

Schools face transportation funding cuts

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Staff reporter

LAKE COUNTY — Superintendent of Schools Wally Holbrook said Dec. 27 county school districts are preparing for “massive and unequalled reductions” to K-12 transportation funding as part of the host of cuts recently outlined by Gov. Jerry Brown.

The governor announced on Dec. 13 that nearly \$981 million in midyear “trigger cuts” would kick in early next year because the state’s revenue has fallen more than \$2.2 billion short of budget projections.

Brown’s plan focuses on funding cutbacks for higher education, some social services and K-12

schools — with the latter seeing about \$327.6 million in reductions.

As a result, Lake County schools would lose about \$875,000 in state support for transportation, Holbrook wrote in a statement released Dec. 27.

“The midyear cuts in transportation raise many issues for our schools,” he said, noting that school buses are vital for local families because of the county’s rural layout.

The planned cutbacks mean county school districts will have to pick up a larger tab for home-to-school transportation costs, according to Holbrook.

The superintendent highlighted the potential affect to the

Kelseyville Unified School District, which he said would need to cover more than \$277,000 of the projected \$449,219 price for its program.

The state previously increased the burden on county school districts in July by decreasing the initial allotment for transportation, Holbrook said. The trigger cuts would result in a 51.5-percent drop in those already reduced funds, he added.

Each district will determine individually how to address its anticipated reductions, according to the Lake County Office of Education (LCOE).

“Simply discontinuing school transpor-

tation service is not a viable solution for Lake County schools,” Holbrook said.

He also called the state’s timetable for implementing the cutbacks “problematic,” saying that “schools cannot simply reduce personnel costs” mid-year without giving advanced notice to staff because of collective bargaining agreement requirements.

The LCOE suggests residents concerned about cuts to transportation contact their state representatives, Holbrook said. Assemblyman Wesley Chesbro can be reached at 463-5770 or 916-319-2001. State Senator Noreen Evans can be called at 916-651-4002.