



NC ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

June 20, 2008

Dear Members of the State Budget Conference Committee:

On behalf of more than 7,000 administrators who manage the daily operations for the state's 115 public school districts, we appreciate the efforts of both the House and Senate in creating state budget proposals that seek to protect and enhance the educational opportunities offered to students in Grades K-12. As you and other members of the budget conference committee work in the next few days to resolve the differences, we ask for your help in ensuring that the following funding priorities from school districts statewide are included in the final state budget:

- **SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION – \$48 million for school bus fuel costs and no cuts in the transportation allotment.**

This funding will help school districts cover surging diesel fuel prices that have pushed past \$4 per gallon in recent weeks and are creating a deficit too large to be handled by year-end reversions that have covered smaller deficits in the past.

- **CHILD NUTRITION – \$20 million.**

This funding is needed to offset cost increases facing school lunch programs statewide as state-mandated menu changes take effect with the 2008-09 fiscal year. These receipt-supported child nutrition programs also have been hit hard by the nationwide trend of rising grocery prices and gasoline prices that have resulted in higher food delivery costs.

- **INCENTIVE AWARDS/ABC BONUSSES – \$107 million.**

This amount is needed to prevent a reduction in the performance-based bonuses that are payable to teachers and teacher assistants next school year. If the final budget provides only \$71 million, each teacher and teacher assistant qualifying for the bonus could see a 34 percent reduction in that payment. For example, the \$1,500 bonus for teachers in high-growth schools might need to be reduced to \$995.

We respectfully ask that these three funding requests receive top priority before any new programs are created or any existing programs are given major expansion funding. We realize you face a difficult task in finalizing the state budget given our current economic situation and hope this list of priorities will help you make decisions that are in the best interests of North Carolina's public schools and the 1.4 million students they serve. Thank you for your consideration of these priorities and for your commitment to our state, and in particular, to helping public schools prepare students to succeed in our 21st Century global economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill McNeal".

Bill McNeal
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katherine W. Joyce".

Katherine W. Joyce
Assistant Executive Director/Lobbyist