA members are urged to review the current budget proposals and talking points regarding their impact at <http://ncasa.net/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=199> and then take the following steps:

- Contact all Co-Chairs of the House Appropriations Committee, all members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Education and your own House members to discuss the impact the proposed budget cuts will have on your school district and/or school. (Committee contact information is at <http://www.ncasa.net/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=241> and contact information for individual House members is available at <http://www.ncleg.net/gascripts/members/memberList.pl?sChamber=House>.)
- Share information about the proposed budget cuts with all members of your own staff, parents in your school district, community leaders and others and ask them to help raise concerns about potentially deep cuts to public school funding.

"Member action now is critical as the House budget is taking its final shape over the next two weeks," McNeal said. "We must all work together to ensure that our state's young people continue to have the resources they need for a sound, basic education."

House Panel Makes Additional Cuts To Public School Budget

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Education this week made roughly \$100 million in additional line item cuts to the chamber's proposed budget for public schools for 2009-2010 while pulling back last week's proposal to chop five instructional days off the end of next year's school calendar followed by a 10-day cut for the 2010-2011 school year. The controversial and highly unpopular proposal for the cut in instructional days, which would be tied to a pay cut and furlough of school personnel, was removed from the subcommittee's purview but is still under consideration by the eight co-chairs of the House Appropriations Committee. Those committee chairs should be urged to prevent inclusion of this provision in the final House budget as it is finalized over the next two weeks. Deletion of that proposal, at least temporarily, led to the additional line item adjustments listed below.

Adjustments to the House Education Budget – May 26, 2009				
Public School Categories Adjusted	2009-2010 Continuation Budget	House Proposed Education Budget 5/20/09	House Proposed Education Budget 5/26/09	Differences in Proposed Education Budgets
Exceptional Children Headcount	-	-	(\$15,000,000) R	-15,000,000
At-Risk Student Services	\$226,614,401	(\$22,895,155) R	(\$70,000,000) R	-\$47,000,000
School Technology	\$10,000,000	(\$7,000,000) NR	(\$9,000,000) NR	-\$2,000,000
Textbooks	\$109,140,068	(\$37,977,278) NR	(\$47,977,278) NR	-\$10,000,000
Central Office	\$120,855,235	(\$6,470,262) R	(\$9,064,143)R	-\$2,600,000
More @ Four	\$86,062,842	(\$8,600,000) R	(\$10,000,000) R	-\$1,400,000
Teaching Fellows Trust Fund	-	(\$4,500,000) NR	(\$5,500,000) NR	-\$1,000,000
Classroom Materials/Supplies	\$88,238,683	-	(\$2,000,000) R	-\$2,000,000
Mentoring	\$11,164,616	(\$2,791,154) R	(\$5,582,308) R	-\$2,700,000
Limited English Proficiency	\$78,731,314	(\$1,000,000) R	(\$2,000,000) R	-\$1,000,000
Low-Wealth Supplemental Funding	\$207,499,970	(\$18,161,868) R (Would cut all funding in FY09-10 for 13 LEAs at 90% or higher of qualifying formula)	(\$9,080,934) R (Would cut ½ of funding for 13 LEAs in FY09-10 and eliminate full funding in FY10-11)	+\$9,080,934
Transportation	\$388,445,598	(\$19,422,280) R	(\$29,133,420) R	-\$10,000,000
National Board Certification Application Fees	\$3,274,500	(\$3,274,500) R	Changed to a 3-year loan program. The State will not cover 3 days of release time.	+3,274,500
Dropout Prevention	-	\$14,000,000 R	\$13,000,000 R	-\$1,000,000

Note: Adjusted funding are only a portion of the total House Education Budget proposal. Other funding amounts were reported on 5-21-09 by NCASA and are shown at <http://www.ncasa.net/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=199>. All are subject to change.

The budget subcommittee also unveiled the proposed “special provisions” or budgetary instructions and elaboration that will accompany many of the education spending directives in the House version of the state budget.

