



# AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

## Report of Findings Looking Back, Looking Forward: How the Economic Downturn Continues to Impact School Districts

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## Abstract

This study is the fourth in a series of studies conducted by the American Association of School Administrators on the impact of the economic downturn on schools.

AASA launched the series in fall 2008 in response to state budget shortfalls, federal buy-outs and interventions, and a series of additional events characterizing a slowing, stagnant economy. As the economic situation worsened, AASA continued to monitor its impact on schools through a series of surveys of school administrators nationwide.

The previous studies in the AASA Economic Impact Study series include (see the full studies at [www.aasa.org/policy/econstudies](http://www.aasa.org/policy/econstudies)):

- “AASA Impact of the Economic Downturn on School Jobs Snapshot Survey” (released Jan. 16, 2009)
- “AASA Opportunity for Federal Education Funding Survey” (released Dec. 15, 2008)
- “AASA Study of the Impact of the Economic Downturn on Schools” (released Nov. 12, 2008)

Collectively, the findings of the AASA Economic Impact Study series demonstrate that school districts in every part of the country are subject to the realities of the economic downturn. While this benchmark data cannot predict a trend, it is difficult to deny that the financial crisis is increasingly threatening the progress schools have obtained and the stability they have enjoyed in the past.

This latest study, "Looking Back, Looking Forward: How the Economic Downturn Continues to Impact School Districts," is based on a study of school administrators conducted in February and March 2009. This survey asked many of the same questions as the “AASA Study of the Impact of the Economic Downturn on Schools,” conducted in October 2008. Therefore, it is possible to compare and contrast key findings from the two studies.

In the new study, many responders reported that the adjustments made to the 2008-09 school year budget were moderate when compared to the cuts school administrators are being forced to make for the 2009-10 school year budget. Responses to the October 2008 survey reflected a general sense of pragmatism among school administrators and an acceptance of the need to tighten budgets and implement moderate changes. Initial cuts were made to budget items that minimized direct impact on student learning and achievement. In contrast, the results from the new study show a marked increase in cuts to areas that more directly impact student achievement, including increasing class size, reducing academic offerings and eliminating teaching positions.

### School Funding Levels

Both this study and that conducted six months earlier asked administrators whether American school districts are adequately funded. In a word, the findings reveal that matters are getting worse.

- In the new study, 75 percent of respondents described their districts as “inadequately funded,” compared to 67 percent from the October 2008 study.(Q1)

The day-to-day cash management and fund capital development of a school district are challenging in the best of times. In the October 2008 study, school administrators reported that they expected to face challenges raising funds and selling bonds. The new study indicates that districts' fiscal problems have intensified after only six months:

- Twenty-one percent of respondents indicated they were facing short-term borrowing to meet payroll and accounts payable. While it is not unusual for districts to maintain a line a credit for managing cash, this is clearly a significant percentage.
- Only two percent of respondents reported facing non-performance on bond repayment schedules and only one percent were threatened with insolvency.

### **Use of Stimulus Funds**

The new study was completed just after the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 became law. As such, AASA was able to ask school administrators to indicate and rank eligible projects for the stimulus funding they would be receiving. Illustrating that school administrators recognize the importance of targeted, short-term investments with the greatest chance of long-term impact, survey responders seemed to focus their priorities on staff and resource development. When asked which projects their districts would address with stimulus funding: (Q9)

- The top five uses labeled "high priority" were classroom technology (57 percent), school modernization/repair (54 percent), safety/security measures (40 percent), connectivity (39 percent) and professional development (37 percent).
- The top five uses labeled "priority" were classroom equipment/supplies (48 percent), software (48 percent), supportive technology for students with needs (48 percent), professional development (47 percent) and textbooks (44 percent).
- The top five uses labeled "low priority" were health equipment (67 percent), start a new career/technical program (66 percent), art education equipment/supplies (65 percent), physical education equipment/supplies (64 percent) and music education equipment/supplies (57 percent).

Education represents a large share of states' general fund budgets. With state deficits expected to total more than \$350 billion over the next two years, it will be very difficult for states to avoid damaging cuts to education, cuts that will likely deepen as the recession continues. While the \$100 billion included for education in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will help states backfill some of their budget cuts, it is unlikely that it will be enough to allow states and schools to completely reverse the cuts. (*Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*) While some of the stimulus funds could help school districts acquire new programs, services and equipment, many of the purchases may simply represent the return of resources and capacities the schools had cut in the early stages of the recession and precipitous reductions in local and state funding to school districts.

### **Budget Cuts: Impact on Students**

Earlier AASA studies indicated that while school districts felt the impact of the economic downturn in fall 2008, they were able to minimize significant cuts in the 2008-09 school year that directly impacted student learning. In contrast, the new study reveals that schools are planning significant cuts in 2009-10. While budgets for 2008-09 were passed before the current economic crisis, 2009-10 budgets were developed in the midst of significant state budget shortfalls. As a result, the new study illustrates that the financial picture is less optimistic for the 2009-10 school year:

- The percentage of schools increasing class size more than tripled from 13 percent in 2008-09 to 44 percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools laying off personnel quadrupled from 11 percent in 2008-09 to 44 percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools cutting academic programs (such as academic intervention and Saturday classes) more than tripled from seven percent in 2008-09 to 22 percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools deferring maintenance increased from 21 percent in 2008-09 to 33 percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools cutting extracurricular activities almost tripled from 10 percent in 2008-09 to 28 percent in 2009-10.

The continued economic downturn threatens gains in student achievement, progress in narrowing the achievement gap and the capacity of schools to deliver essential services. Administrators reported that the economic downturn has negatively affected their schools' capacity to: (Q15)

- Improve student achievement: 76 percent responded somewhat/a great deal
- Close achievement gaps: 75 percent responded somewhat/a great deal
- Maintain focus on student learning/instructional improvement: 75 percent responded somewhat/a great deal
- Address the learning needs of all students: 73 percent responded somewhat/a great deal
- Meet/exceed state/federal levels: 76 percent responded somewhat/a great deal

### **Budget Cuts: Impact on Personnel and Community**

The impact of budget cuts at school is not limited to students. For many communities across the nation, schools are a major employer and cost-saving measures have a direct impact on the community. While the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 is designed to help stem the tide of school layoffs, it appears the stimulus funds won't be enough to prevent all proposed layoff due to the severity of the economic downturn and state budget shortfalls.

- Seventy-two percent of respondents said their district had to eliminate positions in the 2009-10 school year budget.
- Survey responders identified 17,597 jobs that are slated for elimination in the 2009-10 school year. This represents a small portion of the 574,000 jobs that researchers have predicted for elimination in FY09, FY10 and FY11.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Roza, M. (2009). "Schools in Crisis: Making Ends Meet: Projections of State Budget Shortfalls On K-12 Public Education Spending and Job Loss." Seattle, WA: The Center on Reinventing Public Education, University of Washington Bothell. *Footnote continues on next page.*

Administrators reported that the economic downturn has directly impacted schools' capacity to:

- Maintain employment levels (support staff): 83 percent responded somewhat/a great deal
- Provide professional development for administrators: 79 percent responded somewhat/a great deal
- Maintain employment levels (teachers): 77 percent responded somewhat/a great deal
- Maintain employment levels (administrative): 75 percent responded somewhat/a great deal
- Provide professional development for teachers: 75 percent responded somewhat/a great deal
- Recruit/retain qualified staff: 66 percent responded somewhat/a great deal

Overall, the new study reveals the impact of the economic downturn on schools has worsened over the past six months. Schools across the nation are planning significant cuts in their 2009-10 school year budgets, including cuts to areas that directly impact student achievement. When considered in total, the economic downturn has exacted a heavy toll on communities, families, and learning.

