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BTC Brief

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September 2011

NORTH CAROLINA'S DISAPPEARING EDUCATORS:

Since 2008, NC Public Schools Have Shed Thousands of Teachers, Teacher Assistants, and Other Educators

*Timely,
accessible,
and credible
analysis of
state and local
budget and tax
issues*

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KEY FINDINGS:

- **In the last four years, North Carolina public schools report having eliminated 16,678 jobs, nearly one in ten positions compared to 2008 staffing levels.**
- **Cuts hit some school districts especially hard: eight of North Carolina's 115 school districts eliminated more than one in five positions compared to 2008 staffing levels, 24 eliminated more than one in ten teacher positions, and 31 eliminated more than a quarter of teacher assistant positions.**
- **School jobs cuts are almost certain to continue next year. More than \$250 million in temporary federal aid is expected to support between 4,000 and 5,000 local school jobs through September 2012 only, and local school districts, as part of the biennial state budget, will need to come up with \$74 million in additional discretionary cuts to already-bare budgets in the next school year.**

Recession-Era Budget Cuts Have Eliminated Thousands of Public School Jobs in North Carolina

Recent data released from North Carolina's Department of Public Instruction confirms what many educators and parents around the state have sensed: recession-era budget cuts at the state and local levels have eliminated thousands of public school jobs across North Carolina. The results of the NC DPI survey of 113 of the state's 115 school districts found that, in the last four years, North Carolina public schools report having eliminated 16,678 positions,¹ nearly one in ten positions compared to 2008 staffing levels.²

The personnel cuts have fallen most heavily on the classroom. Of all the positions cut during the past four years, more than one in three were teaching positions. Teacher assistant positions accounted for another one in three positions eliminated.³

Relative to school systems in other states, North Carolina arguably had much less room to cut personnel and other expenditures from pre-recession levels. According to US Census statistics, North Carolina was far below the national average in terms of state and local spending on public schools. As of 2007-08, North Carolina ranked 45th nationally in state and local per-pupil spending on public schools, spending \$2,200

FIGURE 1: School Districts in East, West, & South-Central NC Experienced Heaviest Position Losses

