

Withdrawal of funding, support from county threatens well being of Student Health Center

As local health-system foundations announce the end of their support for health care in schools, the Student Health Center anxiously seeks alternate sources of support.

By Shimere Etheridge
Staff Writer

Six Guilford County Schools will be losing funding from a seven-year-old pilot program to serve poor students and at-risk teens. Two health-system foundations have underwritten the program but are pulling their funding from Andrews, Grimsley, and Smith high schools and Allen, Jackson, and Penn-Griffin middle schools.

Beginning in 1998, the Moses Cone-Wesley Long and the High Point Regional Health System foundations began to support the Guilford School Health Alliance by paying for nurses and social workers or licensed counselors in the centers. Services offered at the health center include: offering treatment for acute illnesses and injuries, monitoring chronic illnesses such as diabetes and asthma, offering mental health as well as educational counseling,



Forgay Photo

Student Health Center nurse Carolyn Gordon packs up old files as the Center prepares to close its doors before next school year.

connecting students to primary care physicians, and making referrals to doctors and long-term counseling. Most services are provided free of charge however medical visits may be billed to insurance or medicaid. These services are provided to any student who registers with the

program, and about half of Grimsley's students are registered with the health center.

However, the original three-year pilot program from 1998 was extended, and schools have been dropped or added to the program over the years. Services were cut to two days

per week at Smith after several employees resigned there. Now, Grimsley's Student Health Center will be closing its doors upon completion of the 2005 school year.

"The foundation plans to bring the Guilford School Health Alliance to a close at

the end of this school year," said Robert Newton, president of the Moses Cone-Wesley Long Community Health Foundation.

"To continue operating," said Newton, "the program

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Easley's budget adds early education, cuts extras

The Governor's recent budget proposal favors early education and cuts support for existing programs, especially in art and vocational areas.

By Chris Izzard
Reporter

Governor Mike Easley's budget plan, announced on March 31, is geared toward helping students excel in school. The budget cuts are also meant to help increase enrollment percentages in public universities, colleges, and technical institutions. In order

to attain this goal, various departments outside of education have sacrificed funds to such programs as the arts.

"The art program here at UNCG. I'd hate to see some of the artwork or various classes not being offered because the state cut back on spending for the department," said UNCG sophomore Juanita Goldberg.

Easley's proposal is meant to initiate two new educational programs: "More at Four," which will stimulate the minds of children prior to kindergarten, and "Learn and Earn," a new opportunity for high school students to get an

associate degree from a community college by attending high school for a fifth year. A drawback of the budget cuts is found in the state's Department of the Arts, which has seen a 42% increase in cuts since Easley took office. As a result of this, many of the students enrolled in art programs at various universities are rallying during the period in which a council of legislators will make a final decision about the budget proposal.

"Art is something that is universal. Everyone understands it when they see it. If art starts to move or disappear in places

around the state, people are going to ask questions," said freshman David Stables.

Although the plan has not yet been approved, a council will decide on where the increases will go. One option under consideration is a 1% increase in cigarette tax, which would cause a gain of \$40 million each year. Laying off teachers, another option, would widen the ratio of teachers per student even more. Both alternatives have lasting effects, not only on the students, but also on the members of the educational workforce.

"My goal after college is to become an art teacher here in the state. But if there are going to be job cuts in schools, then it's really not encouraging anyone to work in this field," said Goldberg.

The "More at Four" program was proposed so that children at the age of four could begin elementary school early and possibly learn at a faster pace. Easley hopes that the plan will stimulate the minds of children who live in at-risk neighborhoods so that they will improve in higher levels

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