

State budget cuts threaten K-12 education - and our students' futures

A world-class education system is vital for the prosperity of our state and our children's opportunities in life. For students to flourish, we need a system that supports the diverse learning styles, talents and needs of all children. The foundation of this system includes manageable class sizes that allow teachers to give individual attention to kids, the ability to attract the best teachers, and having programs that support creativity and high academic achievement. As a state we have made strides towards this vision by passing initiatives in the past 10 years that lower class sizes, attract great teachers, and create the innovative programs our kids need and deserve.



The impact of the recession

The deep global recession threatens the progress we have made in the past decade. State funding for our public schools has declined dramatically due to unstable funding sources. The 2009-11 Washington state operating budget sliced approximately \$1.5 billion in K-12 funding and another \$500 million from higher education. Even before these cuts, Washington ranked 45th in the nation in per-pupil investment.

"This year's budget cuts resulted in 60 Bellevue teachers losing their jobs, elimination of all librarians in secondary schools, and larger class sizes for all students. In my school we had to eliminate popular dance and drama classes for middle school kids. Further cuts for next year will eliminate additional electives that provide a well-rounded education for students, and class sizes will get even larger."

Stephen Miller, sixth-grade teacher

These budget cuts already have had an impact on the education our students receive. Public schools across the state are laying off teachers, classroom aides and librarians, and they are eliminating entire programs, including art, music and sports. Even when the economy recovers, it will take our public schools and colleges years to recover from these cuts.

What we stand to lose in 2010

Gov. Gregoire's proposed supplemental budget includes another \$408 million in K-12 cuts and will put our schools, our students and our state even further behind. The future of our state's children - and our economy - is at risk. The proposed cuts will result in overcrowded classrooms, the elimination of all-day kindergarten, the loss of 3,000 teaching jobs and cuts in vital student programs.

The K-12 education funding cuts in Gov. Gregoire's 2010 budget proposal include:

Levy equalization which provides critical funding for poorer school districts is eliminated in the 2011 calendar year	\$142.9 million
K-4 Staff Enhancement is eliminated in the 2010-11 school year	\$110.6 million
Initiative 728 Student Achievement funds are eliminated in the 2010-11 school year	\$78.5 million
All Day Kindergarten is eliminated for the 2010-11 school year	\$33.6 million
Learning Improvement Day is eliminated for the 2010-11 school year	\$15 million
Gifted Education funding is eliminated for the 2010-11 school year	\$7.4 million
Various small grant programs to schools from OSPI are eliminated	\$13.8 million
Alternative Routes to Certification is reduced (about 50%)	\$2 million
Focused Assistance to Schools is reduced (about 50%)	\$1.5 million

There is a better way forward!

We can live up to the promises we have made to our students by taking a more balanced and humane approach to the recession by doing the following:



- **Protect our economic future** by preventing further erosion of the things that residents value so much about our state: quality schools, affordable healthcare, a safety net for the most vulnerable, affordable housing, public safety, and a clean environment.
- **Adopt a balanced approach** to closing the current budget shortfall that includes closing unfair tax loopholes and identifying new revenue sources to stabilize the funding for these programs in the short and long term.

Finding the revenue to adequately fund public education is crucial to our students' futures – and our state's economic vitality.

For more information contact:
Rebuilding Our Economic Future Coalition
Liz Elwart, Field Coordinator
206-420-0133 ext 411 ☐ info@oureconomicfuture.org