



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | June St. Clair Atkinson, Ed.D., *State Superintendent*

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February 3, 2016

The Honorable Phil Berger
President Pro Tempore
N.C. Senate
16 W. Jones Street ▪ Room 2007
Raleigh, NC 27601-2808

Dear Senator Berger:

In your February 1, 2016, letter to us, you raised questions and made comments about the implementation of the following 2015 budget legislation:

“Excellent Public Schools Act – “Provides additional funds to the Department of Public Instruction to carry out elements of the Excellent Public Schools Act contained in Section 7A.1 and Section 7A.7 of S.L. 2012-142. DPI will have \$41.8 million available to implement these requirements in FY 2015-16 and \$46.5 million in FY 2016-17.”

From Section 7A.d of S.L. 2012-142

“The State Board of Education and the Department of Public Instruction shall provide technical assistance as needed to aid local school administrative units to implement all provisions of this Part.”

We have attached the following materials that you requested in your February 1, 2016, letter:

1. Briefing showing the functions of the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) as it relates to staff carrying out state and federal legislation, as well as the State Board of Education’s *Strategic Plan*.
2. Document showing the \$2.5 million cut to the Department of Public Instruction (This document was initially distributed at the January State Board of Education meeting.)
3. Listing of final positions eliminated.
4. Minutes for the December 2-3, 2015, and January 6-7, 2016, State Board of Education meetings. The Board delegated to us the authority to make the \$2.5 million decrease to DPI during its December 2015 meeting.
5. All letters to OSBM related to the \$2.5 million DPI reduction and budget for 2015-16.
6. 2015-16, 2016-17 breakdown for the Excellent Public Schools Act funds.
7. Legislative budget cuts to DPI since 2008-09.

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT

June St. Clair Atkinson, Ed.D., *State Superintendent* | June.Atkinson@dpi.nc.gov
6301 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-6301 | (919) 807-3430 | Fax (919) 807-3445
AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

In K-3 Literacy alone we have engaged in the following activities:

- 577 professional development sessions reaching 18,512 participants,
- Eight local school district consultants and one charter school consultant working directly with schools and districts three- to four-times per week, and
- Support for low-performing schools.

These activities have resulted in increased opportunities for approximately 487,000 children.

Our department also supports the following activities mandated by the General Assembly:

- Collections, quality checks, and reports for student achievement and growth to fulfill A-F School Performance Grades legislation and Read to Achieve;
- Compilation or development and preparation of about 70 complex reports for the General Assembly; and
- Support for the Charter School Advisory Board.

(See the attached for greater details of state legislative requirements for DPI.)

Eliminating positions puts the department in peril to continue our work to support General Assembly goals, mandates, and the implementation, according to legal requirements.

Contrary to the statement in your letter, the State Board of Education has not taken action about the Excellent Public Schools Act allotment, with two exceptions:

1. Funds have been appropriated to schools for supplementary tutoring for twice-retained third grade students.
2. Going to the State Board this month is an item for reading camp allotments.

We regret that the information you received is incorrect about the Open Meetings Law. We are available to discuss this issue further. You can be assured that our goal is the same as yours – to quickly and significantly improve reading achievement and growth for all North Carolina students.

Sincerely,



William Cobey
Chairman, State Board of Education



June St. Clair Atkinson
State Superintendent

JSA:mw

Enclosures

c: Members of the State Board of Education
Philip Price, Chief Financial Officer, DPI
Andrew Heath, State Budget Director, OSBM

c: (cont'd.)

Chloe Gossage, Chief Operating Officer, OSBM

Speaker Tim Moore

Rep. Hugh Blackwell

Rep. Rob Bryan

Rep. Craig Horn

Sen. Tom Apodaca

Sen. Chad Barefoot

Sen. Dan Soucek