At the time of print, the stimulus dollars had yet to reach the state and local level, meaning that the impact of the federal stimulus funds on education remains to be seen. As schools begin receiving the funds, federal, state and local leaders must work to maximize both the flow and flexibility of funds to schools in order to help protect students and schools from program and staffing cuts and ensure schools have the resources they need to increase student achievement, close the achievement gap and fuel economic recovery and growth.

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Survey respondents identified 17,597 jobs slated for elimination in the 2009-10 school year. To scale this survey response to a national level over the duration of the stimulus funds, we refer to research from the Center on Reinventing Public Education (footnote) Roza writes, "...School districts may need to eliminate just over 9 percent of total jobs in K-12 education. In raw numbers, the implication is that 574,277 jobs would be eliminated during the three school years." Breaking the job cuts down to annual levels, Roza estimates 133,467 jobs would be eliminated in FY09, with an additional 191,630 in FY10 and 249,180 in FY11. These numbers illustrate the magnitude of the impact the economic downturn is having on both public education spending and the corresponding job loss.

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## Report of Findings

### Introduction

The report of findings for this study take on greater meaning when viewed in the context of the studies that have preceded it.

When it became apparent in 2008 that an economic downturn was upon us, the leadership of AASA determined that creating benchmarks documenting the impact of that downturn on schools was essential to influencing the national policy agenda. In October 2008, AASA undertook a nationwide study (McCord, Ellerson 2008) of school administrators to determine what impact the change in economic conditions had upon the decisions school leaders faced. Some 836 administrators responded to the “AASA Study of the Impact of the Economic Downturn on Schools” found that belt-tightening measures were underway in districts nationwide in response to shrinking budgets. It also suggested the economic downturn could threaten gains in student achievement and progress in narrowing the achievement gap, which schools have fought so hard to attain, as well as the capacity of schools to deliver essential services.

To give the data additional dimension, AASA commissioned two additional studies of members. In December 2008, nearly 800 administrators provided information regarding their preparedness to identify important projects that could be considered under the yet-to-be enacted stimulus package. The “AASA Opportunity for Federal Education Funding Survey” found America’s public schools had a list of ready-to-go construction and renovation projects that, with an infusion of federal economic stimulus funds, would work to both stimulate a stagnating economy and improve the educational environment for children. Responders identified \$6.52 billion in ready-to-go new construction projects and \$4.49 billion in ready-to-go renovation and repair projects for public schools.

A study of more than 250 administrators conducted in January 2009 was designed to provide more detail on potential school-related job losses produced by the economic turndown. The “AASA Impact of the Economic Downturn on School Jobs Snapshot Survey” found that public school districts across the nation planned to eliminate jobs in the 2009-10 school year in response to the economic downturn, including classroom instructors in all subject areas. Seventy-two percent of school leaders surveyed said their districts planned to eliminate jobs in the 2009-10 school year, suggesting that schools and students faced the stark reality of fewer academic instructors, support staff and student services staff in the 2009-10 school year.

The study reported herein documents the changes in districts’ economic situation since AASA conducted the first Economic Impact Survey in October 2008, while adding aspects related to the anticipated impact of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 signed into law by President Obama in February 2009. It is important to understand that the October 2008 “AASA Study of the Impact of the Economic Downturn on Schools” looked at the 2008-09 school year, while the current study asked administrators to report on how their planning for the 2008-09 and 2009-10 school years have been impacted.

Documenting the impact of the economic downturn on American schools is essential to informing the policy agenda undertaken by AASA and its members. The findings are presented in seven major sections:

- Part I: Snapshot of the Current Economic Situation
- Part II: Feeling the Impact
- Part III: Using Funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009
- Part IV: The Economic Downturn and School Employment
- Part V: Impact on School Community, Families and Learning
- Part VI: Demographics
- Part VII: Policy Threats, Implications and Conclusion

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## **Methodology**

As part of a series of studies examining the impact of the economic downturn on America's schools, AASA launched "Looking Back, Looking Forward: How the Economic Downturn Continues to Impact School Districts" at AASA's National Conference on Education, Feb. 19-21, 2009. The online survey (Appendix A) was distributed to school administrators via an e-mail invitation and a link on the AASA homepage. While the sample was not random or scientific, school administrators receiving and completing the survey represented all regions of the country and districts and communities of all types and sizes. A total of 859 school administrators from 48 different states completed the survey over a three-week period in February and March 2009. Part VI of this report provides additional details on the demographics of the respondents.



## Part I: Snapshot of the Current Economic Situation

Both this study and the “AASA Study of the Impact of the Economic Downturn on Schools” conducted six months earlier asked administrators whether American school districts are adequately funded.

Table 1, below, provides an overview snapshot of the economic situation in America’s public schools, and compares the responses from both studies. In the new study, 75 percent of survey responders described their schools’ economic situation as “inadequately funded,” up from 67 percent in October 2008. (Q1) *See Table 1.*

**Table 1 – District Economic Situation**

	Total	Inadequately Funded		Adequately Funded		Surplus	
	Count	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
2008	835	560	67.1%	254	30.4%	21	2.5%
<b>2009</b>	<b>856</b>	<b>644</b>	<b>75.2%</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>23.2%</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1.5%</b>

Sixty-three percent of the 2009 respondents describe their districts as financially independent. This is a 10 percent drop from the fall 2008 levels, and it suggests an interesting implication. It appears that while more districts are reporting their funding to be inadequate, a full 10 percent more of the respondents come from fiscally dependent districts. One can reasonably assume that the competing interests facing fiscally dependent districts have been intensified by the economic downturn. (Q2)

When responses to the adequacy of funding were disaggregated by rural, suburban and urban designation of district, no district type was found to be exempt from the worsening conditions. Table 2, below, compares the economic situation by community type and against the 2008 study results. The percentage of rural schools describing their economic situation as “inadequately funded” grew from 69.5 percent in 2008 to 77.5 percent in 2009. Similarly, both suburban and urban school districts reported an increase, from 59.9 percent to 67.2 percent and from 74.4 percent to 87.7 percent, respectively. *See Table 2.*

**Table 2 – District Economic Situation, by District Type**

	Total		Inadequately Funded		Adequately Funded		Surplus	
	Count	Percent Across All	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
2008								
<b>2009</b>								
<b>Rural</b>	482	58.1%	335	69.5%	137	28.4%	10	2.1%
	<b>521</b>	<b>61.6%</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>77.5%</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>20.9%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
<b>Suburban</b>	262	31.6%	157	59.9%	95	36.3%	10	3.8%
	<b>268</b>	<b>31.6%</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>67.2%</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>31.3%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
<b>Urban</b>	86	10.4%	64	74.4%	22	25.6%	0	0.0%
	<b>57</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>87.7%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.8%</b>

When the question of adequacy was observed from the standpoint of district size distribution, all districts were impacted with worsening conditions and some suggestion exists that the intermediate-size districts have recently begun to feel a greater impact. *See Table 3.*

- The percentage of schools describing their economic situation as “inadequately funded” increased for schools of all sizes. The one exception, school districts with an enrollment of 50,000 – 99,999 students, showed a very slight decrease in the percentage of schools describing their economic situation as inadequate, falling from 90.9 percent to 90.0percent—a change of less than one percent.

