



STATE OF MINNESOTA  
*L'Étoile du Nord*

Office of Governor Mark Dayton

## **Emergency School Aid: What Minnesotans Are Saying**

*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. Below, read what community leaders are saying about the impact budget cuts would have on their schools, teachers, and kids

**"From 2003 to 2012, our state's public school aid decreased, in real dollars, by almost \$2,000 per student. Since then, we have reversed that trend, increasing per-pupil aid by more than \$1,000 in real dollars and investing \$2 billion overall in E-12 education. Still, many school districts throughout our state are now reporting that they face severe financial shortfalls, which will force the layoffs of hundreds of teachers and support staff in the next school year. This Emergency School Aid is essential to ensure that our schools can continue to provide the high quality educations their students need and deserve. I urge Legislators to join me in addressing the urgent needs of our students and teachers."**

*– Governor Mark Dayton*  
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**"Governor Dayton continues to make our kids and our schools a priority. Since he took office he's been steadily working to increase education funding to keep pace with the rising costs and increased demands placed on our schools. His call today for additional funding relief means that schools would be able to avoid increased class sizes, maintain important programs and services, and hold the line on other cuts that could negatively impact student learning in the coming school year."**

*– Education Commissioner Brenda Cassellius*  
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**"Due to funding shortfalls increased special education cross subsidies, Benson Schools has to cut three percent of its budget. Part of the reductions include a Physical Education Teacher and a Science Teacher, which will reduce programs for students."**

**Governor Dayton’s proposal for emergency funding will help districts, like Benson, bridge the funding gap and maintain opportunities for students.”**

*– Benson Public Schools Superintendent Dennis Laumeyer*

**“We are in danger of throwing away the heritage of ‘the Minnesota Miracle.’ Districts, schools and students have changed, and funding has not kept pace. Our state has the capacity to lead the nation once again, but we need the funding to make it happen.”**

*– Saint Paul Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Joe Gothard*

**“A one-time emergency appropriation to school districts statewide will buy us the time we need to reassess how we budget. More immediately, it will give us \$6 million for the coming school year, which means we will be able to soften the impact on our students and teachers. Saint Paul's Board of Education applauds this proposal and urges the legislature to pass it.”**

*– Saint Paul Public Schools Board Chair Zuki Ellis*

**“We’re facing budget cuts of about \$650,000 this year. That’s a lot in a district our size. It means the district will lay off a math teacher who works in our math resource room. It also means our district won’t replace four teachers who are retiring. That means large classes for the rest of the teachers. Perhaps the biggest problem, however, is the budget cuts means we’re no closer to replacing the social worker in our high school. The one-time money the Governor is proposing will be lifeline from where we are now to the next two-year budget. I hope this Legislature passes this emergency aid for schools and the next Legislature finds some long-term solutions.”**

*– Mora High School Teacher Joy Whitbred*

**“Having nearly 30 eight-year-olds in a classroom means I will be doing as much crowd control as teaching. If I was in charge, I would spend every dime of it keeping class sizes down for the youngest students next year. Smaller classes mean better readers, more learning in math and more kids who get fired up for science. You can’t ask for a better return than that. The Governor's proposal for \$138 million in emergency school aid would send about \$360,000 to my district. That could make a difference. I urge the Legislature to approve the Governor's request.”**

*– Winona Third Grade Teacher Matt Reuter*

**“I am thrilled by Governor Dayton’s statement of allocating additional funding to schools. As a superintendent who announced \$600,000 dollars of reductions at Aitkin Schools in March, I will take any additional funding and encourage legislators to support his wishes. Had my board of education not approved the local optional revenue for the 2018-19 school year, we would have reduced our budget by \$1.1 million. We would love to see the one-time money added permanently, but I will take**

it for this coming year. The additional proposed \$183,500 for Aitkin would help us to restore some but not all of the programming approved to be reduced. Thank you for your work to help our students of Aitkin and Minnesota.”

– *Aitkin Schools Superintendent Brad Kelvington*

“On behalf of the Edina Public Schools, I want to thank you for your proposal to provide additional ‘emergency funding’ for schools to address ongoing school district budget shortfalls. For our district, your proposal would provide an additional \$1.2 million in revenue. Given that our district just made \$1.7 million in cuts for the 2018-19 school year, this revenue would help us to continue to provide the programs and services our families expect, and allow us to continue to make improvements in teaching and learning that best prepare each and every student for their future.”

