



JOY HOFMEISTER  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT *of* PUBLIC INSTRUCTION  
OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION

March 4, 2016

The Honorable Mary Fallin  
Governor of the State of Oklahoma  
2300 N. Lincoln Blvd, Room 212  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

Dear Governor Fallin,

On behalf of the State Board of Education, the State Department of Education and the schoolchildren of Oklahoma, I respectfully request a supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$56,269,298.20.

This amount would cover the mandatory four percent (4%) reduction in FY 2016 funding announced March 3, 2016, to the Financial Support of Public Schools (\$39,628,355.60) and to the Flexible Benefit Allowance for certified and support personnel (\$16,640,942.60). This request represents only a fraction of the total amount of cuts to common education in FY 16, which now totals \$109,151,698.32.

The latest round of cuts to education simply cannot be absorbed without seriously impacting Oklahoma's preK-12 schoolchildren. Districts throughout the state already have cut to the budgetary bone in the wake of previous reductions. Without expeditious help from the Legislature, educators face painful decisions with potentially devastating consequences for classroom instruction.

As detailed under 70 O.S. 26-104, it is the responsibility of the Oklahoma State Legislature to fund the Flexible Benefit Allowance for teachers and staff. Fortunately, monies appropriated to this fund in FY 16 were able to cover the amount of cuts that resulted from the initial General Revenue failure. However, no monies remain to cover the amount of cuts from this second revenue failure. Therefore, we ask the Legislature to fulfill its statutory obligation to fully fund the Flexible Benefit Allowance.

You should also be aware that the Office of Management and Enterprise Services and the Oklahoma Tax Commission project the Common Education Technology Revolving Fund will receive only \$34,239,000 of the \$47,372,299 that was appropriated for the Financial Support of Public Schools, meaning schools will weather an additional shortfall of \$13,133,299.

Additionally, the Oklahoma Tax Commission projects that the Legislature will need to appropriate an additional amount of an estimated \$40,000,000 to the Ad Valorem Reimbursement Fund for FY 16. We ask that you fully fund the Ad Valorem Reimbursement quickly so that schools are not put at risk of defaulting on their bond obligations.

As districts and schools adjust to the funding cuts, they could benefit greatly by being afforded greater flexibility on some existing funds. Subsequently, the State Department of Education also requests that swift action be taken by the Legislature to provide flexibility to schools on FY 15 appropriated line items as follows:

FY 15 State Line Item Carryover Balances

Professional Development - \$1,392,928.77

ACE Technology - \$1,870,136.42

ACE Remediation - \$2,701,983.26

Reading Sufficiency Act - \$2,328,202.75

Alternative Education - \$559,669.10

**Total - \$8,852,920.30**

Finally, I would ask that, given the dire fiscal situation impacting the State of Oklahoma, that lawmakers this legislative session do not pass along legislation that bears a fiscal impact requiring additional staff, time and resources to implement in the realm of common education.

Your consideration of these items is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Joy Hofmeister

State Superintendent of Public Instruction