**Table 3 – District Economic Situation, by Student Enrollment**

2008 2009	Total		Inadequately Funded		Adequately Funded		Surplus	
	Count	Percent Across All	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
1 – 999	211 <b>277</b>	25.6% <b>32.9%</b>	146 <b>206</b>	69.2% <b>74.5%</b>	62 <b>69</b>	29.4% <b>24.9%</b>	3 <b>2</b>	1.4% <b>0.7%</b>
1,000 - 2,999	286 <b>267</b>	34.7% <b>31.6%</b>	183 <b>200</b>	64.0% <b>74.9%</b>	93 <b>62</b>	32.5% <b>23.2%</b>	10 <b>5</b>	3.5% <b>1.8%</b>
3,000 - 4,999	111 <b>115</b>	13.5% <b>13.6%</b>	65 <b>82</b>	58.6% <b>71.1%</b>	41 <b>31</b>	36.9% <b>27.0%</b>	5 <b>2</b>	4.5% <b>1.7%</b>
5,000 - 9,999	110 <b>100</b>	13.3% <b>11.8%</b>	73 <b>74</b>	66.4% <b>74.0%</b>	36 <b>22</b>	32.7% <b>22.0%</b>	1 <b>4</b>	0.9% <b>4%</b>
10,000 - 24,999	63 <b>58</b>	7.6% <b>6.9%</b>	47 <b>47</b>	74.6% <b>81.0%</b>	15 <b>11</b>	23.8% <b>19.0</b>	1 <b>0</b>	1.6% <b>0.0%</b>
25,000 - 49,999	27 <b>16</b>	3.3% <b>1.9%</b>	23 <b>13</b>	85.2% <b>81.3%</b>	4 <b>3</b>	14.8% <b>18.8%</b>	0 <b>0</b>	0.0% <b>0.0%</b>
50,000 - 99,999	11 <b>10</b>	1.3% <b>1.2%</b>	10 <b>9</b>	90.9% <b>90.0%</b>	1 <b>1</b>	9.1% <b>10.0%</b>	0 <b>0</b>	0.0% <b>0.0%</b>
100,000 or More	5 <b>2</b>	0.6% <b>0.2%</b>	4 <b>2</b>	80.0% <b>100.0%</b>	0 <b>0</b>	0.0% <b>0.0%</b>	1 <b>0</b>	20.0% <b>0.0%</b>

The impact of the economic downturn is apparent at the national, state and local levels. In an effort to examine the economic impact at a regional level, Table 4, on the next page, reports how schools in various regions of the country describe their economic situation. While all of the regions reported an increase in the percentage of schools describing their economic situation as inadequately funded, the greatest increase was in Regions 6 and 7, on the East Coast. *See Table 4.*

- Region 2 (Southwest) reported only a one percent increase in the number of schools districts describing their economic situation as “inadequately funded,” growing from 76.2 percent in 2008 to 77.2 percent in 2009.
- Regions 6 and 7 (East Coast and Mid-Atlantic) reported the greatest increase. Region 6 grew more than 12 percent, from 52.6 percent in 2008 to 64.9 percent in 2009. Region 7 grew more than 30 percent, from 38.5 percent in 2008 to 69.3 percent in 2009.

**Table 4 – District Economic Situation, by Region**

2008 2009	Total		Inadequate		Adequate		Surplus	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Region 1	92 <b>91</b>	11.1% <b>10.8%</b>	76 <b>78</b>	82.6% <b>85.7%</b>	13 <b>13</b>	14.1% <b>14.3%</b>	3 <b>0</b>	3.3% <b>0.0%</b>
Region 2	84 <b>123</b>	10.1% <b>14.6%</b>	64 <b>95</b>	76.2% <b>77.2%</b>	17 <b>26</b>	20.2% <b>21.1%</b>	3 <b>2</b>	3.6% <b>1.6%</b>
Region 3	205 <b>207</b>	24.7% <b>24.6%</b>	154 <b>165</b>	75.1% <b>79.7%</b>	47 <b>38</b>	22.9% <b>18.4%</b>	4 <b>4</b>	2.0% <b>1.9%</b>
Region 4	154 <b>121</b>	18.5% <b>14.4%</b>	100 <b>82</b>	64.9% <b>67.8%</b>	52 <b>38</b>	33.8% <b>31.4%</b>	2 <b>1</b>	1.3% <b>0.8%</b>
Region 5	97 <b>58</b>	11.7% <b>6.9%</b>	73 <b>47</b>	75.3% <b>81.0%</b>	23 <b>10</b>	23.7% <b>17.2%</b>	1 <b>1</b>	1.0% <b>1.7%</b>
Region 6	95 <b>77</b>	11.4% <b>9.2%</b>	50 <b>50</b>	52.6% <b>64.9%</b>	41 <b>26</b>	43.2% <b>33.8%</b>	4 <b>1</b>	4.2% <b>1.3%</b>
Region 7	104 <b>163</b>	12.5% <b>19.4%</b>	40 <b>113</b>	38.5% <b>69.3%</b>	60 <b>46</b>	57.7% <b>28.2%</b>	4 <b>4</b>	3.8% <b>2.5%</b>

**Table 4a – AASA Regional State Roster**

Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7
AK	AR	IA	IL	AL	DE	ME
AZ	CO	MI	IN	FL	MD	MA
CA	KS	MN	KY	GA	NJ	NH
HI	NM	NE	MO	LA	PA	NY
ID	OK	ND	OH	MS	WV	RI
MT	TX	SD		NC		VT
NV	UT	WI		SC		CT
OR				TN		
WA				VA		
WY						

The day-to-day cash management and fund capital development of a school district are challenging in the best of times. In the October 2008 study, school administrators reported that they expected to face challenges raising funds and selling bonds. The new study indicates that districts’ fiscal problems have intensified after only six months:

- Twenty-one percent of respondents indicated they were facing short-term borrowing to meet payroll and accounts payable. While it is not unusual for districts to maintain a line a credit for managing cash, this is clearly a significant percentage.
- Only two percent of respondents reported facing non-performance on bond repayment schedules and one percent were threatened with insolvency.