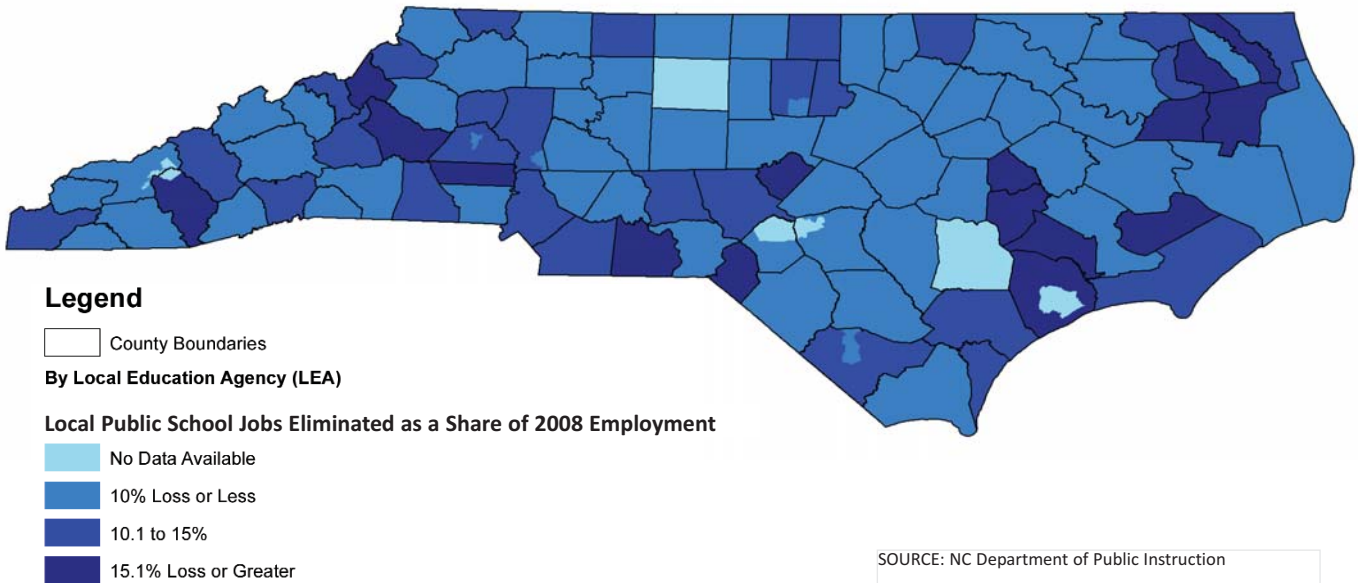


FIGURE 2: Ten “Hardest Hit” NC School Districts

Rank	District (LEA)	SHARE OF 2008 EMPLOYMENT			District Wealth Score (% of state average)
		Total Positions Lost	Teacher Positions Lost	TA Positions Lost	
1	Avery	28.5%	14.9%	30.2%	153.65%
2	Anson	26.5%	20.7%	41.5%	68.27%
3	Jones	25.2%	24.6%	22.9%	84.39%
4	Scotland	21.7%	9.2%	77.8%	64.31%
5	Jackson	21.6%	21.2%	72.6%	163.93%
6	Burke	21.2%	17.2%	38.5%	80.24%
7	Tyrrell	20.9%	7.7%	33.3%	85.89%
8	Lincoln	20.2%	11.8%	64.5%	91.40%
9	Lenoir	18.7%	9.3%	48.7%	74.79%
10	Lee	18.7%	9.4%	61.2%	85.49%

SOURCE: NC Department of Public Instruction

less per pupil compared to the national average. Specifically on administrative spending, North Carolina ranked 49th nationally in per-pupil spending on general administration and 38th in school-level administration.⁴

Cuts Hit Some School Districts Particularly Hard

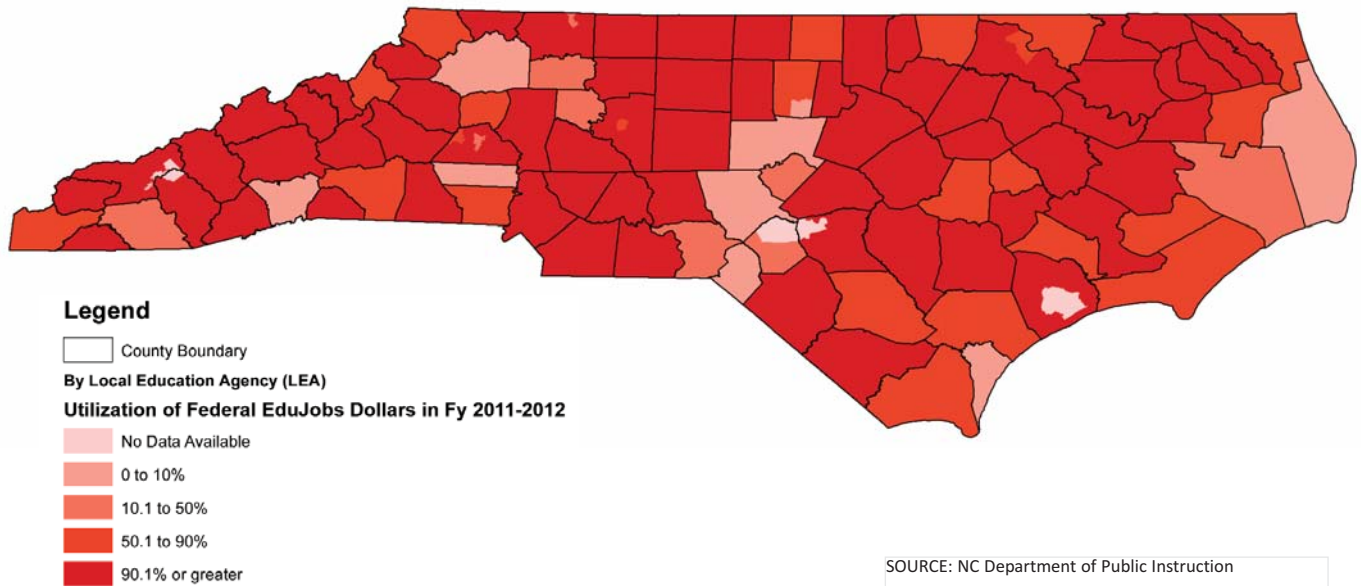
Lost public school positions were far from evenly distributed across North Carolina’s 115 school districts. Cuts hit some school districts especially hard: eight districts eliminated more

than one in five local school positions compared to 2008 staffing levels, 24 eliminated more than one in ten teacher positions, and 31 eliminated more than a quarter of teacher assistant positions. Although almost all districts report eliminated staff positions, losses were highly concentrated in the eastern, western, and south-central parts of the state (See Figure 1).

