



STATE OF MINNESOTA
L'Étoile du Nord

Office of Governor Mark Dayton

Emergency Aid for Schools Facing Budget Shortfalls

Budget for a Better Minnesota

Dozens of school districts across Minnesota are facing immediate budget deficits that could result in layoffs for hundreds of teachers, the elimination of extracurricular activities, and larger class sizes in the coming year. Governor Dayton's proposal would invest \$137.9 million in one-time funding to increase school resources by 2 percent in the coming year, amounting to an additional \$126 for every student in Minnesota. Read below to learn how burgeoning budget deficits are detrimentally impacting students and school districts across Minnesota.

International Falls Journal – Proposal could bring more funding to Borderland school districts

Gov. Mark Dayton this week announced a proposal to provide \$138 million in emergency aid to school districts around Minnesota, including those in Borderland. Under Dayton's plan, funding would increase for the International Falls school district by \$163,981; and \$68,704 for Littlefork-Big Falls. Falls Superintendent Kevin Grover said the funding would significantly benefit the Falls district as it continues to decline in enrollment, meaning less money generated. "I can't speak for the (school) board on how they would use the specified funds, but I am pretty sure they would revisit some of the reductions that have been made to balance the budget," he said. "I support this and appreciate Gov. Dayton recognizing that the funding to schools preceding him taking office did not keep up with rising cost. Gov. Dayton and the legislature have made strides to get funding back to early 2000 buying power, but we are not there yet." [\[Read More\]](#)

WJON 1240 AM – Governor Dayton Stops in St. Cloud To Push Emergency School Aid

Governor Mark Dayton continues his tour across the state Thursday pushing for Emergency School Aid with a stop in St. Cloud. The governor is advocating for roughly \$138-million in funding to help school district's across Minnesota avoid layoffs and program cuts. District 742 Superintendent Willie Jett says the funding shortages not only affect staff, but students and families district wide. "The Emergency Aid to schools proposed by the governor would serve as a much needed down payment to correct the funding shortfall." [\[Read More\]](#)

Star Tribune – Gov. Mark Dayton takes his last-minute pitch for education aid to Minnesota schools

From Rochester to Rosemount, the DFL governor is touring the state's schools to appeal to local legislators to pass his \$137.9 million plan that would boost education funding before Minnesota school districts are forced this summer to lay off hundreds of teachers and draw down reserves. "Minnesota schools are still struggling," Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Superintendent Jane

Berenz said. In Rosemount, the state's fourth-largest school district would get an extra \$4 million under Dayton's plan. Without it, schools will cover this year's \$12 million deficit by dipping into the district's reserves, which is like a savings account. [\[Read More\]](#)

Litchfield Independent Review – [Litchfield schools would receive \\$235,016 from proposal](#)

"It would be wonderful if we could get more financial support from the governor and his plan," Litchfield Superintendent Beckie Simenson said. "We can always use more mental health support. That's something we would seriously consider." When talking about state funding, and often when lawmakers discuss increasing the state aid formula, which is based on enrollment, school administrators point out the state decreased aid from 2003 to 2012. Though the trend has been reversed, all is not repaired. "The bottom line is schools went two to three bienniums with zero increase," said Daron VanderHeiden, superintendent of Hutchinson Public Schools. "And everything costs more. Year after year, inflation increases." He said data show the per pupil formula is about \$1,000 behind inflation. [\[Read More\]](#)

KTTC News – [Governor Dayton visits Rochester school to present funding proposal](#)

Governor Mark Dayton is asking the state Legislature to support emergency aid for schools in Minnesota. The Governor made a visit to Rochester Wednesday to discuss his proposal and talk to students at Franklin Elementary. Rochester Public Schools face a budget deficit of \$1.6 million for the 2018-2019 school year. Rochester Schools Superintendent Michael Muñoz says getting additional funding would let the school system consider adding more supports that impact the students and forgo future budget cuts. [\[Read More\]](#)

Sun Focus – [State proposes \\$138 million in emergency school aid](#)

With many Minnesota school districts facing multi-million-dollar deficits, the state Legislature and governor's office have announced plans for a single-time emergency school aid proposal that would pump \$137.9 million into school funding. Mounds View School District Superintendent Chris Lennox said the influx of emergency dollars would be a good start, but that districts are facing long-term issues that would only be served in the short-term with the added revenue. [\[Read More\]](#)

St. Cloud Times – [Dayton pushes emergency school aid funding at Talahi](#)