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## Part II: Feeling the Impact

While we have documented that the impact of the economic downturn is worsening, defining how that impact is felt is an important element of this and previous related studies conducted by AASA. All data in this section was collected in the 2009 study. While the October 2008 study collected similar data, the 2009 study instrument collected the 2008-09 and 2009-10 school year information at the same time in an effort to make the information as current as possible. Responders were asked to indicate if they had considered and implemented, considered and delayed implementation, considered and rejected, or never considered each option.

**Buildings and Facilities Related Items:** Earlier AASA studies indicated that building and facility related expenses were a primary target of school budget cuts. The new study indicates that districts may have tightened as much as they can: (Q6)

- The percentage of schools deferring maintenance increased from 21 percent in 2008-09 to 33 percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools adjusting thermostats for less heating and cooling in buildings decreased from 46 percent in 2008-09 to 25 percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools closing/consolidating schools rose from five percent in 2008-09 to eight percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools delaying a capital debt (bond) program increased from eight percent in 2008-09 to 11 percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools reducing custodial services rose from 16 percent in 2008-09 to 22 percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools outsourcing custodial/maintenance work dropped from six percent in 2008-09 to four percent in 2009-10.

**Curriculum Related Actions:** Earlier AASA studies indicated that while school districts felt the impact of the economic downturn in fall 2008, they were able to minimize cuts that directly impacted student learning. Looking forward to the 2009-10 school year, the outlook is not as optimistic: (Q7)

- The percentage of schools increasing class size more than tripled from 13 percent in 2008-09 to 44 percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools eliminating/delaying instructional improvement strategies nearly tripled from 11 percent in 2008-09 to 32 percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools cutting non-academic programs (such as after school and Saturday enrichment programs) tripled from nine percent in 2008-09 to 27 percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools cutting academic programs (such as academic intervention and Saturday classes) more than tripled from seven percent in 2008-09 to 22 percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools strengthening identification/screening of non-resident students fell from 17 percent in 2008-09 to 14 percent on 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools having to reduce elective courses not required for graduation almost quadrupled, from seven percent in 2008-09 to 27 percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools deferring textbook purchases more than doubled, from 16 percent in 2008-09 to 34 percent in 2009-10.

- The percentage of schools reducing high-cost course offerings (e.g., occupational education classes) more than tripled, from five percent in 2008-09 to 17 percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools reducing instructional materials almost doubled, from 19 percent in 2008-09 to 37 percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools eliminating field trips grew from 19 percent in 2008-09 to 24 percent in 2009-10.

**Operations Related Actions:** Operations-related actions were one of the first places school administrators looked to save money as the economy began to stumble. As a result, the expansion of cuts to operations-related actions is not as large as other areas, such as buildings/facilities and curriculum related actions: (Q8)

- The percentage of schools reducing operations to a four-day work week (during the summer) fell from 14 percent in 2008-09 to nine percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools reducing operations to a four-day week during the school year fell from three percent in 2008-09 to two percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools cutting bus transportation routes and availability rose from 14 percent on 2008-09 to 23 percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools finding new transportation efficiencies (tiered pick-ups) rose from 18 percent in 2008-09 to 23 percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools cutting extracurricular activities almost tripled from 10 percent in 2008-09 to 28 percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools deferring technology purchases doubled from 16 percent in 2008-09 to 32 percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools reducing consumable supplies grew from 25 percent in 2008-09 to 42 percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools eliminating non-essential travel grew from 34 percent in 2008-09 to 42 percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools joining bulk purchasing groups or co-ops fell from 52 percent in 2008-09 to 24 percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools reducing collaborative planning time within the school day rose from six percent in 2008-09 to 13 percent in 2009-10.

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### **Part III: Using Funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009**

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 includes roughly \$100 billion for America's public schools. Money will flow to the schools through a number of separately designated programs. Respondents were asked to indicate their priority for the use of the stimulus funds in their districts.

Illustrating that school administrators recognize the importance of targeted, short-term investments with the greatest chance of long-term impact, survey responders seemed to focus their priorities on staff and resource development. When asked which projects their districts would address with stimulus funding:

- The top five uses labeled "high priority" were classroom technology (57 percent), school modernization/repair (54 percent), safety/security measures (40 percent), connectivity (39 percent) and professional development (37 percent).
- The top five uses labeled "priority" were classroom equipment/supplies (48 percent), software (48 percent), supportive technology for students with needs (48 percent), professional development (47 percent) and textbooks (44 percent).
- The top five uses labeled "low priority" were health equipment (67 percent), start a new career/technical program (66 percent), art education equipment/supplies (65 percent), physical education equipment/supplies (64 percent) and music education equipment/supplies (57 percent).

While some of the stimulus funds may help school districts acquire new programs, services and equipment, it must be noted that many of the purchases may simply represent the return of resources and capacities the schools had cut in the early stages of the recession.

The stimulus funds are a welcome resource for public schools and hold a promise of reinvesting in schools and the communities in which they serve an important economic role. It should be noted, however, that the actual allocation may well exceed the sum net gain at the local level, given ongoing state and local education funding setbacks.

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## Part IV: The Economic Downturn and School Employment

The implications on school employment produced by the economic downturn promise to have a long-lasting impact on American school districts. All data in this section was collected in the 2009 study. While the October 2008 study collected similar data, the 2009 study instrument collected the 2008-09 and 2009-10 school year information at the same time in an effort to make the information as current as possible. Responders were asked to indicate if they had considered and implemented, considered and delayed implementation, considered and rejected, or never considered each option.

**Personnel-Related Actions:** Earlier AASA studies indicated that while school districts felt the impact of the economic downturn in fall 2008, they were able to minimize cuts that directly impacted student learning, including the elimination of academic instruction positions. The economic picture for the 2009-10 school year is less optimistic: (Q5)

- The percentage of schools implementing a personnel furlough more than tripled from five percent in the 2008-09 school year to 17 percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools laying off personnel quadrupled from 11 percent in 2008-09 to 44 percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools freezing outside professional service contracts tripled from 10 percent in 2008-09 to 30 percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools reducing non-teaching professional support personnel tripled from 15 percent in 2008-09 to 45 percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools reducing outside staff development consultants more than doubled from 19 percent in 2008-09 to 39 percent in 2009-10.
- The percentage of schools reducing staff-level hiring more than doubled from 22 percent in 2008-09 to 49 percent in 2009-10.
- Survey responders identified 17,597 jobs that are slated for elimination in the 2009-10 school year.<sup>1</sup> (Q11, Q12) Some 49.5 percent of the job eliminations would be through direct staff cuts; 17.8 percent could come from attrition, 8.9 percent would come from declining enrollment, and 23.8 percent would come for "other" reasons. (Q13).

AASA examined how deep the job cuts are for public schools in both this survey (Q13, Q14) and in the "AASA Impact of the Economic Downturn on School Jobs" (January 2009). When asked to identify the number of expected job cuts, how the cuts are being made, and the types of jobs being cut for the 2009-10 school year, the "AASA Impact of the Economic Downturn on School Jobs" found:

- Collectively, teaching positions represented 38 percent of the jobs to be cut. Seventeen percent of the positions to be eliminated were teaching positions in the areas of mathematics, science, social studies and English. An additional 21 percent of the positions slated to be cut were teaching positions in foreign language, special education, art, music and physical education positions.