Wealthy, middle-income, and poor school districts were all represented among the school districts suffering the largest personnel losses. In fact, the three districts with the biggest personnel losses as a share of 2008 levels – Avery, Anson, and Jones – rank among the top, bottom, and middle, respectively, in NC DPI’s Low-Wealth Supplemental Funding formula (See Figure 2).⁵

The cumulative impact of four years of job losses is to hold back the recovery in local communities across the state while also impairing the ability of North Carolina’s schools to provide the state’s children with the

FIGURE 3: Majority of NC Schools Districts Retained Most or All Federal EduJobs Funds for FY2012



high-quality education necessary to compete and succeed as adults in the long term. Research has consistently shown that smaller class sizes and higher levels of instructional support staff (e.g. guidance counselors, librarians, technology specialists) lead to better outcomes for students.⁶

Job Losses at Public Schools Almost Certain to Continue into Next Year

Unfortunately, school jobs cuts are almost certain to continue next year. In August of 2010, Congress allocated \$10 billion in “EduJobs” aid to local school districts across the country to stem the national tide of widespread educator layoffs.⁷ North Carolina’s share of this EduJobs aid was \$297 million,⁸ and, in total, local North Carolina school districts have reserved more than \$250 million to support between 4,000 and 5,000 local school jobs in the current school year. In fact, 60 of the state’s 115 school districts had not spent any of their EduJobs allocation as of June 30, 2011, and only 18 districts had spent more than half of their original grant (See Figure 3).⁹ Yet because all EduJobs money must be spent by September 2012, schools will likely be forced to eliminate most of those positions unless they receive new federal, state, or local resources.

Local school districts, as part of the biennial state budget, will face additional reductions in state funding in 2012-13. This year’s \$429 million in local discretionary cuts (\$124 million more than 2010-11) will rise by another \$74 million next year, putting even more financial strain on already-bare district budgets.

Policymakers Should Put a High Priority on Stopping and Reversing Loss of Educators

Having effective, high-quality public schools is vital to the economic future of North Carolina. The vast majority of new jobs in the years to come will require skilled workers and entrepreneurs capable of thinking critically and adapting to a rapidly changing economy.¹⁰

Overcrowded classes and under-resourced schools will not produce the skilled workers that North Carolina needs. Without the resources necessary to ensure that children receive sufficient attention and support from skilled educators, more and more of North Carolina’s children will fall behind, resulting in fewer high

school graduates and fewer young adults earning a college degree or post-secondary credential.

Such a dismal future for North Carolina is not inevitable. North Carolina's public schools have made significant progress in guiding more teens through to graduation and improving graduates' readiness for career and college. By raising enough revenue to avert further educator job losses and ensuring adequate state funding for districts with insufficient local resources, policymakers can ensure that the North Carolina's public schools have the resources necessary to sustain and build on that hard-earned progress.

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- 1 NC Department of Public Instruction. "Public Schools Have Cut More than 8 percent of staff since 2008-09 - Revised." August 31, 2011. Available at <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/newsroom/news/2011-12/20110831-01>
 - 2 Technical Note: It is not accurate to read the results of the survey as resulting in 16,678 fewer (filled) jobs compared to 2008 staffing levels. Some of the positions eliminated were authorized but vacant as of 2008. The survey also did not include jobs created in local school districts to account for enrollment growth, federal grants such as Race to the Top, and local initiatives. For example, school districts report 10,370 positions eliminated between 2008-09 and 2010-11, but the Department of Public Instruction's "Highlights of the NC Public School Budget" documents show that there were roughly 7,000 fewer public school employees in 2010-11 compared to 2007-08.
 - 3 NC Department of Public Instruction, August 2011.
 - 4 US Census Bureau: Public School Finance Data. Public Elementary-Secondary Education Finance Data: 2009 Data. Accessed on September 5, 2011 at <http://www.census.gov/govs/school/>
 - 5 NC Department of Public Instruction: Finance & Business Services. "Planning Allotments - Low Wealth and Small County Planning Summary." Accessed on September 5, 2011 at <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/fbs/allotments/planning/>
 - 6 Augenblick, Palaich and Associates, Inc. "Recommendations to Strengthen North Carolina's School Funding System." September 2010. Available at <http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/documentsites/legislativepublications/Study%20Reports%20to%20the%202011%20NCGA/Public%20School%20Funding%20Formulas%20-%20Joint%20Legislative%20Study%20Committee.pdf>
 - 7 Alyson Klein. "Senate Passes Edujobs Bill." Education Week. August 5, 2010. Available at http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/2010/08/senate_passes_edujobs_bill.html
 - 8 NC Department of Public Instruction: Finance & Business Services. "ARRA Education Jobs Fund." Accessed on September 5, 2011 at <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/fbs/arra/edujobs/>
 - 9 NC Department of Public Instruction: Finance & Business Services. "ARRA: Financial: ARRA Reporting Application." Accessed on September 5, 2011 at <http://apps.schools.nc.gov/pls/apex/f?p=122>
 - 10 The North Carolina Commission on Workforce Development. "State of the North Carolina Workforce – 2011-2020: 'Preparing North Carolina's Workforce and Businesses for the Global Economy.'" June 2011. Available at <http://www.nccommerce.com/wf/about-us/plans-policies-reports-initiatives/reports/2011-state-of-the-workforce-report>