After sitting on a rug and chatting with Talahi Community School students on Thursday morning, Gov. Mark Dayton pushed his proposal to inject some of the state's \$329 million budget surplus into schools. "St. Cloud area schools continue to face annual budget deficits despite careful stewardship of our finances. These shortfalls in funding remain a consistent financial challenge," said Superintendent Willie Jett. Jett called the emergency aid a "much needed down payment to correct the funding shortfall." [\[Read More\]](#)

Marshall Independent – [Dayton visits Park Side; says state can afford to give more to schools](#)

It started with hearing stories of Minnesota schools struggling with budget deficits, Gov. Mark Dayton said. Rather than have school districts lay off teachers or cut programs, he thought the state should put some of its budget surplus to use. "We're looking at a budget deficit for next year. So, those funds would be very important for us, to take a look at things like special education teachers, English Learner teachers, social workers, counselors and even custodians," said Marshall Superintendent Scott Monson. [\[Read More\]](#)

[KIMT 3 News – Gov. Dayton visits a Rochester school: “The question is how much can we do for our schools”](#)

According to the Minnesota Rural Education Association, at least 33 Greater Minnesota school districts are cutting staff due to budget deficits, including 85 teachers. "I don't think the question is how little can we do for our schools. I think the question is how much can we do for our schools to meet the needs," said Governor Dayton. [[Read More](#)]

[KAAL 6 News – Gov. Dayton Continues Advocacy for Emergency School Funding in Rochester](#)

The Governor is urging the Legislature to support \$138 million dollars in one - time emergency aid. If the proposal passes, it would mean just under \$2.7 million in funding for Rochester Public Schools. "We are looking at \$1.6 million dollars in reductions for next year, which are several staff. If that funding would pass, that would give us an opportunity to bring back some of those positions," said Superintendent Michael Munoz. [[Read More](#)]

[Rochester Post-Bulletin – Triton Public Schools faces \\$240,000 in reductions](#)

District officials are now taking a hard look at where cuts can be made to have a balanced budget for the 2018-19 school year. Last spring, Triton made more than \$380,000 in reductions, including some to extracurricular activities. The board now faces an additional \$240,000 in cuts to keep the budget balanced. Triton has a little more than \$1 million left in its fund balance, Joyce said. Among the money-saving proposals is an increase in classroom sizes. Another proposal involves staff reductions. [[Read More](#)]

[Winona Daily News – Winona Area Public Schools would get \\$363K in one-time funding under Dayton's proposal](#)

Gov. Mark Dayton called for lawmakers Tuesday to set aside \$138 million in emergency funding for public schools. Based on the most recent Winona Area Public Schools enrollment numbers, that would mean \$363,636 in new, one-time funding for next year, a welcome sight for a district that's had to slash its budget by \$3.2 million over the past two years with cuts of more than \$1 million needed in each of the next three years. "Although this funding would only be available for one year, it would help lessen the impact of the decrease in spending power that has developed over time," WAPS Superintendent Rich Damhan said. "For WAPS, this would help us to begin to grow our fund balance, while lessening the amount needed to cut from our budget in future years." [[Read More](#)]

[Star Tribune – Twin Cities schools cutting teacher, staff jobs as they face massive shortfalls](#)

Metro-area school districts are facing one of the worst budget-cutting seasons in recent years, and they plan to lay off more than 240 teachers and other staff to save money. In the metro area, 26 school districts are confronting a total shortfall of more than \$108 million for the 2018-2019 school year — the highest amount since 2011. Because staffing makes up a large portion of budgets, districts are relying on job cuts to balance their budgets. "It's the largest we've seen in a few years," said Scott Croonquist, the group's executive director. "It's more districts, and more districts facing larger shortfalls than we've seen in a time." [[Read More](#)]

[Rochester Post-Bulletin – Red Wing schools face potential cuts, operating levy](#)

Changes are coming to the Red Wing School District. Red Wing Superintendent Karsten Anderson outlined just less than \$3.1 million in cuts. At least that amount would need to take

effect in two years if district voters do not pass a new levy. The current levy includes \$300 of board-passed levy per student and \$811 per pupil passed by the voters nearly 10 years ago. That levy expires after the 2018-19 school year. “Declining enrollment is a factor because we are paid per pupil,” Anderson said. “The state Legislature also put a cap on reimbursement for some services. And we have increasing costs due to inflation, especially with health insurance.” [[Read More](#)]

Staples World – [School board okays first budget cuts](#)