– *Edina Public Schools Superintendent John W. Schultz, Ph.D.*

“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. For Winona Area Public Schools, this would help us to begin to grow our fund balance, while lessening the amount needed to cut from our budget in future years.”

– *Rich Damhan, Winona Area Public Schools Superintendent*  
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“We are very supportive of the governor’s proposal, and it will help us this year.”

– *Robbinsdale School Board President John Vento*  
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“Extremely excited to hear that news... Our fingers are crossed that it will actually pass. We are getting close to finishing next year's budget and we are cutting \$1.6 million dollars out of our budget for next year... If anybody stepped into a public school classroom now, things have really changed and it's a much more difficult job than it probably was many years ago... So they really deserve as much funding as we can give them. We have to stay within our financial perimeters”

– *Rochester Public Schools Superintendent Michael Munoz*  
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“This time it’s very drastic for a school district like us... This is going to change the world we teach in.”

– *Monticello High School History Teacher Joe Rosh*  
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**“Right now, the best way to come into alignment is to reduce staff... We can’t operate in a deficit.”**

– *Monticello Interim Superintendent Michael Favor*  
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**“We’re looking at every line item from the superintendent’s office on down.”**

– *Robbinsdale Superintendent Carlton Jenkins*  
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**“I want more activities for kids... I know we’re not in that position right now, but taking them away is never a good option.”**

– *Shakopee School Board Member Tony Pass*  
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**“I think [kids] deserve more and I think they got more in the past. [She urged people to come together] in the spirit of our kids and the value of education that has come from our history of doing the right thing.”**

– *Southland Music Teacher Laura Freund*  
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**“Every cut will affect someone and someone else will be disappointed.”**

– *Staples Motley School Board Member Mary Freeman*  
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**“We either need to make up that gap with general fund dollars that we are currently spending in other ways or we need to change our [class-size] ratios.”**

– *Duluth Public Schools Superintendent Bill Gronseth*  
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**“To say that I was dreading this night is a gross understatement. We find ourselves in a tough situation here.”**

– *St. Francis Schools Superintendent Troy Ferguson*  
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**“It is very difficult to recommend changes in staffing; we are in a difficult business. We know there have been a lot of conversations with administration. We need to make sure we are doing our due diligence to provide our students the best services we can provide.”**

*– Cambridge-Isanti School Board Chair Tim Hitchings*

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**“We’re at a place now where we’re making \$2 million cuts. Our administration is bare-bones. Our teaching staff is barebones. It really hurts. The stuff that was easy to cut was cut ten years ago. You’re put into a position where you’re doing what you know is wrong for those kids.”**

*– Rob Rapheal, Forest Lake School Board Chair*

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**“The cost... continues to go up whether you are a private or public entity. We have larger cohorts leaving the system, and smaller entering... There are just fewer students to begin with.”**

*– Rebecca Boll, Director of Business and Finance, Hutchinson Public Schools*

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**“While the teachers and paraprofessionals greatly appreciate the opportunity to participate in the process, the end result has become something we cannot support... We are doing so in support of all our students and all educational staff and will not rank one FTE, section, program, or support staff as more important than another. Deep cuts and a rapid return to an 8 percent fund balance will not help us attract or retain quality staff and may also cause us to lose students.”**

*– Byron Education Association President Brooke Woodhouse*

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**“We fund the schools first, and we create the budgets for the schools making sure they're viable then we do the allocations for the programs. The programs are where we look at other ways for efficiencies... We've been very lean the past few years.”**

*– Marie Schrul, Chief Financial Officer for St. Paul Schools*

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**“When you get a one-to-two percent [funding] increase from the state, you’ve got a problem. Things get tighter and tighter. Class sizes go up, and services become less available.”**

*– Steve Massey, Forest Lake Public School District Superintendent*

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**“Declining enrollment is a factor because we are paid per pupil... The state Legislature also put a cap on reimbursement for some services. And we have increasing costs due to inflation, especially with health insurance.”**

*– Red Wing Schools Superintendent Karsten Anderson*

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**“We just have this gap that keeps on growing... That’s a challenge for schools across the state. We tried hard in this process to stay away from our core classroom and support needs... It’s difficult because, no matter what, it impacts someone in our community.”**

