

# ATTENTION! WE NEED YOUR HELP!

## Orange County Schools could lose another \$107M unless we act now!

At the recent session on January 14<sup>th</sup>, the State Legislature approved another \$500M in current statewide **cuts** for education/\$103M from Orange County Schools alone for this school year. They return to Tallahassee in March with the potential to vote for an **additional \$107M in cuts from Orange County Schools** for 2009-2010, because of statewide revenue shortfalls. The funding for public schools has never been at greater risk.

To make up for this \$107M in projected loss of revenue, here are some of the items being considered. Keep in mind this is not a comprehensive list, just a list of the many items that may be discussed and either kept whole, limited in their scope, or cut altogether.

- Changing schools to a 4 day week (parents responsible for child care on the 5<sup>th</sup> day)
- School start/end times
- Athletic/summer school/field trips/other special programs
- Gifted/International Baccalaureate/AP/ESOL/Disability/Tutoring programs
- School supplies/textbooks/technology purchases
- Energy Savings including total OCPS shut down over holidays/other unused times
- School Resource Officers Cut, in addition to Staff/Faculty Hours cut (this means less people to assist with daily campus safety)

## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO STOP THIS FROM HAPPENING????

Attached is a list of the State Legislators from our area, and these are the websites to obtain their contact information electronically:

<http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/contentViewer.aspx?category=WebSite&file=contact%20us.htm>

<http://www.flsenate.gov/Legislators/index.cfm?Members=By+Last+Name&Tab=legislators&Submenu=1>

We are asking that you please call, write, or email each of them and let them know that we want to keep these programs above and find other ways to fund education. Stephen Precourt, Gary Siplin, Lee Constantine, Geraldine Thompson, and Scott Plakon sit on education-related committees that review and/or introduce legislation, so it is imperative that they are contacted. On the back side of this page is a template that you may use. You should add your personal story (i.e. why you don't want the changes listed above). Once you do that, then it is ready to be sent to all and will have much more impact than a simple form letter.

During the upcoming session in Tallahassee, our voices must be heard. We must calmly approach our legislators and offer reasonable alternatives/potential solutions. But most importantly, we must put a human face on the large numbers filling the press. If we act together, we can make a difference in the future of our children and education.

Thank you for helping save our schools!

Alais Salvador & Sharon Newton

Whispering Oak Elementary School Advisory Council (SAC)

Please contact: [asalvador@cfl.rr.com](mailto:asalvador@cfl.rr.com) or 407-656-1315 with ANY questions or to get electronic copies of legislator mailing labels, forms, etc.

Date

Legislator Name

Address

Phone

Email

Dear *(name)*,

We can no longer afford to continue cutting funds from our school system.

In particular, losing *(list your biggest issue of concern here)* would be hard because *(list details of how it would affect your family)*.

*(List anything else you would like to bring to their attention here)*

We value our children and their education, and we are looking to you to support education and vote against cuts that will hurt our children and decimate our school system. We're not saying it's time to tax at will. It's simply time to start closing some of the tax loopholes and collecting revenue from uncollected areas such as the Bottled Water, Internet Sales, Charter Fishing Boat fees, Stadium Skyboxes, Accounting fees, and on and on. People purchasing these items can afford to pay taxes more than our working class parents that are being taxed on clothing and shoes at local discount stores. The billions that could be collected from these annually could rescue our schools and then some.

Will you stand with us?? It's crucial that you vote against further education cuts in March. Education is a foundation for success, the harm to our children today will never be recouped.

Remember that 2/3 of our state budget is education and social services. If we fund education now, it will greatly reduce the need for social services in the future. We're watching how you vote on behalf our children. They are truly the future of this great state.

Thank you for protecting our schools!

*(Your signature here)*

*(Your name and address here)*