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**Media Contact**

Patrick Getlein  
Communications Director  
patrick@thecommonwealthinstitute.org  
804-396-2051 x103  
www.thecommonwealthinstitute.org

January 6, 2016

## **Cuts to State Education Funding Cost Localities and Kids \$800 Million Per Year**

*New report shows where lawmakers shortchanged preK-12 education to balance the state budget*

Richmond, VA -- Cuts made by Virginia lawmakers since the recession have reduced state support for Virginia's schools by about \$800 million per year, according to a new report from The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis, an economic and policy research organization in Richmond.

The cuts stem from 12 different policy changes enacted by lawmakers, many made within the state's complex education funding formula. And all but one are still in place today.

They include capping the number of support staff the state will help pay for at levels below what schools need, eliminating support for certain equipment and travel expenses, and increasing the estimated lifespan of buses. These arbitrary changes caused a precipitous drop in state funding, according to the report, and undermine the intent of the formula lawmakers use to determine how much school funding the state should contribute to the shared cost of education.

"The changes made to the formula helped the state balance its budget during a time of financial strain, but do not reflect the realities facing Virginia's schools," says Chris Duncombe, policy analyst with the Institute and lead author on the report. "Now that the state's in a better financial position, it's time to fix the formula."

The report details the areas of cuts, the total cost in terms of lost funding for schools, and points to the consequences: fewer staff, larger class sizes, and deteriorating school facilities.

“These cuts jeopardize the ability of Virginia’s schools to provide a high-quality education, which the state is directed to ensure in the Virginia Constitution and which is necessary for Virginia to build a strong economy,” says Michael Cassidy, president of the Institute.

The full report is available online at [www.thecommonwealthinstitute.org](http://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 decisions that improve the well-being of individuals, communities and Virginia as a whole. Visit [www.thecommonwealthinstitute.org](http://www.thecommonwealthinstitute.org) for more information.