The Staples-Motley School Board approved \$273,300 in education cuts at their Mar. 19 meeting and formed a committee to explore “ongoing operational efficiencies and to look at additional cuts as needed for the coming school year.” Chad Longbella said a decision on the education cuts was needed now so the affected staff could be notified and allowed time for their due process as required in their contracts. The \$273,300 in cuts approved include shifts in staff at the elementary school, reduction of overloads at the middle school as well as a cut of 1.9 full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers, media resources at the high school and middle school, one FTE in the Connections program, one high school librarian FTE, one possible high school FTE depending on scheduling, the Accelerated Reading program and dropping the College in the School FTE to part time for the first semester. [[Read More](#)]

Anoka County Union Herald – [St. Francis School Board approves \\$3.7M reductions](#)

After a long discussion Feb. 26, the St. Francis School Board voted 6-1 to approve \$3.7 million in budget cuts ahead of the 2018-2019 school year. The district will cut approximately 50 full-time equivalent positions. The 2016-2017 school year brought a \$1.1 million revenue shortage and an expense overage of \$1.3 million, prompting the district to dip into its unassigned fund balance, which sat at \$2.7 million. At the end of the year it was down to \$630,259, which was \$2.1 million lower than projected and represented only about 1.2 percent of annual expenditures. The board’s target is a fund balance of at least 5 percent of annual expenditures. With a low fund balance, “it’s very hard to manage your day-to-day operating,” said Bernice Humnick, business services director. [[Read More](#)]

KDAL 610 AM – [Duluth Included In Gov. Dayton School Funding Plan](#)

Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton is calling for \$138 million dollars in emergency funding for Minnesota schools as districts across the state wrestle with budget shortfalls. The Duluth School District has struggled for years with budget deficits, facing difficult cuts to meet their bottom line each fiscal year. Fiscal year 2019, no different. “I would say the total budget adjustments necessary are around \$4 million,” says Hasler. With staff and teacher layoffs on the line, Hasler says the extra state funding never hurts. “It would absolutely be helpful. Absolutely, unmistakably be helpful.” [[Read More](#)]

Rochester Post-Bulletin – [Byron schools are cutting costs](#)

The Byron Public Schools will seek to balance its budget through spending cuts next month. The district has spent down its rainy-day fund by about \$900,000 since 2011, reducing that fund, as a share of the annual budget, from 18.3 percent to 6.7 percent. The fund was projected to fall still lower, to 4.8 percent, this year. Last fall, the school board voted to maximize its local option tax levy to \$424 per student, adding \$320,000 in revenue for the 2018-19 fiscal year. In addition, the district is set to receive a 2 percent increase in state funding. [[Read More](#)]

Star Tribune – [Gov. Mark Dayton proposes nearly \\$138 million in emergency aid to Minnesota schools](#)

Around the Twin Cities metro area, 26 school districts are facing a shortfall of more than \$108 million for the next school year. Meanwhile, at least 33 school districts in other parts of Minnesota are planning to cut a total of 85 teachers and 75 staff members, according to a recent survey by the Minnesota Rural Education Association. In Robbinsdale, where a \$10.6 million gap is forcing the district to consider cutting 73 staff positions, school board President John Vento said he welcomed the help. But with such a large shortfall, he did not think it would be enough to avoid layoffs. “We are very supportive of the governor’s proposal, and it will help us this year,” he said. [[Read More](#)]

Aitkin Independent Age – [ISD 1 budget cuts claim jobs](#)

The termination of positions and educational programs was approved by the Aitkin School Board at its regular meeting on March 19 in an effort to get the budget back on track. The recent cuts were made in an effort to alleviate the deficit spending, Superintendent Brad Kelvington said during the Monday night meeting. The total dollar amount of cuts in the budget for next year is approximately \$600,000. [[Read More](#)]

Austin Daily Herald – [Southland struggles with how to proceed into future](#)

With no changes, the district would be in deficit spending in the next school year, which would compound each year if nothing changed. By 2021-22, the district is projected to be almost \$500,000 in decline and would enter statutory operating debt. That would trigger state financial control of the district which could result in cuts made by the state, or dissolution of the district. Closing the elementary school would save over \$510,000. [[Read More](#)]

Faribault Daily News – [Dwindling enrollment pushes board to cut 3 teaching jobs](#)

In the last year, Faribault Schools have lost just over 100 students, a drop that’s forcing the district to cut three elementary school teachers in 2018-19. The staff cuts are a piece of the board’s agreement to cut \$460,000 from the 2018-19 school year budget. [[Read More](#)]

