



Teaching. Learning. Leading.

VEA Statement on the 2010-12 Biennial Budget as Proposed by Governor Kaine

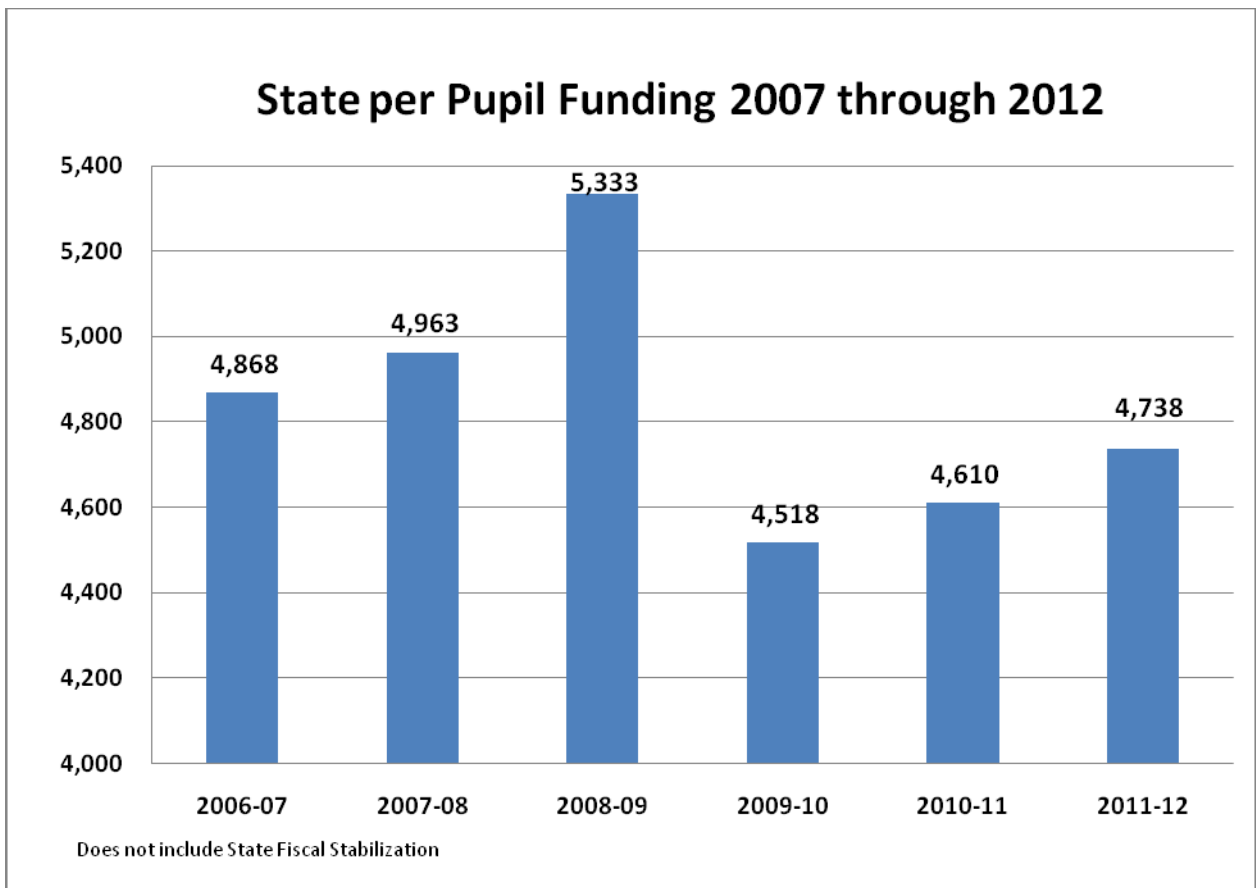
**Statement Presented by Kitty Boitnott, President of the Virginia Education Association, for the Senate Finance Subcommittee on Education
1/28/2010**

Senator Colgan, members of the subcommittee, ladies and gentlemen, I am Kitty Boitnott, President of the Virginia Education Association. Thank you for the opportunity to share our viewpoint on Governor Kaine's budget for the 2010-12 biennium. We appreciate the difficulties you face in these uncertain economic times and value your efforts to support public education.

We believe that the process by which this budget was put together obscures the damage being done to our system of public education in the Commonwealth. VEA believes that the public, parents and the students in our state are being misled as to the extent of the cuts to K-12 as a consequence of this. ARRA funds, filling in for the reduced state funds during 2009-10, masked the extent of the cut. The impact of the proposed budget on our children and the educators we represent will be devastating.

Last year, the Executive branch with the concurrence of the legislature, initiated policy changes in the Standards of Quality, a responsibility that constitutionally lies only with the State Board of Education. Over \$375 million each year was taken away from schools when state funding for 13,000 support positions was cut due to this executive revision in standards for school aides, clerical assistance, maintenance staff and other

necessary positions. Again this budget cycle, the Governor's proposals include still more changes in funding for the Standards of Quality, again bypassing the Board of Education. So while the administration says that the cost of rebenchmarking is \$138.6 million, the cost to restore funding without the various policy adjustments over the three-year period is closer to \$1 billion. The magnitude of the cuts will mean that our schools will have fewer teachers, larger class sizes, and reduced programs. Funding per pupil from the state as proposed for 2009-10, 2010-11 and 2011-12 is far less than the amount provided in 2008-09.



Because of the drastic measures that localities will be forced to make because of the cuts in state funding on top of their own economic problems, 15,000 jobs will be eliminated. Please note that if K-12 is cut in a proportional manner to make up for the \$2B current shortfall, we will see state support eliminated for an additional 8,600 jobs. Educators who would have been working and contributing to the quality of the classroom will be impossible to keep. Ripples will be felt in Virginia's economy and in workforce development.

Policymakers should be mindful of the gap between state funding and the amount that our local school divisions are required to spend in order to provide a high quality education for the 1.2 million children attending public schools across the Commonwealth. The proposed budget ignores the Commonwealth's constitutional obligation to maintain a system of high quality education.

Let me close with a plea that you do all you can to make the cuts to K-12 transparent and understandable to the public. Minimize the reductions and make them temporary.