- Student services staff positions (librarians, nurses, maintenance, cafeteria and transportation) represented 17 percent of expected cuts. Responders reported that 33 percent of the positions to be eliminated were support staff (teacher aides/assistants, secretaries and central office/administrative positions). More than 60 percent (61 percent) of the positions slated to be cut were direct staff cuts. Attrition accounted for 25 percent of the projected job cuts.

The new study paints a similar picture. When asked to identify the number of expected cuts, how the cuts are being made, and the types of jobs being cut for the 2009-10 school year, the newest study results are as follows:

- Collectively, teaching positions represented 37.8 percent of the jobs to be cut. Results indicated that 18.8 percent of the positions to be eliminated were teaching positions in the areas of mathematics, science, social studies and English. An additional 18.9 percent of the positions slated to be cut were teaching positions in foreign language, special education, art, music and physical education positions.
- Student services staff positions (librarians, nurses, maintenance, cafeteria and transportation) represented 20.2 percent of expected cuts. Responders reported that 37.5 percent of the positions to be eliminated were support staff (teacher aides/assistants, secretaries, and central office positions). Almost 50 percent (49.5 percent) of the cuts would be direct staff cuts. Attrition accounts for 17.8 percent of the projected job cuts.

School districts of all sizes and types (rural, suburban and urban) were subject to the projected job cuts as a result of the economic downturn, as evidenced in both this study and the January 2009 study. Sobering in this data was the fact that the cuts were not limited to support staff but included in significant numbers core teaching staff, including those in high-need areas (math, science and special education) that represent hard-to-replace positions with significant district investment in their professional development.

The uncertainty of the timing of an economic recovery is compounded by the fact that the vast majority of states require school districts to provide employees with timely notification of the termination of their employment.

- In the new study, 90 percent of respondents work in a state with a timeline for notifying staff of termination of employment. (Q3)

Assuming the employees subject to termination under the reduced fiscal capacity of the district are place-bound, districts buy precious little time to retrieve their workforce should the economy return to a more stable status; otherwise, districts are facing not only the loss of valued employees in teaching disciplines difficult to replace but also lose their investment in professional development.



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## Part V: Impact on School Community, Families and Learning

The impact of budget cuts at school is not limited to students. For many communities across the nation, schools are a major employer and a reliable source of revenue. Cost-saving measures have a direct impact on the community, as well. When schools curtail spending through measures such as reducing payroll, conserving energy use, reducing fuel consumption, deferring maintenance and delaying purchases, the local community is the first to share the effects.

When administrators were asked how their districts' current economic situation has affected schools' ability to address certain indicators, the results were as follows (*responders were asked to rate the indicators as "not at all," "somewhat," or "a great deal"*): (Q15)

- Maintain employment levels (support staff): 83 percent responded somewhat/a great deal
- Provide professional development to administrators: 79 percent responded somewhat/a great deal
- Maintain employment levels (teachers): 77 percent responded somewhat/a great deal
- Maintain employment levels (administrative): 75 percent responded somewhat/a great deal
- Provide professional development to teachers: 75 percent responded somewhat/a great deal
- Recruit/retain qualified staff: 66 percent responded somewhat/a great deal

The continued economic downturn increasingly threatens gains in student achievement, progress in narrowing the achievement gap and the capacity of schools to deliver essential services. Administrators reported that the economic downturn has negatively affected their schools' capacity to:

- Improve student achievement: 76 percent responded somewhat/a great deal
- Close achievement gaps: 75 percent responded somewhat/a great deal
- Maintain focus on student learning/instructional improvement: 75 percent responded somewhat/a great deal
- Address the learning needs of all students: 73 percent responded somewhat/a great deal
- Meet or exceed state and federal performance assessment levels: 76 percent responded somewhat/a great deal

When considered in total, the economic downturn has exacted a heavy toll on communities, families, and learning. Recouping that loss may mean both replacing tangible items—a relatively easy task—and rebuilding capacity, a task that is difficult at best.

## Part VI: Demographics

This study represented both an opportunity to look at the future impact of the economic downturn in schools and an opportunity to benchmark against responses to earlier AASA studies. The distribution group for this survey included the sample groups completing earlier AASA surveys as well as additional AASA members who had not completed one of the surveys in the AASA Economic Impact series.

Beyond repeating questions included in earlier Economic Impact Studies, reaching out to some of the same AASA members helped to establish benchmarks and trends in the data. (Q21)

- Thirty-one percent of responders completing this survey took the “AASA Impact of Economic Downturn on Schools” survey in October 2008.
- Twenty-four percent of responders completing this survey took the “AASA Opportunity for Federal Education Funding” survey in November 2008.
- Slightly more than 25 percent (25.4 percent) of responders completing this survey contributed to the School Renovation/Construction Database in December 2008. *This database is a collection of ready-to-go school renovation, repair and construction projects. School administrators shared this information with both AASA and their congressional delegation in order to leverage stimulus dollar discussions on Capitol Hill.*
- Just over 26 percent (26.2 percent) of responders completing this survey took the “AASA Impact of Economic Downturn on School Jobs Snapshot Survey” in January 2009.

A total of 859 school administrators from 48 different states completed the survey over a three-week period in February and March 2009. (Q20) See Table 5.

**Table 5: Distribution of Respondents by State**

2008 / 2009														
AL	20	<b>7</b>	HI	0	<b>0</b>	MA	12	<b>13</b>	NM	5	<b>5</b>	SD	9	<b>23</b>
AK	8	<b>8</b>	ID	7	<b>11</b>	MI	33	<b>26</b>	NY	48	<b>82</b>	TN	8	<b>2</b>
AZ	18	<b>14</b>	IL	57	<b>49</b>	MN	47	<b>59</b>	NC	7	<b>7</b>	TX	30	<b>19</b>
AR	5	<b>6</b>	IN	19	<b>15</b>	MS	3	<b>5</b>	ND	10	<b>15</b>	UT	2	<b>6</b>
CA	18	<b>7</b>	IA	38	<b>28</b>	MO	48	<b>38</b>	OH	24	<b>16</b>	VT	5	<b>7</b>
CO	9	<b>57</b>	KS	15	<b>11</b>	MT	11	<b>14</b>	OK	18	<b>19</b>	VA	29	<b>17</b>
CT	15	<b>41</b>	KY	6	<b>3</b>	NE	17	<b>20</b>	OR	8	<b>12</b>	WA	13	<b>15</b>
DE	1	<b>0</b>	LA	3	<b>1</b>	NV	6	<b>4</b>	PA	49	<b>43</b>	WV	1	<b>6</b>
FL	5	<b>3</b>	ME	13	<b>7</b>	NH	6	<b>8</b>	RI	5	<b>5</b>	WI	51	<b>36</b>
GA	19	<b>13</b>	MD	5	<b>2</b>	NJ	39	<b>26</b>	SC	3	<b>3</b>	WY	3	<b>6</b>

Table 6 (below) breaks down the responders by student enrollment and community type. Roughly two-thirds of respondents work in school districts with enrollments of less than 3,000 students. (Q18) Almost two-thirds (61.6 percent) of respondents described their school district as rural. (Q19) See *Table 6*.

