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State budget cuts mean over 11,000 fewer staff in our schools, including 4,200 teachers

Report chronicles Virginia’s dramatic reduction in the staffing of K-12 schools during a period of rising student needs

RICHMOND, VA - Elementary, middle, and high schools in Virginia have 11,200 fewer positions than before the recession including 4,200 fewer teachers, 5,500 fewer support staff, and 1,500 fewer instructional staff after adjusting for enrollment. This according to a new report by The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis, an economic research and policy organization based in Richmond.

Meanwhile, the number of students with high needs has grown as the number of economically disadvantaged students rose 39 percent, students with limited English proficiency rose 33 percent, and homeless students rose 73 percent.

During the recession, state lawmakers chose to decrease support for Virginia’s schools by altering the state’s funding formula. After adjusting for inflation and enrollment, this change could reduce the state’s support for schools by over $1 billion during the next fiscal year. Though it's been years since the end of the recession, many of the changes made to the formula have remained in place. This has put an increasing burden of supporting schools on cash-strapped localities that have been forced to decrease staff.

“High-quality education is a cornerstone of building a Virginia where everyone who works hard is able to support their family and build a brighter future. This dramatic reduction in staffing threatens this goal,” says Michael Cassidy, president of The Commonwealth Institute.

The full report, Missing Class, is available online at www.thecommonwealthinstitute.org.

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The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis provides credible, independent, and accessible information and analyses of fiscal and economic issues with particular attention to the impacts on low- and moderate-income persons. Our products inform fiscal and budget policy debates and contribute to sound
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