



Press Conference Re: Public School Budget – April 14, 2010 Comments from Bill McNeal, NCASA Executive Director

Even before our lawmakers return to Raleigh May 12 to begin their short session and the necessary revisions to the state budget they adopted for 2010-2011, the detrimental cuts to public schools already are set to deepen to almost \$1 billion.

You have heard from my colleagues today about the teachers and other dedicated school personnel who already lost their jobs in the current school year because of state budget cuts. You also have heard that the cuts our public schools already absorbed have had a negative impact in the classrooms where our state's young people are being educated.

On behalf of the North Carolina Association of School Administrators and the more than 6,000 school leaders in our membership, I stand here today to sound the alarm and warn our lawmakers that if the public school cuts for next school year go forward as planned or grow even deeper, our state will be doing irreparable harm to the educational opportunities that our State Constitution promises all students.

Contrary to the common perception, public schools are not heavy in administrative costs that easily can be trimmed without causing pain in the classroom, since administrators provide the support teachers need to move students to the next level. In fact, eliminating all the administrators in the central offices of all 115 school districts and the entire Department of Public Instruction would save no more than 3% of the total state funding now invested in our public schools. When confronted with major cuts in state funding like the ones we faced this school year and that we see worsening on the horizon, our school leaders have few options except cutting the jobs of essential personnel or eliminating critical services from the classroom.

Additional budget cuts for public schools are counter-productive to our state's efforts to rebuild our economy. They also detract from our state's commitment to turn around our lowest-performing schools and help every child reach his or her potential as called for through this year's planned reauthorization of the federal No Child Left Behind law and through our state's commitment to the "Race to the Top" effort.

We cannot move forward in preparing our students to be career- and college-ready with the skill set they need to serve as tomorrow's state leaders unless we stop chipping away at the foundation of their growth and development – our public schools.

The superintendents, principals and other school leaders who are on the front lines leading our public schools daily join me in urging our lawmakers to take the appropriate steps to prevent the magnitude and detrimental impact of the cuts currently proposed for North Carolina's public schools. Our 1.4 million students deserve nothing less than a continuing commitment that our state will provide the necessary resources to prepare them for the global economy.