



February 15, 2010

Dear VA PTA Leaders:

VA PTA has been working very closely with other education stakeholders as we try to figure out how to create a sense of urgency among the public with regard to the harm that is going to be done by this Governor and this General Assembly if someone doesn't step up pretty darn soon with a suggestion on how not to decimate our public schools in Virginia. We have been working with Virginia Education Association (VEA), the Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS), the Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA) and other advocates for individual school divisions.

Yesterday, we engaged in a conference call with some of those associations' leaders, and developed a coalition message. Also VEA has launched their own public relations campaign with the billboard signs announcing that children are about to be robbed of their education and their futures. Please find attached the Word document that provides the bullet points of our coalition message.

Also attached you will find the latest chart that outlines the cuts that each locality faces in light of the latest leaks regarding cuts to education funding and the change in the local composite index that Governor McDonnell announced this week.

Please feel free to share the numbers from the chart with your local superintendent, school board members, and leaders in your local PTA chapters as you work to craft a local campaign around what is happening in Richmond and how that is going to impact the families and children of your localities.

We are all in this battle together. We need to work together as we never have before.

Please reach out to your Superintendents, your local community leaders, and anyone else who is worried—as they should all be—about what is about to happen to Virginia's schools and Virginia's school children.

NOW is the time for us to take action! We need to mobilize at the local level in order to bolster our efforts here in Richmond. Our legislators need to hear from their constituents at home. Our Governor needs to hear that we need him to demonstrate the leadership he promised during his campaign. VA PTA has posted Child Advocate Action Alerts as of 11am Monday, February 15 on the need for Virginia's Senate to take a lead on the budget. An action alert email will go out to all of our subscribers as well. Please forward that email out as soon as it arrives in your inbox.

If VA PTA can offer support for your local efforts, please let us know. Below is a link to an article about the current state of Virginia's budget that appeared in The Washington Post. I think you will find it very telling as to how these budget negotiations are proceeding.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/02/11/AR2010021104789.html>

Thanks for what you are already doing and for what you are about to do for the children of the Commonwealth.

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