

The Public School Forum's Friday Report

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Groups Speaking Out on Proposed Budget Cuts

Two news conferences are scheduled for next week to speak out against the proposed budget cuts, which are aligned to be deeper than any in recent history. On Monday a coalition of major educational organizations including the Forum will be holding a news conference at the offices of the North Carolina PTA at 11 AM. In addition to the PTA and the Forum the Coalition includes the North Carolina Association of Educators, Association of School Administrators and School Boards Association. The Coalition contends that the proposed cuts to K-12 education will erase twenty years of educational progress.

On Tuesday, Together North Carolina, a Coalition of 73 organizations ranging from United Way to churches to NAACP to the Child Advocacy Coalition, will call on lawmakers to take a more balanced approach toward budget making, combining increased taxes with job cuts.

Similar coalitions are forming at the community level and it is anticipated that there will be dozens of meetings this weekend as concerned citizens share their concerns with local legislators.

More Changes in K-12; Much Deeper Cuts in Community Colleges & Higher Ed

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Education pulled back on last week's proposal to cut five instructional days from the end of next year's school calendar and ten days from the 2010-11 school year. While the proposal, which would have resulted in a pay cut and furlough of school personal, was removed from the subcommittee's proposal, it is still under consideration by the eight co-chairs of the House Appropriations Committee.

Elimination of the cuts in instructional days led to an additional \$100 million in line item cuts to the proposed budget for public schools for 2009-10. Included in these additional cuts are:

- Exceptional Children Headcount (additional \$15,000,000 cut)
- At-risk Student Services (additional \$47,000,000 cut)
- School Technology (additional \$2,000,000 cut)
- Textbooks (additional \$10,000,000 cut)
- Central Office (additional \$10,000,000 cut)
- More @ Four (additional \$1,400,000 cut)
- Teaching Fellows Trust Fund (additional \$1,000,000 cut)

More Changes to K-12 (cont'd)

- Mentoring (additional \$2,700,000 cut)
- Transportation (additional \$10,000,000 cut)
- Dropout Prevention (additional \$1,000,000 cut)

Budget Making Process Extended

While the House leadership intended to have the proposed House budget to the Senate by June 1 the process is being extended. The original timeline for the budget was made prior to new revenue projections that found the size of the deficit facing the state much greater than originally anticipated. Currently, committees are still debating portions of the proposed House budget. The full Appropriations Committee is not scheduled to debate the entire budget until June 16th. This new schedule makes it more and more unlikely that there will be a final budget approved by both the House and Senate before the end of the fiscal year which is June 30th.

Never Ask For Something . . . You Might Get It

When UNC President Erskine Bowles said publicly in several different settings that Centers and Institutes attached to UNC were not part of the university system's core mission, it is unlikely that he anticipated that the current budget crisis would lead legislative leaders to place literally dozens of Centers and Institutes on the chopping block for cuts ranging from 10% to, in some cases, 100%. Impacting the public school community is the elimination of the Principals Executive Program and potential cuts to groups like the Center for the Advancement of Teaching. Those cuts, however, are the tip of the iceberg. Dozens of other centers attached either to UNC General Administration or to individual colleges are also facing cuts.

Senate Prohibits Graduation Project

The Senate has approved legislation (HB 223) that would eliminate a required graduation project for high school seniors. The bill would still allow local school system to require the projects, but a statewide requirement would be dropped. The bill also calls for a study of the cost and effectiveness of the projects and a report on the findings to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by July 1, 2010. House Bill 223 will head to the Governor's desk to be signed into law.

CMS Releases Results from School Quality Reviews

School Quality Reviews, which Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools created, reach beyond test scores to provide a close-up look at how well educators in each school are helping all their students learn. Recently released, the reviews report that eight of the 23 schools studied this spring got the lowest possible rating. Only one, Ardrey Kell High, got the highest of four ratings, “high quality school”

The district spends close to \$6,600 per school to send inspectors into classrooms; interview faculty, students and parents; pore through data and produce an eight-page report detailing strengths and weaknesses. To read the full reports, along with reports on 24 others reviewed in the fall, go to www.charobs.com/education.

Institute of Political Leadership Recruits for Fall 2009 Class

Newly elected and re-elected officials are in place all over the state and the country. Most have started this new political season facing massive budget crises and economic challenges unprecedented in modern times. Never has the need for strong, bold, innovative, and ethical political leadership been greater than it is today. And never has the need been greater for substantive, meaningful political debate of policy alternatives and options at all levels of government. And this is precisely what the Institute of Political Leadership (IOPL) strives to bring to North Carolina.

2008 was a banner year for IOPL with well over 100 Fellows running for office all over North Carolina. And IOPL Fellows are serving their constituents statewide, from the North Carolina General Assembly and the Council of State to elected positions in the judicial system and municipal and county boards across the state.