Staples World – [School board okays first budget cuts](#)

The Staples-Motley School Board approved \$273,300 in education cuts at their Mar. 19 meeting and formed a committee to explore “ongoing operational efficiencies and to look at additional cuts as needed for the coming school year.” The budget cuts also ax the Accelerated Reading program in the district and reduced from full time to part time a position associated with College in the Schools. [[Read More](#)]

City Pages – [Stingy voters and state budgets are gutting the Forest Lake school district](#)

“We’re at a place now where we’re making \$2 million cuts,” says Forest Lake School Board chair Rob Rapheal. “Our administration is bare-bones. Our teaching staff is barebones. It really hurts.” This crisis point is the result of the district’s funding, both from the community and the state, lagging behind rising costs. [[Read More](#)]

Duluth News Tribune – [Duluth schools face nearly \\$4 million deficit](#)

The Duluth school district is facing a nearly \$4 million deficit in fiscal year 2019. Last month, the board faced a \$2 million deficit for the current year's budget. That deficit was reduced by the state sending a one-time \$600,000 adjustment enrollment as well as by the district delaying the filling of open positions, cutting department and staff development budgets and delaying the telepresence project at the high school. [[Read More](#)]

ECM ABC Newspapers – [St. Francis School Board approves \\$3.7M reductions](#)

After a long discussion Feb. 26, the St. Francis School Board voted 6-1 to approve \$3.7 million in budget cuts ahead of the 2018-2019 school year. The district will cut approximately 50 full-time equivalent positions to “right size” the district. As an effect of the cuts, class sizes would increase, most dramatically at the high school. Core subjects would see double-digit increases to average class size, with English language arts sitting at 37.8, math at 37.91, science at 37.85 and social studies at 38.52. [[Read More](#)]

Isanti County Times – [Cambridge-Isanti Schools to reduce 230 instructional assistant hours next year](#)

Facing \$1.5 million in budget reductions for the 2018-2019 school year, the Cambridge-Isanti School Board took action during its March 22 meeting to reduce 230.75 hours for instructional assistants and paraprofessionals beginning with the next school year, a cost savings of approximately \$770,000. In a statement to the Isanti County News, the district said it doesn’t know exactly how the board’s action will affect personnel. [[Read More](#)]

ECM Sun This Week – [District 191 prepares for budget cuts](#)

Even with spending cuts, the district is projecting a \$2.2 million year-end deficit in 2018-19. As they have in recent years, officials plan to spend down dwindling general fund reserves to cover the red ink. Next year’s unassigned general fund balance is projected at 7.41 percent of total general fund spending, which would require the board to waive its policy of maintaining an 8 percent balance. [[Read More](#)]

ECM Union Times – [Enrollment numbers force cuts at Milaca](#)

“Somber” would best describe the mood inside the crowded March 19 Milaca School Board meeting as the board discussed and then voted unanimously to make reductions in the budget of \$665,000, which will include a total of five teachers and four paraprofessionals. The budgetary adjustment shows a total of \$257,410 from the elementary school and \$190,060 from the high school. From a district perspective, shaving dollars and finding savings generates a total of \$221,400. [[Read More](#)]

Fergus Falls Journal – [Fergus Falls School Board announces program reductions](#)

Position and program reductions were announced and approved as a resolution at the Fergus Falls School Board meeting on Monday evening. There will be three reductions this year, equaling .667 full-time equivalent position and a full-time equivalent in class size reduction. The reductions will be an elementary class size reduction, a .167 FTE music position and a .5 FTE iQ Academy special education position. [[Read More](#)]

Houston County News – [Strong Schools, Strong Communities](#)

Last November, the board tried to pass an operating levy referendum that would have raised the current levy amount to \$626.72 per student – an increase of about \$400. The levy failed and left the district making around \$300,000 worth of cuts. [[Read More](#)]

Hutchinson Leader – [School Board to Consider \\$500,000 in Budget Cuts](#)

“But the cost ... continues to go up whether you are a private or public entity,” said Rebecca Boll, Hutchinson Public Schools’ director of business and finance. That was why, Monday night, she advised the School Board to consider \$500,000 in spending reductions for next school year. This past year, declining enrollment was cited along with school funding that continues to fall

behind inflation as the reason for \$860,000 in reductions from the school budget. The cut of 12 weeks of art from sixth grade, or one trimester, received particular public scrutiny. [\[Read More\]](#)

