

## Statement on the 2010-11 CMS Budget from Mecklenburg ACTS

[www.mecklenburgacts.org](http://www.mecklenburgacts.org)

For those who care about public schools, the coming months will be difficult. Even as we grapple with the anger and distrust created by school closings, we face additional cuts that will affect our children's education and have the potential to further divide our community.

The process that led to the November 9 school closings vote suffered from several shortcomings that we should seek to avoid in the future.

- The closings disproportionately affected one segment of our community.
- The piecemeal nature of the process made it difficult to detect any coherent rationale for the decisions, leaving community members confused and suspicious.
- Neither staff nor board members presented convincing evidence that the closings would provide fiscal or academic benefits that would outweigh their negative effects on students, families and communities.

As a community, we should do what we can to limit education cuts by working with the county commission and the state legislature. But some cuts will be inevitable. We at Mecklenburg ACTS believe that as we consider next year's budget, we should focus on three key goals.

- Creating and maintaining a strong, stable corps of teachers at all schools. This will require consideration of many factors, including class size, that attract strong teachers to schools, enable them to be successful and encourage them to remain.
- Ensuring that all students have access to comparable educational opportunities, regardless of neighborhood or family income.
- Spreading the consequences of budget cuts fairly across the community.

Proposed actions need to be backed by clear and convincing reasoning that considers the circumstances of individual schools and uses data that is accurate, relevant and statistically significant.

In light of these priorities, we are concerned to see the board and staff turning first to cuts in programs that would disproportionately affect disadvantaged students – programs such as Bright Beginnings and Weighted Student Staffing.

When you face a crisis, you know who your friends are. A true friend shows up when the whole world has disappeared. What lessons have we taught our struggling youth by closing many of their schools? What lessons are we teaching them if we approach cuts to programs that work for them with greater speed and urgency than we do other reductions? How are they to trust us? Trust is in short supply these days. Now, and throughout this process, we urge both board and staff to think carefully before acting.

## **Supporting this Statement**

*Mecklenburg ACTS has developed this statement in hopes that its priorities can help bring our community through the painful school budget process. Because there is strength in numbers, Mecklenburg ACTS would like for other community groups, as well as for individuals, to express support for these priorities. The more of us there are, the louder our voice will be.*

*If your group is willing to support this statement of priorities, please sign below or e-mail us at: mecklenburgacts@gmail.com. Please include the full name of your group, and a contact name and number, so that we can follow up with you. Support for the statement will not be portrayed as support for Mecklenburg ACTS as a group, or for any of the group's other statements or actions.*

*If you would like to support this statement as an individual, please sign below, including your zip code, or e-mail us your name and zip code. If you are a leader in an organization, and feel comfortable identifying your position as part of your support, please*

**Mecklenburg ACTS (Mecklenburg Area Coming Together for Schools) is a grassroots coalition of parents and citizens working to build community commitment to equity and excellence in ALL CMS schools.**

Statement supported by:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---