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### S.C. School Administrators Rally at the Statehouse

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**COLUMBIA, S.C.** -- School administrators from across the state rallied at the capital Wednesday to urge lawmakers to take steps to save education funding.

A budget proposal before the S.C. General Assembly would cut funding for schools by an additional 6 percent or \$85 million.

That would return state spending for schools to 1995 levels.

Superintendent of Education Jim Rex has said that hundreds more teachers could lose their jobs and class sizes would rise if the cuts continue.

"That's not good for South Carolina and definitely not good for the children of South Carolina," said Bruce Davis, President of the S.C. School Board Association.

Members of the [School Boards Association](#) and the [S.C. Association of School Administrators](#) say lawmakers need to act.

"I think there are some other opportunities for creating revenue rather than cutting. I think you're going to have to do both," said Dr. Zona Jefferson, with the S.C. Association of School Administrators.

"I understand the economy, but I also understand that there are significant opportunities for generating revenue that can support schools," she said.

Educators are calling on the legislature to increase the state's cigarette tax to the national average, eliminate caps on sales taxes and enforce [online sales tax collections](#).

"If you want a strong state, you're going to have to support public education. If you want our children to have bright futures, you're going to have to support public education," said Jefferson.

The two school associations have crafted a resolution that outlines their agenda and urges lawmakers to address school funding.

"It's more of a message to the legislators from the educational community, 'we'll support them, when they support public education,'" said Jefferson.

So far, 25 of the state's 85 school boards have endorsed the plan.

"We're not asking for all the funds, but we're asking for any revenue sources that will keep us from laying-off teachers," said Davis.

The superintendent for Hampton County's District 2 says his district is facing a \$2.5 million deficit.

"School district budgets are primarily personnel," he said, "when you have to make cuts, personnel is what you're going to windup cutting."

The district is one of many statewide that could be forced to layoff a number of teachers.

"If you're talking \$2.5 million, with teacher's salaries averaging about \$40,000, you just have to do the math,"

"That money is not there any more, so we don't have options now," Davis said.

Educators say lawmakers must act quickly to find revenue streams that can fund schools.

"We can not cut our way to a good educational system," said Jefferson.

"Our children only get one childhood (and) one opportunity to learn."



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