**Table 6: Distribution of Respondents by District Enrollment and Community Type**

<b>ENROLLMENT</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
1 - 999	25.60%	<b>32.9%</b>
1,000 - 2,999	34.70%	<b>31.6%</b>
3,000 - 4,999	13.50%	<b>13.6%</b>
5,000 - 9,999	13.50%	<b>11.8%</b>
10,000 - 24,000	7.70%	<b>6.9%</b>
25,000 - 49,999	3.30%	<b>1.9%</b>
50,000 - 99,999	1.30%	<b>1.2%</b>
100,000 OR MORE	0.60%	<b>0.2%</b>
<b>COMMUNITY</b>		
<b>Rural</b>	58.00%	<b>61.6%</b>
<b>Suburban</b>	31.60%	<b>31.6%</b>
<b>Urban</b>	10.40%	<b>6.7%</b>

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## Part VII: Policy Threats, Implications and Conclusion

Over the six months that AASA has studied the impact of the economic downturn on schools, a number of policy threats and implications have become apparent. While the institution of public schooling has demonstrated a capacity to sustain many threats, the scope and number of challenges presented by recent developments are unprecedented and threaten to overwhelm even the resilient public school system. Several of those challenges are detailed below:

- AASA members continue to address the economic downturn with a sense of pragmatism. The persistence of the downturn has shifted the response from tightening budgets and implementing moderate changes to implementing increasingly significant changes, including a marked increase in cuts to areas that more directly impact student achievement.
- Education represents a large share of states' general fund budgets. With state deficits expected to total more than \$350 billion over the next two years, it will be very difficult for states to avoid damaging cuts to education, cuts that will likely deepen as the recession continues. While the \$100 billion included for education in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will help states backfill some of their budget cuts, it is unlikely that it will be enough to allow states and schools to completely reinstate the resources and capacities they cut in the early stages of the recession. (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities)
- The increasing budget cuts threaten the capacity of schools to deliver essential services and threaten the gains schools have made in student achievement and narrowing the achievement gap. Schools and students face the stark reality of fewer academic instructors, support staff and student services staff when they return to school for the 2009-10 school year.
- AASA and school administrators recognize and appreciate the sizable one-time investment in public education that the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 represents. As schools begin receiving the funds, it is hoped that federal, state and local leaders will work to maximize both the flow and flexibility of funds to schools.
- As of mid-March 2009, the national economic downturn had given no indication of reversing itself. That being said, education leaders and policymakers at the state and local levels are well aware of the common lag that exists between a rebound at the federal level and a rebound at the state and local levels. Put more succinctly, state and local leaders recognize that their local situation may continue to worsen, even after the federal economy begins to improve. This awareness will continue to factor into their budget and policy decisions.
- One of the engines to economic recovery is schooling. A strong system of schools fuels the workforce development and economic diversity essential to a recovering economy. Reducing investment in schools when capacity is needed to sustain recovery only prolongs the economic downturn. Therefore, it is critical that Congress and the U.S. Department of Education work to ensure schools have the resources they need to fuel economic recovery and growth.

- Disruption of schools by an economic downturn serves to further disable families facing the same economic challenges. Families in distress rely on schools to add stability to their plight at home, whether they are dealing with loss of work, foreclosures or escalating prices. Schools offer the haven needed to help families to return some normalcy to their children's lives.

Several of the conclusions from the "AASA Study of the Impact of the Economic Downturn on Schools," conducted in October 2008, still hold true, and are included below:

- State and national accountability efforts are interrupted by the economic downturn. The effort to increase student achievement and reduce the achievement gap between subgroups is clearly facing a threat.
- A new round of costly school finance litigation could occur during economic downturns as the quality, equity, and adequacy of educational services are called into question.
- Particularly in fiscally dependent school districts (that depend on a city or county government for financial support), competing municipal and city entities vie for shrinking revenues and produce interagency competition that can further disrupt the provision of public financing for schools.
- The loss of a qualified workforce can have a critical impact on school district operations. The reduction of valued school personnel represents both a loss of the significant investment made in their development and a very real fiscal and non-fiscal loss to the immediate community.
- As budget reductions occur in schools, there is an inclination to label all costs not directly associated with instruction as being non-essential to the quality of schooling. When cuts occur in areas such as deferred maintenance, student health and safety, and extracurricular activities, schools are materially diminished.
- The superintendency is recognized as one of the most challenging positions in the public sector. The pipeline of willing and qualified individuals to fill future vacancies continues to narrow for a variety of reasons, including—but not limited to—the prospect of working on a chronically underfunded mission.

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**Legislation:**

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

[http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111\\_cong\\_bills&docid=f:h1enr.pdf](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=111_cong_bills&docid=f:h1enr.pdf)

## Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire

### PART I: Snapshot of Current Economic Situation

1. How would you describe your district's current economic situation?	
Inadequately funded	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adequately funded	<input type="checkbox"/>
Surplus	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Is your district financially dependent or independent?	
Fiscally dependent (fiscal operation subject to approval by other local government )	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fiscally independent (fiscal operation not subject to approval by other local government)	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Does your state/district have a timeline for notifying staff of termination of employment?	
If so, what is the timeline?	
4. Is your school district facing:	
Potential non-performance on bond repayment schedules?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Short term borrowing to meet payroll and/or accounts payable?	
Declaration of insolvency?	<input type="checkbox"/>

### PART II: Feeling the Impact: Which of the following actions has your district considered in the proposed budget for the 2009-10 school year as a result of the economic downturn?

	Implemented for 2008-09 School Year	Considered, Implemented 2009-10 School Year	Considered, Delayed Implementation	Considered, Rejected	Never Considered
<b>5. PERSONNEL RELATED</b>					
Furloughing of personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Laying-off personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Freezing outside professional service contracts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reducing non-teaching professional support personnel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reducing outside staff development consultants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reducing staff-level hiring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>6. BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES RELATED</b>					
Deferring maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Altering thermostats for less heating and cooling in buildings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Closing/consolidating schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Delaying a capital debt (bond) program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outsourcing custodial/maintenance work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reducing custodial services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>7. CURRICULUM RELATED</b>					
Increasing class size	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eliminating/delaying instructional improvement initiatives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cutting nonacademic programs (such as after-school and Saturday enrichment programs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cutting academic programs (such as academic interventions and Saturday classes)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strengthening identification/screening of non-resident students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reducing elective courses not required for graduation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deferring textbook purchases	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reducing high-cost course offerings (e.g., occupational education classes)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reducing instructional materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eliminating field trips	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>8. OPERATIONS RELATED</b>					
Reducing operations to four-day work week (during summer)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reducing operations to four-day school week (during school year)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cutting bus transportation routes and availability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding new transportation efficiencies (i.e., tiered pickups)					
Reducing extracurricular activities					
Deferring technology purchases	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reducing consumable supplies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eliminating non-essential travel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joining bulk purchasing groups or co-ops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reducing collaborative planning time w/in school day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**PART III: Using Funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009:** Funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 include roughly \$100 billion for America's public schools. Money will be flowing to schools through multiple 'pots' of money. The list below represents a variety of allowable uses under the various 'pots' of funding. Please indicate which of the projects your district would address: (mark all that apply)

