

NEWS RELEASE

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NCASA Leaders Voice Concerns over Governor's Budget for Public Schools

Leaders of the North Carolina Association of School Administrators (NCASA) reacted with significant concern after reviewing the 2010-2011 state budget proposal released today by Gov. Beverly Perdue.

“We know our state still has a long way to go in its economic recovery, and we projected that state resources for K-12 schools would continue to be inadequate for the coming year,” said NCASA Executive Director Bill McNeal. “Yet we had hoped that Gov. Perdue could find away with her budget proposal to begin repairing the damages caused by the \$225 million discretionary reduction public schools were forced to absorb this year and to prevent that reduction from growing to \$304.8 million next school year as already approved by the North Carolina General Assembly.

“The governor’s proposal to increase the discretionary reduction by an additional \$135 million to the \$304.8 million is a step in the wrong direction that we hope the General Assembly will not follow,” McNeal said. “This reduction is ‘discretionary’ in name only because public school leaders ultimately will have very little discretion and few options except for laying off more school personnel and negatively impacting classroom services.”

McNeal noted that public schools in the current school year already have eliminated 5,401 jobs, including more than 2,400 teaching positions. Of the \$225 million discretionary reduction public schools faced for 2009-2010, \$198,765,000 or 88.34 percent directly hurt the classroom with cuts to teachers, instructional support personnel and teacher assistants.

McNeal also raised concerns about the governor’s proposal to cut \$5.4 million from school system central office operations.

“While this cut may seem insignificant to many, the negative impact from this reduction will be huge because it will further reduce the capacity that each school district has for supporting classroom services and responding to increased state and federal demands for accountability,” McNeal said. “Contrary to common perception school districts are not heavy in administration. In fact our central office operations already are cut to the bone, now comprising only 1.5 percent of the state’s investment in public schools, and any additional cuts in this area will make it almost impossible for school districts to have the capacity to support schools. Overall the cuts amount to approximately 4 percent in reductions to the K-12 budget.”

McNeal and NCASA President Larry Price called upon the General Assembly to maintain school district central office funding and minimize the discretionary reduction already authorized for public schools.

“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,” said Price. “Any cuts beyond those the General Assembly already outlined for public schools with the 2009 state budget will place us on a path to do irreparable harm to our public schools and to the educational opportunities our state’s constitution promises all students.”

The North Carolina Association of School Administrators is the membership organization for more than 6,000 education leaders from the state’s 115 local education agencies and includes superintendents, principals, assistant principals, and directors of other core services for public schools and the 1.4 million students they serve.

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