

Budget for a Better Minnesota

Skip's Story: Why Special Education Matters

Skip Bruber is young man with multiple disabilities, including cerebral palsy and visual impairments. Growing up, Skip received special education services from St. Paul Public Schools starting when he was two years old and continued receiving support throughout his high school career.

The special education interventions and support services Skip received allowed him to graduate from high school. He went on to attend Augsburg College, where he recently received his bachelor's degree and graduated with a 3.0 GPA.

Skip is currently receiving additional job skills training in order to find a position in which he can put his education and advanced skills in writing to use. According to his mother Elizabeth, Skip's access to special education services means that rather than being defined by his disabilities, he faces a bright future that is allowing him to meet his full potential and live a rich and productive life.

Helping Thousands of Minnesotans Like Skip

Every child deserves the opportunities and support to succeed in school, regardless of his or her abilities. That is why Governor Dayton's budget would invest \$125 million in special education, making significant reforms and taking important steps to fix the state's broken special education funding formula.

Increased funding proposed in the governor's budget plan would provide an additional \$180 per student, per year, for every school district in the state. This 13% increase in special education funding would be directed to the districts that need help the most. This new investment would finally begin to address the state's long-underfunded commitment to special education.

More than increased funding, the governor's plan also includes new reform measures to stem the rising cost of delivering high-quality special education support in the classroom; tailoring funding to meet the individual needs of students. One major area of needed reform is greater accountability in cost containment. Currently if a child open enrolls, the district they live in is billed 100% for all special education services the student receives in another district. The governor's plan would require both school districts to share that funding responsibility.

Governor Dayton's budget would also reduce paperwork for special education teachers, allowing them to spend more time teaching kids with special needs and less time filling out forms. Earlier this year, the Department of Education reduced the Total Special Education Systems manual from over 270 pages to just 16. Now, the governor has proposed allocating additional funds to build on that success, creating an online reporting system that would allow special education teachers to expedite their reporting in a more efficient manner.



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