<b>9. FACILITIES</b>	<b>High Priority</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Low Priority</b>
School modernization and repair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grounds renovation and repair/site improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safety and security measures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS</b>			
Art education equipment/supplies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom equipment/supplies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health equipment (AEDs, beds, wheelchairs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Music education equipment/instruments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical education equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Textbooks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Career/technical instructional materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Career/technical equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Start a new career/technical program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>			
Professional development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>			
Connectivity (fiber optics, routers, modems, T1 lines, wireless)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Machines (computers, printers, faxes, copiers, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Software	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supportive technology devices (for students with needs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**PART IV: The Economic Downturn and School Employment**

10. Has your district had to eliminate positions for the 2009-10 school year in your proposed budget?	
11. How many staffing positions—administrative, teaching and support—do you currently have in your district? ( <i>enter whole number, without commas</i> )	
12. How many positions would be eliminated? ( <i>enter whole number, without commas</i> )	

13. How many positions are being cut due to: ( <i>enter whole number, without commas</i> )	
Declining enrollment?	
Attrition?	
Staffing cuts?	

	Other?
14. What types of positions are being eliminated?	
Core subject classroom teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Art/music/phys ed teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foreign language teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Special education teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher aides/assistants	<input type="checkbox"/>
School secretaries	<input type="checkbox"/>
School librarians	<input type="checkbox"/>
School nurses	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintenance/cafeteria/transportation staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
Central office/administration	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

**PART V: Impact on School Community, Families and Learning:** To what extent has your district's current economic situation affected your schools' capacity to:

15.	Not at All	Somewhat	A Great Deal
Maintain employment levels (administrative workforce)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain employment levels (teacher workforce)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain employment levels (support staff workforce)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide professional development for administrators?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide professional development for teachers>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recruit/retain qualified staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improve student achievement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Close achievement gaps?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain focus on student learning/instructional improvement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Address the learning needs of all students, including disabled?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meet or exceed state and federal performance assessment levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**PART VI: Demographics**

16. What is your current position?	
Superintendent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Associate/deputy superintendent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assistant superintendent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Director	<input type="checkbox"/>
Principal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. If you are a superintendent, how many years have you been a superintendent?	
18. How many students were enrolled in your district as of July 2008?	

	1 - 999	<input type="checkbox"/>
	1000 - 2999	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3000 - 4999	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5000 - 9999	<input type="checkbox"/>
	10000 - 24999	<input type="checkbox"/>
	25000 - 49999	<input type="checkbox"/>
	50000 - 99999	<input type="checkbox"/>
	100000 or more	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. My school district is best described as:		
	Rural	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Suburban	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Urban	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. In which state is your school district located?		
21. Have you taken any of the AASA surveys related to the economic downturn over the past six months?		

## Appendix B: Survey Response Data

### 1. How would you describe your district's current economic situation?

Inadequately Funded	644	75%
Adequately Funded	199	23%
Surplus	13	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>856</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 2. Is your district fiscally dependent or independent?

Fiscally Dependent (fiscal operation subject to approval by other local government)	320	37%
Fiscally Independent (fiscal operation not subject to approval by other local government)	534	63%
<b>Total</b>	<b>854</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 3. Does your state/district have a timeline for notifying staff of termination of employment?

Yes	758	90%
No	86	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>844</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 4. Is your school district facing:

Potential non-performance on bond repayment schedules?	17
Short-term borrowing to meet payroll and/or accounts payable?	183
Declaration of insolvency?	8

### 5. Which of the following personnel-related actions have your district considered in the proposed budget for the 2009-10 school year as a result of the economic downturn?

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	Implemented for 2008-09 School Year	Considered, Implemented 2009-10 School Year	Considered, Delayed Implementation	Considered, Rejected	Never Considered
Furloughing of personnel	35 5%	124 17%	111 15%	71 10%	402 54%
Laying-off personnel	89 11%	364 44%	191 23%	55 7%	129 16%
Freezing outside professional	80	234	230	48	197

service contracts	10%	30%	29%	6%	25%
Reducing non-teaching professional support personnel	128	381	211	39	80
	15%	45%	25%	5%	10%
Reducing outside staff development consultants	153	324	170	29	146
	19%	39%	21%	4%	18%
Reducing staff-level hiring	186	415	147	20	73
	22%	49%	17%	2%	9%

**6. Which of the following buildings and facilities related actions have your district considered in the proposed budget for the 2009-10 school year as a result of the economic downturn?**

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	Implemented for 2008-09 School Year	Considered, Implemented 2009-10 School Year	Considered, Delayed Implementation	Considered, Rejected	Never Considered
Deferring maintenance	177 21%	276 33%	157 19%	83 10%	133 16%
Altering thermostats for less heating and cooling in buildings	376 46%	208 25%	106 13%	33 4%	102 12%
Closing/consolidating schools	41 5%	63 8%	91 11%	65 8%	533 67%
Delaying a capital debt (bond) program	67 8%	91 11%	90 11%	55 7%	490 62%
Outsourcing custodial/maintenance work	46 6%	33 4%	77 10%	104 13%	534 67%
Reducing custodial services	128 16%	178 22%	149 18%	78 10%	288 35%

**7. Which of the following curriculum-related actions have your district considered in the proposed budget for the 2009-10 school year as a result of the economic downturn?**

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	Implemented, 2008-09 School Year	Considered, Implemented 2009-10 School Year	Considered, Delayed Implementation	Considered, Rejected	Never Considered
Increasing class size	112 13%	367 44%	179 22%	51 6%	121 15%
Eliminating/delaying instructional improvement initiatives	93 11%	258 32%	212 26%	80 10%	174 21%
Cutting nonacademic programs (such as after-school and Saturday enrichment programs)	75 9%	217 27%	198 25%	85 11%	232 29%
Cutting academic programs (such as academic interventions and Saturday classes)	54 7%	177 22%	193 24%	94 12%	282 35%
Strengthening identification/screening of non-resident students	137 17%	115 14%	79 10%	31 4%	440 55%
Reducing elective courses not required for	58	218	164	63	310

graduation	7%	27%	20%	8%	38%
Deferring textbook purchases	132 16%	275 34%	158 19%	54 7%	197 24%
Reducing high cost course offerings (e.g., occupational education classes)	43 5%	133 17%	181 23%	81 10%	364 45%
Reducing instructional materials	152 19%	300 37%	161 20%	41 5%	162 20%
Eliminating field trips	151 19%	195 24%	251 31%	74 9%	139 17%

