

[**Editor's Note:** From John Wall, Legislative Assistant to Rep. Michele Presnell. This is in response to a piece by Jimmy Rogers in the Mountaineer, "**Blame Raleigh for possible school closing, By Jimmy Rogers, Jan 30, 2016**" <http://themountaineer.villagesoup.com/p/blame-raleigh-for-possible-school-closing/1475647> ]

Good afternoon,

Please see Rep. Presnell's response to a Jan. 30 opinion published in The Mountaineer.

Best,  
John

John Wall  
Legislative Assistant to Rep. Michele Presnell  
North Carolina General Assembly  
[PresnellLA@ncleg.net](mailto:PresnellLA@ncleg.net)  
Office: 919-733-5732  
Fax: 919-754-3163  
300 N. Salisbury Street, Room 418A  
Raleigh, NC 27603-5925

Enrollment has fallen in Haywood County Schools every year since at least 2008, and Jimmy Rogers was on the school board every single one of those years.

A functional school board keeps enrollment stable – parents want to send their children to well-managed schools. Enrollment in Haywood County Schools has been far from stable.

Rogers has been a member of the Haywood County School Board for more than a decade. He, along with other members of the board, continue to actively mislead the public with regard to the possible closure of Central Elementary. Rogers and others point to "budget cuts" from Raleigh as the reason Central faces shuttering. Let's talk about that.

State and federal school funding is tied to enrollment. Funding dollars follow students. This is known as the Average Daily Membership (ADM). When a student leaves Haywood County schools, as at least 600 have done since 2008, funding follows him to his new public school, whether the school is traditional or charter. If his parents decide to homeschool him, ADM funding for that student stops.

Contrary to Jimmy Rogers' misleading statements, state funding per student has actually increased significantly in recent years. When I took office in 2013, Haywood County Schools received \$5,147 per student. Today, they receive \$5,426 per student – an increase of 5.4%.

However, in the meantime, enrollment has decreased by 289 students, or 3.9%.

Over the same time period, overall state funding in Haywood County increased from \$39,451,664 to \$40,020,796 – an increase of \$569,132, or 1.4%.

How is an increase of \$569,132 to educate 289 fewer students a cut? It's not. It plainly reflects the fact that the current leadership in the General Assembly, myself included, have placed education funding at the forefront of our priorities. To say anything else is simply disingenuous at best, or an outright lie at worst.

Included in those budget increases since Republicans took control are substantial teacher raises. In 2013-14, Haywood County schools received \$18,815,403 to fund 333.5 teacher positions. Haywood County is currently receiving \$19,792,672 to fund 324.25 teacher positions.

All told, Haywood County Schools are receiving \$977,269 more than they were in 2013-14 to fund 9.25 fewer teacher positions. That \$977,269 is going into teachers' pockets where it belongs.

Budget increases have not come solely from teacher raises. Haywood County Schools education funding has increased in other areas as well since 2013-14:

- Textbooks: \$107,863 to \$214,277 (\$106,414 or 98.7%)
- Instructional support: \$2,171,645 to 2,362,966 (\$191,321 or 8.8%)
- DSSF: \$242,736 to \$255,370 (\$12,634 or 5.2%)
- Behavioral support: \$72,555 to \$99,016 (\$26,461 or 36.5%)
- Children with disabilities: \$3,911,188 to 4,018,943 (\$107,755 or 2.8%)
- Academically gifted: \$374,898 to \$382,104 (\$7,206 or 1.9%)
- Limited English: \$115,675 to \$131,201 (\$15,526 or 13.4%)
- Cooperative innovative schools: \$315,823 to 316,646 (\$823 or 0.3%)

Let's compare education budget increases over the past several years to massive education budget cuts made by the other party when they were in charge. In 2009-10, the other party cut \$821,397,353 from K-12 education. That's more than three-quarters of a billion dollars cut from K-12 education in a single year.

Why did the other party cut education so harshly? When the recession hit around 2008, the other party had stretched state coffers so thin that they could not withstand any sort of economic hardship.

The only option when you've mismanaged and spent every dollar that comes in is to make deep cuts. The other party made deep cuts in 2009-10, and unfortunately for residents, that's exactly what the other party in Haywood County is doing right now.

Simply put, Haywood County school district is receiving more state money to do less, and yet still, the school board is threatening closure of a school. In the end, it will be the children of Haywood County who suffer from mismanagement.