

Governor's Recommendations for Public Schools

While developing the proposal for reducing operating budgets, the Executive sought the input of educational leaders to develop a plan for achieving the necessary budget reductions without compromising the quality of classroom instruction. Superintendents from several public schools had the opportunity to voice concerns and offer suggestions on prudent measures for cutting costs. Superintendents recommended numerous strategies, several of which were fully adopted, giving school officials an important role in the budget reduction process.

The most significant changes to public schools will not take effect until Fiscal Year 2010, as it is extremely difficult to impose significant reductions in the midst of a school year. Based on the superintendents' recommendations, implementing five temporary changes to next year's operating budget would reduce funding by a total of \$125 million in Fiscal Year 2010. The Executive also recommends additional funding for base increases and expansions, resulting in a net change of \$80 million or 3.1% of the Public School Support. Small school districts may be held harmless from select reductions as well. Changes to the Fiscal Year 2010 public school operating budgets would include:

- Temporarily changing the defined uses for Senate Bill 9 funds to allow districts to charge property and liability insurance to the SB9 fund rather than operational budget. SB9 funds are currently limited to infrastructure improvement projects. \$50 million
- Delaying the purchase of instructional materials for one year. Additional funds would still be made available for off-cycle adoptions. \$25 million
- Suspending the additional instruction day. \$14 million
- Delaying the Education Technology allocation for FY10. The Educational Technology allocation provides supplemental funds for telecommunications, software and information technology staff. \$6 million
- Temporarily increase maximum class sizes. It is believed that this can be attained simply by not replacing teachers that resign or retire and allowing natural attrition to reduce personnel expenses. Under this plan, kindergarten class sizes would increase to 18 students with a maximum of 22 children per classroom. First grade would increase class sizes to 22 students with an educational assistant assigned at 23 students. High schools and middle schools would eliminate the course cap and allow for an average of 165 students per teacher. \$30 million