

NCATA Legislative Alert

June 23, 2009

Dear Members,

As negotiations continue between the House of Representatives and the Senate, compromise is the name of the game. In the joint Education Committee on Monday, the Senate members agreed to the teacher assistant reduction which will cut \$130 million from the teacher assistant allotment and 4500 teacher assistants state-wide. Not good at all! Not good for us, not good for our students, and not good for our economy!

I know I have asked you to email your legislators and even specific legislators and I am asking again! *Tell them that revenues need to be raised to negate these cuts to education!* Ask them to find a way to balance our budget without cutting teacher assistants and teachers and placing our students' education in peril. Governor Perdue has been very specific in the language at her rallies that the North Carolina General Assembly needs to come up with a budget that does not cut teachers OR teacher assistants. She knows how valuable we are in the classroom.

Such drastic cuts will damage our public education system after years of steady progress. With larger class sizes and fewer teacher assistants how will we continue to give the small group instruction and individualized attention to the students, especially the at-risk students?

With fiscal reports indicating that the economy will not be back up to support a pre-recession budget until 2013-2014, how will our children's education suffer until then? In five years our kindergarten students will be heading to middle school. Will they be ready? And to take it even further, if they are *not* ready in five years, how will these cuts impact them even further down the road. *How will the cuts to the classrooms eventually impact our economy, our state, our nation?*

Forward this alert on to others please, even if they are not members of our association. Tell them that NCATA is working very hard for teacher assistants but that these are difficult times and numbers do matter in having a voice in Raleigh! **We need everyone working together to support teacher assistants and teachers.** There are around 29,000 federal, state, and locally paid teacher assistants in North Carolina. Please, get the word out to them all!

Sincerely,
Melinda

Melinda K. Zarate
NCATA Legislative Chair