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## **Additional \$2.2 Million in Budget Cuts Approved for GCS**

*Board of Education continues to work toward finalizing the 2009-10 budget*

**Greensboro, N.C.** – The Guilford County Board of Education approved Thursday additional cuts to the 2009-10 budget totaling about \$2.2 million. Guilford County Schools (GCS) continues to assess its budget while awaiting the approval of a state budget by the General Assembly.

During Thursday's meeting, the board approved to make the budget cuts by amending five programs and services. Changes will be made to Home Field Advantage, the employee dental insurance benefit, supplies and materials for athletics, bus stops for some middle and high school students and standby bus driver positions.

These programs and services will be impacted in the following ways:

- Home Field Advantage – This program allows highly mobile students to remain at the same school even if they move to a different attendance zone. Previously, bus transportation was provided to these students. Now, transportation will only be provided during the school year in which the move occurs. Students can continue to attend the school in subsequent years if parents or guardians provide transportation. This change saves \$416,877.
- Employee dental insurance benefit – Previously, GCS paid \$10.75 per month toward employee dental insurance under one of two plans. The change will require employees to pay the full cost for participation in either plan. The annual savings would be \$1,358,000. Since this benefit is already being paid for the fiscal year, the actual savings may be closer to \$1.1 million.
- Supplies and materials for athletics – Funding for athletic supplies and materials will be decreased by 15 percent at middle and high schools. Supplements will be reduced to a base of 80 percent instead of 85 percent. This change saves \$123,667.
- Consolidation of bus stops – The Transportation Department will consolidate some bus stops to reduce circling in neighborhoods. The primary impact is on high school routes and a few middle school routes. Savings will equal approximately \$250,000.
- Standby bus driver positions – Ten standby bus driver positions will be eliminated. The drivers in these positions will be placed in other vacant bus driver positions. This change equals \$300,000 in savings.

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Since some of these programs have implications for the start of school on Aug. 25, GCS is currently working to put the changes into place. The district will be communicating with the parents and guardians of impacted students, employees and schools within the next two weeks.

The board also voted to remove two items from consideration for cuts. A further consolidation of bus stops affecting elementary students and the Smith High International Baccalaureate program will not be considered for budget cuts in the 2009-10 school year.

At past board meetings, district staff members have recommended a total of approximately \$36.8 million in cuts and redirections divided into three tiers. Tier 1, about \$12.6 million, consists of the cuts and redirections included in the superintendent's proposed budget and the board's request to the Guilford County Board of Commissioners in May. Tier 2 totals approximately \$12.9 million and Tier 3 totals approximately \$11.3 million. The items in the second and third tiers are being considered by the board now as the state budget outlook becomes clearer. The five cuts approved Thursday are in Tier 2.

Other Tier 2 and 3 items were recommended for a board vote due to the time sensitive nature of the decisions, but the board took no action. A vote was not taken on the terms of employment for lead bus drivers, the extended year programs at Brooks Global Studies and Johnson Street Global Studies, or the implementation of a three-tier bus schedule.

**About Guilford County Schools**

*Guilford County Schools is the third largest school district in North Carolina serving more than 71,000 students at 120 schools. With approximately 10,000 employees, the district's mission is to graduate responsible citizens who are prepared to succeed in higher education or the career of their choice.*

*Guilford County Schools is a national leader in providing specialized schools and instructional programs designed to meet the educational needs of a culturally diverse citizenship. For more information, visit the district's Web site at [www.gcsnc.com](http://www.gcsnc.com).*