KAAL 6 News – [Byron School Board Discusses Budget Cuts](#)

The Byron School Board met Monday night to discuss its future including making cuts to positions and programs and increasing class sizes to meet the district's financial goals. One includes increasing elementary class sizes and eliminating a paraprofessional role. The second scenario would eliminate the Fall Trap program, reduce clerical staff and replace one school nurse with two health aides. Each scenario would mean a \$495,000 reduction in the budget to meet the board-approved eight percent for its rainy day funds. [\[Read More\]](#)

Star Tribune – [Minneapolis schools brace for cuts as district tackles \\$33 million budget deficit](#)

Counselors, social workers and other Minneapolis school staff are bracing for hundreds of possible layoffs this year to help address the school district's projected \$33 million deficit. Preliminary numbers from the district show that the potential layoffs could affect an estimated 350 to 400 full-time equivalent jobs. "It's really hard. Every school is feeling the impact on this," district spokesman Dirk Tedmon said. "These are the steps we have to take . . . we're looking to solve it through programmatic changes to get to a structurally balanced budget." [\[Read More\]](#)

MPR News – [St. Paul schools see \\$17 million budget shortfall](#)

The St. Paul school district is projecting a \$17 million budget gap for next year. The district expects a \$6.6 million increase in revenue from higher per-student state funds and a tax levy. Expenses are projected to go up by nearly \$24 million, driven mainly by inflation costs for salaries and benefits. [\[Read More\]](#)

Pioneer Press – [Budget stress hitting some of St. Paul's most popular schools](#)

Some of St. Paul's most popular public schools are under major budget stress as the school district works to prop up overall enrollment while also cutting costs. The district is wrestling with a \$17.2 million budget deficit for the fall. Schrul said much of that gap can be made up through eliminating one-time expenses from the current school year and through cuts to district programs, which she'll detail at the board's next meeting. [\[Read More\]](#)

Rochester Post-Bulletin – [Winona school board votes to close two elementary schools](#)

The Winona Area Public Schools board voted Thursday night to close Madison and Rollingstone elementary schools. The decision comes after months of discussion of how best to cut the district's operating expenses to balance its dwindling budget. The decisions came after a budget reduction committee made the closings part of its recommendation to meet an expected \$1.7 million shortfall in the district's 2018-19 budget. [\[Read More\]](#)

Star Tribune – [Minneapolis schools brace for cuts as district tackles \\$33 million budget deficit](#)

Counselors, social workers and other Minneapolis school staff are bracing for hundreds of possible layoffs this year to help address the school district's projected \$33 million deficit. Patrick Henry is expected to cut \$1.9 million, putting Japanese, English, math and physical education teachers' jobs on the chopping block. At Washburn, \$1.6 million in cuts, or 13 percent of the budget, will mean losing jobs such as social workers and security staff. The number of counselors will drop from six to two for the 1,600-student high school. [\[Read More\]](#)

Star Tribune – [Shakopee school board authorizes \\$2.4 million in cuts, fills vacancy](#)

The Shakopee school board has authorized \$2.4 million in proposed budget cuts for the 2018-19 school year, in part by closing a school for sixth graders and cutting a mix of district staffers. The board plans to save about \$871,000 by closing Pearson 6th Grade Center and another \$788,000 in staffing reductions. But board members told district administrators to reconsider a proposed \$30,000 slash to middle school sports, in order to save programming for the 700-plus children who participate. [[Read More](#)]

St. James Plainealer – [St. James School Board cuts \\$212,176 for 2018-2019 budget](#)

As roughly 60 students, staff and faculty squeezed into the tight confines of the Armstrong Media Center, all eyes were on the St. James School Board. With a fund balance currently at - \$179,272.00 the district knew that they needed to do something to put themselves in a better financial situation. For many of the students, parents and staff in attendance Option C would see them lose a beloved teacher. That teacher was Alex Hein, who students in the open forum touted as a “caring and hard-working teacher.” [[Read More](#)]

Thief River Falls Times – [Cuts Hardest on Northwest Area Learning Center](#)

In January, the finance committee of the Board of Education recommended reducing the budget by \$200,000. Several meetings have been held since then. It was also explained that the District has been deficit spending since 2014-15 and projecting deficits since 2013-14. Cuts have been made in the past, but if the District is to reduce the budget by \$200,000 and maintain its unassigned fund balance at a healthy level, more cuts would have to be made and this time it would mean cutting staff. [[Read More](#)]