APPENDIX					
District (LEA)	SHARE OF 2008 EMPLOYMENT			% EduJobs Allocation Left (as of June 28, 2011)	District Wealth Score (% of state average)
	Total Positions Lost	Teacher Positions Lost	TA Positions Lost		
Alamance	6.4%	3.5%	23.5%	100%	89.69%
Alexander	13.1%	9.5%	24.8%	84%	79.13%
Alleghany	10.6%	9.0%	24.4%	100%	112.96%
Anson	26.5%	20.7%	41.5%	100%	68.27%
Ashe	9.4%	5.7%	9.1%	83%	115.66%
Avery	28.5%	14.9%	30.2%	70%	153.65%
Beaufort	6.6%	5.5%	16.1%	100%	86.12%
Bertie	7.5%	3.5%	20.0%	100%	67.04%
Bladen	5.3%	11.0%	0.0%	56%	73.82%
Brunswick	4.2%	2.6%	4.4%	90%	194.63%
Buncombe	7.3%	3.7%	18.8%	100%	133.71%
Asheville City	7.0%	3.5%	6.5%	100%	133.71%
Burke	21.2%	17.2%	38.5%	100%	80.24%
Cabarrus	4.3%	1.9%	13.9%	100%	109.82%
Kannapolis City	9.0%	4.0%	22.9%	94%	89.60%
Caldwell	2.5%	1.9%	3.1%	100%	77.83%
Camden	15.9%	10.3%	42.6%	100%	82.99%
Carteret	13.8%	5.9%	33.3%	82%	185.79%
Caswell	5.3%	7.7%	3.5%	100%	71.90%
Catawba	10.3%	6.0%	32.1%	92%	103.29%
Hickory City	11.9%	7.5%	18.0%	90%	103.29%
Newton City	6.9%	4.3%	13.8%	25%	103.29%
Chatham	5.0%	3.8%	6.3%	0%	118.07%
Cherokee	14.0%	12.4%	27.8%	79%	101.59%
Chowan	14.6%	7.0%	34.7%	100%	88.92%
Clay	9.9%	8.2%	11.4%	100%	129.27%
Cleveland	11.9%	9.4%	22.8%	100%	78.36%
Columbus	13.2%	16.6%	10.8%	100%	67.91%
Whiteville City	9.3%	5.7%	34.7%	100%	67.91%
Craven	6.2%	4.3%	5.8%	100%	91.59%
Cumberland	6.0%	3.9%	14.4%	100%	90.17%
Currituck	14.2%	4.1%	36.0%	59%	195.95%
Dare	6.7%	4.3%	2.1%	0%	299.35%
Davidson	6.4%	6.0%	16.2%	100%	87.64%
Lexington City	1.1%	0.9%	3.0%	85%	87.64%
Thomasville City	2.8%	4.0%	4.4%	100%	87.64%
Davie	9.3%	5.9%	8.3%	35%	96.40%
Duplin	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%	68.61%
Durham Public	13.6%	16.4%	13.0%	100%	146.96%
Edgecombe	7.1%	5.9%	16.3%	94%	70.96%
Forsyth	4.9%	5.1%	5.7%	100%	135.53%
Franklin	4.6%	2.9%	11.6%	100%	77.42%
Gaston	7.6%	8.0%	8.7%	83%	99.80%
Gates	12.2%	20.4%	11.5%	100%	68.42%
Graham	0.5%	1.1%	0.0%	100%	102.22%
Granville	9.5%	4.2%	30.6%	100%	70.81%
Greene	17.7%	20.4%	29.2%	58%	60.47%
Guilford	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	97%	130.57%
Halifax	6.7%	3.1%	14.8%	100%	70.69%
RoanokeRapids City	8.2%	0.8%	29.6%	99%	70.69%
Weldon City	6.8%	8.9%	18.5%	72%	70.69%
Harnett	5.6%	0.0%	24.5%	100%	68.83%
Haywood	11.3%	6.0%	16.8%	100%	107.24%
Henderson	10.9%	11.4%	23.8%	0%	124.41%
Hertford	6.0%	3.2%	8.6%	100%	70.08%
Hoke	2.7%	0.0%	14.2%	40%	57.28%
Hyde	2.9%	4.5%	0.0%	11%	137.12%
Iredell	10.6%	5.5%	51.0%	100%	106.42%

