



Legislative Link

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

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Budget Conferees To Add \$25 Million To Education

House and Senate education budget negotiators met jointly for the first time Thursday afternoon to review differences in the spending plans proposed by the two chambers and to begin ironing out the differences. For a starting point, the negotiators were told they have \$24,926,940 more than the \$11,317,787,539 that the House budget spent on all education programs for 2009-2010. In addition, education budget negotiators will add \$67,977,090 to total education spending for 2010-2011.

While this increase in funds is not large and likely will be split between public schools, universities and community colleges, it will provide the negotiators an opportunity to address some of the House-approved cuts that are the most troubling. Rep. Cullie Tarleton, D-Watauga, and Sen. Joe Sam Queen, D-Haywood, both expressed concerns about the \$12.7 million in cuts outlined for Career-Technical Education for 2009-10 and said they hoped negotiators would make eliminating this cut a priority when the roughly \$25 million in new funds are allocated. Tarleton also mentioned the need to restore cuts previously outlined by the House for funding high school students who are dually enrolled at community colleges.

Co-Chairs of the education budget negotiating team planned to work through the weekend and then bring recommendations for education spending back to the full group of education conferees at 3:30 p.m. Monday.

Since these budget talks are now in high gear, it is imperative that school administrators stay in contact with your own House and Senate members, especially those who are budget conferees, and ask them to protect public school classrooms and jobs as they put together the final education budget for the next two years.

Contact information for budget conferees, charts and other information highlighting education budgets approved by the House and Senate, talking points about budget priorities for public schools, and other information is at <http://www.ncasa.net/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=199>.

Superintendents Visit Lawmakers To Share Public School Budget Priorities

Approximately 50 superintendents from across the state walked the halls of the General Assembly on Wednesday to have critical conversations with their own lawmakers regarding the public school budget.

According to Dr. Jim Causby, Executive Director of the North Carolina School Superintendents' Association, this legislative visit was an important first step in having a positive impact on state spending for public schools.

"The turnout was excellent and the timing that allowed us to attend the Governor's Rally supporting K-12 education was priceless," Causby said in a follow-up email to all superintendents. "Now that we have started this effort, we cannot back off. If each of you makes the effort we can restore most of the K-12 budget and not sacrifice next year's class of students. You must rally your employees and your entire community to support the positions we have taken."

The superintendents shared a "budget priorities" position paper with lawmakers that asks them to protect public school classrooms and jobs as the final public school budget is put together. In addition, the group is calling for a balanced approach to the state budget that includes adequate new revenues to head off the most severe public school cuts that have been proposed for the coming year. The superintendents also highlighted concerns they have with specific public school cuts and asked that these receive priority for restoration in the final budget. These concerns include the following:

- **Career-Technical Education State Months of Employment** – Fully fund current formulas (no cuts).
- **Central Office** – Adopt reductions found in Senate and Governor's proposed budgets.
- **Class Size Increase** – Fully fund current formulas (no cuts).
- **DPI Agency Operating** – Maintain current funding.
- **DPI Agency Positions** – Maintain current staffing.
- **LEA Discretionary/Flexibility Reduction** – No reduction in the final budget.
- **Mentors – Teachers/Instructional Support** – No reduction in the final budget.
- **Non-Instructional Support Personnel** – Fully fund current formula (no cuts).
- **Salaries** – No salary increases except for purposes of promotion or qualifications.
- **Staff Development** – Accept Senate Budget amount which reduces this allocation by 50%.
- **Teacher Assistants** – Fully fund current formulas (no cuts).
- **Transportation** – Fully fund current formula (no cuts), and do not transfer school bus tort claim liability to the school districts as proposed by the Senate.

Bill McNeal, Executive Director of the North Carolina Association of School Administrators which is the umbrella organization for the superintendents association and 10 other administrator groups, said the value of the superintendents' legislative contacts cannot be understated.

"We appreciate the efforts these superintendents made to come to Raleigh on short notice to share these important budget priorities with their legislators," McNeal said. "Lawmakers are looking to superintendents and other NCASA members for guidance on the tough decisions they must make as they finalize the state budget, and this is an important time for school leaders to stand together on the priorities for protecting public school classrooms."

McNeal said he applauds the other administrator groups affiliated with NCASA who also are working to communicate with lawmakers on public school budget priorities. The North Carolina Council of Administrators of Special Education has sent a budget priority letter to lawmakers, and the North Carolina Pupil Transportation Association is planning a visit to the General Assembly next week to address school transportation funding concerns. Other NCASA affiliated groups are taking similar actions, and McNeal said all are encouraged to make contacts with legislators to help ensure the best possible outcome for public schools in the final state budget.

Governor Perdue Rallies Across The State To Protect K-12 Classrooms

Governor Bev Perdue kicked off a series of rallies in Raleigh on Wednesday to garner public and legislative support for protecting public schools in the state budget. Approximately 50 superintendents from across the state and leaders of the North Carolina Association of School Administrators stood with the Governor at the rally in Raleigh.

Below are excerpts from her prepared remarks:

“In the last few months North Carolina has been hit by the deepest national crisis in our lifetimes. I’m told we have one of the largest shortfalls in America. It is the largest shortfall in our history – \$4.7 billion next year and even more the following year.” ...

“I applaud the General Assembly for their work to put a budget together. But – and that’s a big word – in North Carolina we must act boldly to protect the classroom.” ...

“We cannot and must not cripple education. Cutting education means cutting short our economic future.” ...

“That’s why today I call on the General Assembly to make smart, tough cuts in the budget and to raise the revenue necessary to protect North Carolina’s classrooms.” ...

“We will cut deep. We will do more with less. But as state leaders we cannot increase class size, we cannot lay off teachers and we cannot sacrifice our economic future.”

The Governor also took her budget message to other rallies held this week in Greensboro, Charlotte and Asheville.

Additional rallies are planned for Greenville and Wilmington on Monday. The Wilmington event will be held at 10 a.m. at the Minnie Evans Arts Center, 605 Halyburton Memorial Parkway. The Greenville rally will begin at noon at South Central High School. NCASA members from the surrounding area are encouraged to participate to support the Governor’s efforts to protect K-12 schools.

Public School Legislation Scheduled For Action Next Week

The following is a brief synopsis of legislative activity planned so far for next week on bills that could impact public schools and their personnel:

Monday, June 22

- Education budget conferees meet to negotiate on the education portion of the state budget, 3:30 p.m. in Room 421 of the Legislative Office Building.
- House floor debate scheduled at 7 p.m. on Senate Bill 526, School Violence Prevention Act, which calls for local school boards to adopt anti-bullying policies that enumerate groups of students who are typically targeted.

Tuesday, June 23

House Committee On Education, 11:00 a.m., 643 Legislative Office Building

- **House Bill 687, Tax Credits for Children with Disabilities** (Delayed from the last two meetings of the committee) – NCASA strongly opposes this bill that would create refundable tax credits for students with disabilities who are either home-schooled or educated in private schools.
- **Senate Bill 962, Probationary Teacher Appeals** – Would provide fourth-year teachers the right to a local board hearing if they are denied career status and would allow other probationary teachers to request a written record for reasons for non-renewal of their contract. NCASA supports this bill as amended.

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
NCASA Assistant Executive Director Katherine W. Joyce at 919-828-1426 or kjoyce@ncasa.net.*