Subcommittee co-chairs announced their plans for the subcommittee to consider any amendments and then approving a final House education budget package next Thursday, June 4. The target date for completion of the House version of the total state budget is June 18. Negotiations between House and Senate budget writers will follow in an effort to reach a compromise and final budget package by June 30, a target date that many political observers say is unlikely to be reached.

Legislature Eliminates Mandated High School Graduation Project

The Senate earlier today followed the House’s lead in approving legislation that will no longer allow the State Board of Education to require completion of a high school graduation project for graduation prior to July 1, 2011. That legislation, House Bill 223, next will head to the Governor’s desk to be signed into law.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Jimmy Love, D- Lee, also calls for the General Assembly’s Program Evaluation Division to study the cost and effectiveness of a statewide high school graduation project requirement and reports its findings to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by July 1, 2010.

While eliminating the previous statewide mandate for a high school graduation project, the legislation leaves intact the option for a local board of education to require the project for graduation in that school district.

In addition to House Bill 223, several other public school bills gained final legislative approval this week and will soon be awaiting final action by the Governor. They include the following:

- **House Bill 42, Science Safety in the Public Schools** – Would make several changes regarding high school and middle school science safety including: 1) changing a local board of education’s responsibilities for meeting science safety requirements, 2) directing the State Board of Education (SBE) to ensure that prospective middle and high school science teachers receive adequate preparation in science laboratory safety in their teacher education programs, and 3) prohibiting a local board of education from applying for a certificate of occupancy for any new middle or high school building until the plans for the science laboratory areas have been reviewed and approved by the SBE or another entity authorized by the SBE. The bill would be effective on the date it is signed into law.
- **House Bill 218, Parent and Student Educational Involvement Act** – Would require written notice to a student’s parent, guardian or other legally responsible person when the student has been recommended for expulsion or suspension for more than 10 days. The written notice must specify information regarding the incident that led to the recommendation as well as the hearing and appeals process available to the student. The new notification requirement would become effective with the 2009-10 school year.

Committees Debate Controversial Bills On Bullying, Sex Education

Two public school bills that appear to be causing a party-line philosophical split were debated in legislative committees this week, although the fate of neither is certain at this point.

The House Education Committee earlier today approved Senate Bill 526, School Violence Prevention Act, which would require local school board policy adjustments aimed at preventing bullying in public schools. The most controversial part of the bill requires local policies to contain a list of perceived characteristics of a person susceptible to bullying, which include sexual orientation and gender identity. Sen. Julia Boseman, D-New Hanover and author of the bill, said requiring the

characteristics ensures that all children are protected from intolerance. However opponents of the bill claim that identifying groups is unneeded and protection should be the same for all students.

Senate Bill 526 was referred to the House Judiciary I Committee for additional review after a somewhat heated debate between Democratic and Republican members of the House Education Committee.

Earlier this week the Senate Mental Health and Youth Services Committee delayed a vote on a controversial bill that would create a dual track for the sex education curriculum taught in public schools.

House Bill 88, Healthy Youth Act, would require all school districts to offer both an abstinence-until-marriage program and an abstinence-based comprehensive sexuality health education program. Parents and legal guardians would be allowed to select one of the two available tracks for his or her child each year in grades 7-9.

The Senate is considering revising the bill to require placement of students in the abstinence-based comprehensive education program, if parents do not return a form indicating their preference. This is a change from the House version that proposed allowing parents to choose from three sex education options: the new comprehensive program, abstinence-only or no sex education at all. The House version would also opt students out of sex education completely if parents failed to identify their preference.

Approximately 12 school districts in North Carolina, including New Hanover County Schools, currently offer a comprehensive sex education curriculum. New Hanover has been providing the two-track curriculum since 1993-1994.

Debate on the Senate revisions to House Bill 88 are expected to resume by the committee at its next meeting.

Summary Of This Week's Action On Bills Affecting Public Schools

For a complete summary of this week's legislative actions on legislation affecting public schools and their personnel, please see this week's "Weekly Bill Action Summary" at: <http://www.ncasa.net/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=227>. The same site offers a status report on all bills NCASA is tracking for our members during the 2009 legislative session, and that information is arranged in categories to make it easier to locate specific legislation of interest.

*For additional information on these or other legislative issues, contact
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