

Poor children in Fresno would lose funds under House education proposal

By Barbara Anderson

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Fresno Unified School District office

SCOTT ADAMS — Neighbors Staff Photo

[Fresno Unified](#) officials said Friday the district could lose \$5 million to help educate the most disadvantaged children under a proposal approved by a House education committee.

The proposal would redirect Title 1 funds for poor and disadvantaged students away from the nation's poorest inner-city schools, including Fresno Unified, said Ruth Quinto, deputy superintendent and chief financial officer for the district.

Under the proposal approved by the [House Education and Workforce Committee in H.R. 5](#), funds would be transferred from school districts with high concentrations of at-risk students to school districts and schools that do not serve as many disadvantaged children, Quinto said. Nearly 85% of Fresno Unified students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunches because of their families' low income.

Fresno Unified this year received \$40 million in Title 1 funds. Under the proposal, approved by the education committee on Feb. 11, the district would lose about \$5 million, Quinto said. Nationwide, schools stand to lose about \$615 million.

Title 1 funds are used to pay for school instructional coaches to help teachers improve, for summer school and for classroom aides, among other programs, Quinto said. Fresno Unified has allocated about \$8 million to pay for programs that are chosen by school site councils (teachers, parents and administrators) at high-risk schools. “They get to direct those funds and they get to say what they think is most important to improve student achievement,” she said.

“Every dollar in resources is precious for our students,” Quinto said, “but the resources contemplated for reduction in this case are those that serve students who live in disadvantaged circumstances, so we are very concerned.”

Others share her concerns: “This provision in H.R. 5 would be a tragic reallocation of scarce federal resources away from the schools and students with the greatest needs,” said Michael Casserly, executive director of the [Council of the Great City Schools](#). “This would dilute the original federal intention of marshaling resources to bolster educational opportunity for poor students.”

The House of Representatives is expected to vote on the proposal by the end of February.

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