APPENDIX (cont.)					
District (LEA)	SHARE OF 2008 EMPLOYMENT			% EduJobs Allocation Left (as of June 28, 2011)	District Wealth Score (% of state average)
	Total Positions Lost	Teacher Positions Lost	TA Positions Lost		
Mooreville City	9.4%	11.1%	13.4%	100%	106.42%
Jackson	21.6%	21.2%	72.6%	100%	163.93%
Johnston	6.7%	4.3%	22.9%	100%	78.56%
Jones	25.2%	24.6%	22.9%	71%	84.39%
Lee	18.7%	9.4%	61.2%	28%	85.49%
Lenoir	18.7%	9.3%	48.7%	100%	74.79%
Lincoln	20.2%	11.8%	64.5%	0%	91.40%
Macon	4.0%	1.4%	18.2%	21%	163.72%
Madison	5.3%	2.9%	4.6%	100%	90.14%
Martin	7.7%	4.1%	16.1%	100%	72.85%
McDowell	10.6%	10.0%	23.3%	100%	77.03%
Char-Mecklenburg	14.7%	8.7%	22.9%	98%	214.59%
Mitchell	10.8%	4.8%	38.2%	100%	91.11%
Montgomery	10.7%	8.1%	19.6%	100%	80.38%
Moore	11.0%	4.0%	29.0%	0%	118.23%
Nash	1.1%	0.0%	3.2%	100%	77.30%
New Hanover	12.5%	3.1%	28.9%	0%	221.81%
Northampton	3.0%	0.4%	10.6%	56%	79.53%
Onslow	15.8%	13.9%	25.0%	100%	90.46%
Orange	12.5%	6.1%	32.5%	89%	125.55%
Chapel Hill-Carrboro	9.6%	13.9%	10.7%	0%	125.55%
Pamlico	17.6%	15.0%	30.3%	69%	139.16%
Pasquotank	1.1%	1.1%	0.0%	100%	84.65%
Pender	12.8%	7.4%	48.6%	81%	90.62%
Perquimans	16.5%	6.5%	66.0%	100%	92.99%
Person	14.8%	8.6%	48.6%	56%	88.09%
Pitt	6.0%	4.2%	19.3%	100%	85.08%
Polk	6.1%	6.8%	4.8%	100%	127.52%
Randolph	5.2%	2.9%	12.6%	100%	77.32%
Asheboro City	2.3%	0.6%	0.0%	100%	77.32%
Richmond	2.3%	0.0%	6.1%	22%	65.29%
Robeson	4.3%	0.0%	21.1%	100%	56.48%
Rockingham	8.4%	8.6%	15.8%	100%	77.31%
Rowan	5.9%	2.7%	17.1%	100%	89.60%
Rutherford	9.9%	11.2%	14.6%	76%	82.70%
Sampson	3.4%	0.0%	12.3%	100%	65.28%
ClintonCity	4.6%	6.0%	0.0%	100%	65.28%
Scotland	21.7%	9.2%	77.8%	0%	64.31%
Stanly-Albemarle	7.2%	2.0%	16.6%	98%	77.96%
Stokes	14.7%	8.1%	43.8%	100%	77.33%
Surry	7.7%	3.7%	6.6%	100%	79.05%
Elkin City	8.5%	7.6%	20.0%	97%	79.05%
Mount Airy City	2.8%	3.0%	0.0%	43%	79.05%
Swain	3.7%	3.3%	6.8%	100%	84.31%
Transylvania	7.4%	9.9%	10.9%	100%	126.86%
Tyrrell	20.9%	7.7%	33.3%	80%	85.89%
Union	13.2%	12.3%	24.9%	100%	93.79%
Vance	8.0%	15.0%	0.0%	100%	69.10%
Wake	9.4%	4.4%	16.5%	99%	160.12%
Warren	13.9%	13.4%	22.9%	85%	91.24%
Washington	15.7%	13.6%	45.6%	100%	70.42%
Watauga	11.1%	6.8%	25.3%	100%	175.71%
Wayne	5.9%	3.9%	15.0%	82%	74.89%
Wilkes	7.5%	6.2%	18.6%	1%	87.25%
Wilson	5.8%	5.7%	10.0%	100%	83.89%
Yadkin	8.6%	3.8%	16.9%	35%	75.91%
Yancey	4.0%	2.2%	4.6%	100%	96.15%
North Carolina	8.9%	6.1%	18.7%	86%	