*– Lisa Rider, Executive Director of Business Services, Burnsville-Eagan-Savage School District*

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**“I don’t even want to think about what would happen to our credibility [if class sizes were raised].”**

*– Abigail Alt, Burnsville-Eagan-Savage School Board Member*

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**“When you look at what has been done to get us to \$2.2 (million) deficit spending, it bites.”**

*– Dan Luth, Burnsville-Eagan-Savage School Board Member*

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**“We have been unable to pass an operational levy to support our budget. Many schools are not able to operate with the state’s 2 percent money in the educational formula.”**

*– Triton Superintendent Brett Joyce*

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**“Don’t put it on the backs of the classrooms ... that’s unacceptable. This is the biggest blow to the schools in anybody’s memory. [Budget cuts] are completely gutting the school. In an era when kids are at risk for gun safety, there’s no protection in the school.”**

*– Jeanne Massey, Parent of a Washburn High School Student*

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**“It’s really hard. Every school is feeling the impact on this. These are the steps we have to take... We’re looking to solve it through programmatic changes to get to a structurally balanced budget.”**

– Dirk Tedmon, Minneapolis School District Spokesman  
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## WHAT STATE LEGISLATORS ARE SAYING

**“I support the Governor’s emergency aid proposal and encourage legislators to help make this become law. Our schools should not face serious budget stress when we have a budget surplus. Investing in quality education is a Minnesota value, and I wholeheartedly agree with the Governor in his support of our schools.”**

– Assistant Senate Minority Leader Susan Kent

**“Schools across Minnesota are facing budget cuts, so I applaud and support Governor Dayton’s Emergency School Aid proposal. The funding will give schools the flexibility to preserve classroom programs, lower class sizes, or do what works for their district to avoid drastic cuts that will hurt educational quality for our students. It’s wise to invest some of the surplus in our most valuable assets—our children.”**

– Senator Chuck Wiger

**“As a state lawmaker, I have to make a lot of difficult decisions, but my decision to support an emergency appropriation to prevent 240 teachers from losing their jobs was not difficult at all. We need to fund our schools, give our kids the tools they need to succeed, and express our gratitude for educators’ invaluable contributions to our society.”**

– Senator Steve Cwodzinski

**“Education has always been a pathway to a better life, and the Legislature has an obligation to provide full funding for our public education system to meet the needs of our communities and future workforce. Governor Dayton’s emergency budget request would alleviate forced cost-cutting plans by districts across Minnesota facing budget shortfalls, which would lead to fewer resources for students.”**

– Senator Greg Clausen

**“As a former school board member, I know how hard districts work to negotiate responsible contracts. And I know districts that do so still face great need for additional funding. Providing these funds for districts that need them would be a very responsible use of the budget surplus – and one of the best investments we can make in the future of Minnesota.”**

– Senator Melissa H. Wiklund

**“Across the state our school districts are being forced to lay off hundreds of teachers and support staff, along with significant cuts to school programs, in the coming year due to funding shortfalls. Minnesota currently has a surplus, and what is more important than investing in our future? Governor Dayton’s Emergency School Aid will ensure our schools can continue to provide the high-quality education their students need and deserve.”**

*– Senator Kari Dziedzic*

**“I fully support the Governor’s proposal to provide urgently needed resources so our schools and teachers can avoid looming cuts and continue providing quality education to the young people of Minnesota. Our funding per student has decreased significantly since 2003. Across the state, we face the underfunding of special education programs. Minneapolis Public Schools are confronting a \$33 million-dollar deficit. We subsidize the state and federal responsibility for special education with \$56 million of local funds. The Governor’s initiative would be a big help. The Governor is on the right track, while our colleagues across the aisle in both chambers of the legislature are considering a constitutional amendment that would permanently lock \$530 million out of the general fund in the next biennium, further limiting the resources available to our schools.”**

*– Senator Scott Dibble*

**“There are simply too many schools facing budgetary shortcomings. This is the perfect opportunity to help school districts across our state keep invaluable teachers and staff members, who would otherwise be laid off. And, if we don’t step in, our children will suffer from those consequences. This funding is particularly important for our students in the Hopkins, Saint Louis Park, Robbinsdale and Wayzata school districts that I represent. They will not have another chance to experience this upcoming school year with more resources; now is the only time for them, and it is the only time for us to step up to the plate.”**

