

WEA news release, 12/9/09

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Budget cuts will harm students and the economy, educators warn

If enacted, the huge state budget cuts announced today would harm students and damage our state's economic future, warn members of the Washington Education Association.

The budget released today cuts more than \$400 million from K-12 schools, including:

- K-4 class-size reduction money (3,000 teacher layoffs, larger class sizes).
- The rest of I-728 (class sizes, student programs and professional development).
- All-day kindergarten
- Levy equalization in 220 school districts (jobs, class sizes, other basics).
- The remaining learning improvement day (time for collaboration and preparation).
- Funding for highly capable students (student programs).

The budget proposal cuts another \$89.5 million from higher education and \$145 million in financial aid for college students. Last session, the Legislature slashed nearly \$2 billion in education funding.

Educators across the state are calling on the Legislature to raise new revenue to avoid the worst of the cuts to K-12 and higher education Gov. Chris Gregoire proposed today.

Finding the revenue to adequately fund public education is crucial to our students' futures - and our state's economic vitality, said Mary Lindquist, WEA president.

"I don't know how we will prevent students from falling further and further behind," said Mark Mains, a Mukilteo fourth-grade teacher. "We need to explore all of the options and work together to provide the support and funding for the children who are going to be taking care of us in the future."

The Washington Education Association represents 80,000 teachers, staff associates, education support professionals and higher education faculty members.

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