**8. Which of the following operations-related actions have your district considered in the proposed budget for the 2009-10 school year as a result of the economic downturn?**

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	Implemented, 2008-09 School Year	Considered, Implemented 2009- 10 School Year	Considered, Delayed Implementation	Considered, Rejected	Never Considered
Reducing operations to four-day work week (during summer)	117 14%	76 9%	132 16%	89 11%	398 49%
Reducing operations to four-day school week (during school year)	22 3%	18 2%	87 11%	152 19%	528 65%
Cutting bus transportation routes and availability	111 14%	188 23%	157 19%	93 11%	269 33%
Finding new transportation efficiencies (i.e., tiered pick-ups)	146 18%	186 23%	149 18%	45 6%	289 35%
Reducing extra-curricular activities	79 10%	228 28%	210 26%	97 12%	202 25%
Deferring technology purchases	130 16%	266 32%	208 25%	69 8%	153 19%
Reducing consumable supplies	211 25%	348 42%	148 18%	31 4%	91 11%
Eliminating non-essential travel	279 34%	348 42%	123 15%	16 2%	64 8%
Joining bulk purchasing groups or co-ops	425 52%	193 24%	77 9%	24 3%	98 12%
Reducing collaborative planning time w/in school day	47 6%	103 13%	118 15%	81 10%	448 56%

**9. Funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 include roughly \$100 billion for America's public schools. Money will be flowing to schools through multiple 'pots' of money. The list below represents a variety of allowable uses under the various 'pots' of funding. Please indicate which of the projects your district would address: (mark all that apply)**

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	High Priority	Priority	Low Priority
School modernization and repair	445 54%	249 30%	134 16%
Grounds renovation and repair/site improvement	220 27%	270 33%	327 40%
Safety and security measures	328 40%	316 38%	181 22%
Art education equipment/supplies	53 7%	231 29%	520 65%
Classroom equipment/supplies	195 24%	399 48%	233 28%
Classroom technology	481 57%	293 35%	63 8%
Health equipment (AEDs, beds, wheelchairs)	49 6%	222 27%	538 67%
Music education equipment/instruments	55 7%	296 36%	464 57%
Physical education equipment	36 4%	254 31%	521 64%
Textbooks	278 34%	363 44%	175 21%
Career/Technical Instructional Materials	128 16%	328 41%	345 43%
Career/Technical Equipment	152 19%	305 38%	348 43%
Start Up New Career/Technical Program	110 14%	163 20%	535 66%
Professional Development	306 37%	389 47%	126 15%
Connectivity (Fiber optics, routers, modems, T1 lines, wireless)	322 39%	314 38%	182 22%
Machines (computers, printers, faxes, copiers, etc)	256 31%	353 43%	214 26%
Software	251 31%	385 48%	170 21%
Supportive technology devices (for students with needs)	216 26%	393 48%	208 25%

10. Has your district had to eliminate positions for the 2009-10 school year in your proposed budget?		
Yes	609	72%
No	233	28%
<b>Total</b>	<b>842</b>	<b>100%</b>

14. What types of positions are being eliminated? (mark all that apply)		
Core subject classroom teachers	479	69%
Art/music/phys ed teachers	207	30%
Foreign language teachers	115	16%
Special education teachers	160	23%
Teacher aides/assistants	466	67%
School secretaries	185	27%
School librarians	125	18%
School nurses	71	10%
Maintenance/cafeteria/transportation staff	318	46%
Central office/administration	304	44%
Other, please specify	115	16%

15. To what extent has your district's current economic situation affected your schools' capacity to:			
Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	Not at All	Somewhat	A Great Deal
Maintain employment levels (administrative workforce)?	216 26%	409 49%	215 26%
Maintain employment levels (teacher workforce)?	193 23%	386 46%	264 31%
Maintain employment levels (support staff workforce)?	146 17%	409 49%	281 34%
Provide professional development for administrators?	171 20%	422 50%	244 29%
Provide professional development for teachers?	206 25%	430 51%	204 24%
Recruit/retain qualified staff?	287 34%	345 41%	206 25%
Improve student achievement?	205 24%	394 47%	239 29%
Close achievement gaps?	204 25%	377 45%	251 30%
Maintain focus on student learning/instructional improvement?	205 25%	375 45%	248 30%
Address the learning needs of all students, including disabled?	218 26%	383 46%	225 27%



Meet or exceed state and federal performance assessment levels?	186	381	256
	23%	46%	31%

16. What is your current position?		
Superintendent	796	94%
Associate/deputy superintendent	8	1%
Assistant superintendent	10	1%
Director	20	2%
Principal	1	0%
Other	13	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>848</b>	<b>100%</b>

17. If you are a superintendent, how many years have you been a superintendent?		
Less than 1 year	43	5%
1-5 years	262	32%
6-10 years	218	27%
11-15 years	123	15%
More than 15 years	162	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>808</b>	<b>100%</b>

18. How many students were enrolled in your district as of July 2008?		
1 - 999	278	33%
1,000 - 2,999	267	32%
3,000 - 4,999	115	14%
5,000 - 9,999	100	12%
10,000 - 24,999	58	7%
25,000 - 49,999	16	2%
50,000 - 99,999	10	1%
100,000 or more	2	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>846</b>	<b>100%</b>

19. My school district is best described as		
Rural	522	62%
Suburban	268	32%
Urban	57	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>847</b>	<b>100%</b>

**20. What state is your school district located in?**

AL	7	1%	LA	1	0%	OH	16	2%
AK	8	1%	ME	7	1%	OK	19	2%
AZ	14	2%	MD	2	0%	OR	12	1%
AR	6	1%	MA	13	2%	PA	43	5%
CA	7	1%	MI	26	3%	RI	5	1%
CO	57	7%	MN	59	7%	SC	3	0%
CT	41	5%	MS	5	1%	SD	23	3%
DE	0	0%	MO	38	5%	TN	2	0%
FL	3	0%	MT	14	2%	TX	19	2%
GA	13	2%	NE	20	2%	UT	6	1%
HI	0	0%	NV	4	0%	VT	7	1%
ID	11	1%	NH	8	1%	VA	17	2%
IL	49	6%	NJ	26	3%	WA	15	2%
IN	16	2%	NM	5	1%	WV	6	1%
IA	28	3%	NY	83	10%	WI	36	4%
KS	11	1%	NC	7	1%	WY	6	1%
KY	3	0%	ND	15	2%	<b>Total</b>	<b>842</b>	<b>100%</b>

**21. Have you taken any of AASA's surveys examining the impact of the economic downturn on schools in the last five months? (mark all that apply)**

Impact of Economic Downturn on Schools (October 2008)	266	31%
Opportunity for Federal Funding Survey (November 2008)	206	24%
School Renovation/Construction Database (December 2008)	218	25%
Impact of Economic Downturn on School Jobs Survey (January 2009)	225	26%

The American Association of School Administrators, founded in 1865, is the professional organization for more than 13,000 educational leaders across the United States. AASA's mission is to support and develop effective school system leaders who are dedicated to the highest quality public education for all children.



**AMERICAN ASSOCIATION  
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