*– Senator Ron Latz*

**“Public education is essential to Minnesota's future and we need to invest more to fill this gap in funding. I strongly support governor Dayton’s efforts to devote more funding for schools.”**

*– Senator Karla Bigham*

**“Public education is the engine that powers Minnesota’s economy. Our schools and teachers prepare our students to be productive workers who are able to earn a paycheck and support their families later in life. State lawmakers should approve Governor Dayton’s request for an emergency appropriation for our schools. Without it, 240 Minnesotans who help our kids learn math, science, and more will lose their jobs.”**

*– Senator John Marty*



**“I want to thank Governor Dayton for bringing forth a plan to prevent 240 Minnesotans from losing their jobs and paychecks. Teachers do not get nearly enough credit for the invaluable job they perform on a daily basis. An emergency appropriation to prevent massive layoffs in Burnsville, Eagan, and elsewhere is the right thing to do.”**

*– Senator Jim Carlson*

**“As a teacher, I want to thank the Governor for being such a champion for our students throughout his time in office, and for recognizing the urgency of this situation. He’s put forth a bold investment that will keep more teachers in our classrooms, keep class sizes down, and give more kids the chance to succeed. When investment in our classrooms doesn’t keep up, this means real consequences for our kids. Being forced to do more with less is no longer doable for our educators.”**

*– Representative Julie Sandstede*

**“The Governor is doing the right thing by tackling this education funding problem head-on while we have a modest surplus. I want to thank him for being a champion for our children in Osseo and Robbinsdale Public Schools, and for recognizing the urgency of this situation. His plan is a bold investment that will keep more teachers in our classrooms, keep class sizes down, and give more students the chance to succeed. As a retired teacher, I understand the real consequences for our students when we don’t meet our commitment to adequately fund great schools. Teachers all over our state are doing more with less, and that isn’t sustainable for the future success of our students or our economy. While we need to do more to match our education funding to inflation and fund special education costs adequately, the Governor’s proposal means more students will get the instruction and support they deserve, at least in the near term, and that’s crucial.”**

*– Representative Lyndon Carlson*

**“Investing in our children is at the core of what Minnesotans value. Prior administrations balanced their budgets on the backs of schools – the backs of our children – and as a direct result, many of Minnesota’s schools are in critical need of funding. Governor Dayton’s proposal makes sense, is badly needed, and, in this time of state surplus, is absolutely achievable.”**

*– Representative Andrew Carlson*

**“School districts across the state are facing potential cuts due to budget deficits, threatening the world-class education we expect for our children. Gov. Dayton’s proposal delivers much-needed emergency funds to our schools to avoid teacher and support staff layoffs and larger class sizes in the coming year. Our children deserve a quality education and this emergency funding belongs in our school districts’ hands so they can continue to deliver it.”**

*– Representative Jack Considine*

**“School districts are facing budget deficits and potential cuts that could undermine the quality education we’re committed to providing for our children. Gov. Dayton’s proposal would provide much needed, one-time funding to districts across the state. Every Minnesotan deserves a world-class education and we must make the investments necessary to ensure that is a reality.”**

*– Representative Sandra Masin*

**“As school districts grapple with budget deficits and potential cuts that threaten the quality education we pride ourselves on delivering to our students, Gov. Dayton’s proposal delivers necessary emergency funds to communities around the state. Every Minnesotan deserves a world-class education and providing it should be one of the most significant investments we make as a state. I’m proud to support this proposal and advocate its passage without delay.”**

*– Representative Duane Sauke*

**“School districts across Minnesota are coming face to face with cuts that could impact the quality of education we deliver to students in our community. The Anoka-Hennepin School District is facing these cuts and the emergency funding would help continue our tradition of excellent education. These funds amount to an additional \$126 for every student in Minnesota. This proposal deserves support across party lines.”**

*– Representative Erin Koegel*

**“Dozens of school districts across our state are facing budget deficits and cuts that could significantly impact the quality education we are committed to providing for our kids. This one-time funding can help prevent layoffs, the elimination of extracurricular activities, and larger class sizes in the coming year. Increasing school resources is an investment in the future and the more we can do to prepare kids for college or the workforce, the better off we’ll be.”**

