



Survey Confirms Statewide School Cuts

Seventy percent of schools cut budgets for 2012-2013 school year

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By German Lopez

[A survey](#) released April 29 found Ohio schools are making cutbacks in response to budget cuts previously approved by Republican Gov. John Kasich and the Republican-controlled Ohio legislature.

The 15-question survey from left-leaning Policy Matters Ohio, which received responses from 42 percent of the state's K-12 school districts in 82 counties, found 70 percent of Ohio schools made cuts for the ongoing 2012-2013 school year, 82 percent cut positions, 84 percent reduced or froze compensation and 62 percent expect budget shortfalls next year if the state doesn't increase funding.

"Long-term investment in education is the best way to build opportunity for Ohioans," said Piet van Lier, education researcher at Policy Matters Ohio, in a statement. "Instead, Ohio's cuts to school funding have forced schools to get rid of staff, reduce pay, cut materials and increase class sizes."

The survey found the cuts have led to a reduction in education quality, with 43 percent of Ohio schools reporting larger class sizes, 23 percent reporting less course options, 57 percent cutting materials, supplies, textbooks or equipment for the 2012-2013 school year and 22 percent reducing extracurricular activities or introducing pay-to-play for them.

Policy Matters and Innovation Ohio, another left-leaning think tank, previously found Kasich's 2012-2013 budget slashed education funding by [\\$1.8 billion](#).

In his latest budget proposal, Kasich proposed increasing education funding, although in a way that disproportionately benefited wealthier school districts (["Smoke and Mirrors,"](#) issue of Feb. Since then, the Ohio House passed its own budget bill that rejects Kasich's proposal and increases overall school funding in a more equitable way.

But Policy Matters says the increases aren't enough. Its analysis found school funding is failing to keep up with inflation, with 2015 funding projected to fall \$1.2 billion short of what funding would have looked like if it had kept up with 2006's inflation-adjusted levels.

"Neither Gov. Kasich nor the Ohio House have adequately addressed the needs of Ohio's schools in their budget proposals," van Lier said in a statement. "The Senate must now lead the way in crafting a stronger, more predictable funding system for the next two years and beyond."

Cincinnati Public Schools said state funding cuts were one reason the school district needed Cincinnati voters to approve a school levy in 2012 (“[Battered But Not Broken](#),” issue of Oct. 3). The levy, known as Issue 42, passed in the November election.

Innovation Ohio [previously found](#) Kasich’s budget cuts have led to levies all around the state, effectively increasing local taxes by \$1.3 billion since May 2011.

“By cutting taxes primarily for the wealthy at the state level, Gov. Kasich and the Republican-controlled legislature have merely pushed the need for tax increases down to the local level,” said Janetta King, president of Innovation Ohio, in a statement.

Kasich spokesperson Rob Nichols previously told *CityBeat* that the cuts were necessary to balance the budget, as required by state law. “The reality is we walked into an \$8 billion budget deficit,” he said. “We had to fix that.”

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