IOPL is entering the final stages of selection for the Fall 2009 Class of the Fellows Program. They will be posting the proposed dates on their website at www.iopl.org very soon. If you know individuals who you think would be outstanding future political leaders in North Carolina, please encourage them to visit the IOPL website, find out more about the program, and then complete the online application. They are currently scheduling interviews for the Fall 2009 Class which will begin in early August.

National News...

U.S. Education Secretary Criticizes CA for Proposed Cuts to School Calendar

U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan, in a visit earlier this week, challenged California's politicians and educators to embrace difficult reforms. As part of a 15 state tour intended to help shape the Obama administration's proposal to rework the federal No Child Left Behind law, the Secretary's visit came three days after voters rejected ballot measures that would have shored up the state's finances, leaving schools facing \$5.3 billion in cuts over the next 13 months. "Despite how tough things are financially, it's often at times of crisis we get the reforms we need," he said.

The U.S. Department of Education is in the midst of administering nationwide nearly \$100 billion in federal dollars contained in the economic stimulus package. California has received roughly \$4.3 billion, but depending on how the state uses the initial funding, has the potential to receive billions more. The Secretary warned that although stopping teacher layoffs and reducing class sizes are important, the money must also be used to drive reform, such as using student achievement data to evaluate effectiveness and turning around troubled schools.

He also warned that states that use stimulus money to supplant state funding will disqualify themselves from future funding. He challenged state and local leaders to tackle the most difficult reforms, including reconstituting failing high schools, evaluating teachers based on their students' performance and paying more to teachers who work in hard to staff schools. Duncan's passion for education was felt as he was quick to react to Governor Schwarzenegger's proposal to lop seven days off the school year, saying students need to be spending significantly more time in class to close the achievement gap.

Secretary Duncan Announces Non-Traditional Appointments to Senior Staff

On Tuesday, U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan announced nine "non-traditional" appointments to his senior staff. The following list highlights their amazingly diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Margot Roger, Chief of Staff

- Special assistant to the director of education at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Independent consultant providing education-related program, policy and strategy work
- Staff attorney at the Center for Law and Education
- Senior program officer for the American Association of University Women Ed. Foundation

Secretary Duncan (cont'd)

Juan Sepulveda, Director of the White House Initiative on the Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans

- Senior executive, strategist, and advocate in the non-profit and philanthropic communities
- President of The Common Enterprise (TCE)
- Talk show host, biographer and latino voting rights advocate with the Rockefeller Foundation

Judy Wurtzel, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development

- Co-director of the Aspen Institute
- Executive Director of The Learning First Alliance
- Senior advisor to the deputy secretary at the U.S. Department of Education (1993-99)

David Hoff, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Communication Development

- Reporter in education field include associate editor at Education Week
- Published in a variety of publications including The Washington Post

John White, Press Secretary

- Chief communications officer for Prince George's County Public Schools
- Managed Public/Government Relations in Maryland for AAA Mid-Atlantic
- Director of communications for the Maryland Aviation Administration
- Press Secretary for Maryland's Office of the Secretary of State

Kevin Jennings, Assistant Deputy Secretary, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools

- Founder and former executive director of the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network
- History Dept. Chair and history teacher at Concord Academy in Massachusetts and at Moses Brown School in Rhode Island
- Authored 6 books winning the 1998 Lambda Literary Award

Stacey Jordan, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs

- Communications manager for The Education Sector
- Special advisor for education policy to the mayor of Providence, RI
- Director of the New York City Department of Education Office of Strategic Partnerships

Dianne Piche, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Enforcement, Office of Civil Rights

- Executive Director of the Citizen's Commission on Civil Rights
- Adjunct professor at the University of Maryland in College Park
- Counsel on the Independent Commission on Chapter 1
- Consultant to the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor

Secretary Duncan (cont'd)

Julius Lloyd Horwich, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Legislation and Congressional Affairs

- Education counsel and policy advisor to the U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Education and Labor Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education
- Education Counsel on the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, Subcommittee on Children and Families
- Policy Counsel to U.S. Sen. Tom Harkin

International News ...

Netherlands Face the Effects of a Decline in Crime

The Dutch justice ministry has announced it will close eight prisons and cut nearly 1,200 jobs in the prison system. The country's prison system has capacity for 14,000 prisoners, but due to a declining crime rate which is expected to continue for some time, only 12,000 detainees. Accounty to the Deputy justice minister, Nebahat Albayrak, natural redundancy and other measures should prevent any forced lay-offs.

Forum News...

Call for EPFP Applications

Applications are now being accepted for the Forum's Education Policy Fellowship Program (EPFP). The ten month seminar program meets weekly on Tuesday night from 5:30 to 8:30 pm from September 15, 2009 to May 11, 2010. The program addresses issues related to policy and leadership development. North Carolina boasts almost 600 EPFP alumni. The program seeks high energy individuals committed to enhancing their professional career through networking and exploring leadership and policy in the "real" world. An application may be obtained at the Forum's website. Go to www.ncforum.org and click on EPFP. The deadline is July 31st. Don't delay. Apply today!

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