*– Representative Rob Ecklund*

**“Minnesota is great because we value our children and their education. We must support the teachers and staff who do so much to create a positive place for our children to learn. Forcing schools to cut teachers, support staff and important programs is unacceptable.”**

*– Representative Mike Freiberg*

**“We’re proud of the great schools we have in Minnesota, but we keep asking them to do more with less. While Gov. Dayton has shown tremendous leadership by increasing investments in education, we’re still catching up from years of**

**underfunding. If we don't protect our districts from the massive budget cuts they are facing, like those right here in our St. Paul Public Schools, it's our students who will ultimately lose out. We have a responsibility to every one of our kids, so let's do the right thing and deliver these investments."**

*– Representative John Lesch*

**"If we're going to expect our schools to deliver the world-class education Minnesota families are accustomed to, we need to make sure they have the resources to do it. The proposal from Gov. Dayton will go a long way to make sure more of our young people have the opportunity to achieve in the classroom. Laying off teachers and other staff and letting class sizes increase are huge barriers to student success. I hope fellow legislators can join me in supporting this added funding."**

*– Representative Debra Hilstrom*

**"All kids deserve the prospect of a bright future, and a quality education plays a big role in this. I applaud Gov. Dayton for recognizing the funding predicament schools are facing, and the need to protect them from devastating cuts. As legislators, we have a responsibility to deliver schools the resources they need to provide a world-class education. To be sure, we have more work in front of us, but this proposal will help ensure all kids can continue to get a great education."**

*– Representative Liz Olson*

**"Here in Minnesota, we value public education and the benefits it brings to our state. Our students don't deserve overcrowded classes and diminished quality that would result if we fail to adequately fund our public schools. Instead of giving more tax cuts to corporations as Republicans are doing, we should be spending money on public education—it is a sound investment for our state and our future."**

*– Representative Jen Schultz*

**"School districts all across our state face immediate budget deficits, resulting in cuts that could mean teacher layoffs and increased class sizes in the coming year, while making it difficult to provide support services that help to close the opportunity gap. This is unacceptable and I support Gov. Dayton's proposal to provide these emergency funds without delay. It's critical for our future that every child comes to school ready to learn and that they receive a world-class education. This proposal should earn support from everyone who values our kids and our schools."**

*– Representative Erin Murphy*

**"While Governor Dayton has made historic investments in education, the simple truth is that Minnesota schools are still trying to regain financial footing after years of former Governor Tim Pawlenty's cuts to education. Now our schools need emergency funding, and it is the Minnesota Legislature's duty to fully fund our schools so they don't face budget shortfalls and cuts. I grew up in Apple Valley and I attended the**

**public schools in our community. I know our teachers because they were my teachers. We know they work tirelessly so every student has an opportunity to earn an education that allows them to thrive in a competitive world. That is what Minnesotans expect and, as policymakers, we need to give our teachers and students the support they need.”**

*– Representative Erin Maye Quade*

**“I commend Gov. Dayton for his continued advocacy for Minnesota's schools and students. This additional funding will continue Minnesota's strong tradition of education in our state. These dollars will help Minnesota's students succeed for the future of our state and its workforce.”**

*– Representative Ben Lien*

**“Investing in excellent schools for our students pays off many times over, for their families and for all of us,” said Rep. Pinto. “Public schools across the state, including in St. Paul, urgently need funding to keep more teachers in classrooms, keep class sizes down, and give students the chance to succeed. I am grateful for Governor Dayton’s continued leadership on behalf of children in St. Paul and throughout the state.”**

*– Representative Dave Pinto*

**“Enacting the Governor’s plan to protect our school funding is the wise thing to do, especially in a time of economic uncertainty. Our students and schools unfairly paid the price as a result of Pawlenty’s deficits and misguided priorities, which took years to pay back. Education has made Minnesota a leader, but we won’t continue to lead by underfunding our schools and cutting opportunities for our kids. Minnesotans deserve better.”**

*– Representative Paul Rosenthal*

**“Every child in Minnesota deserves an excellent school, and Governor Dayton’s investment will keep more teachers in our classrooms, keep class sizes down, and give more students the chance to succeed. That’s what families in my community and every community deserve. I am grateful for Governor Dayton’s efforts to protect essential services for students in my community.”**

*– Representative Fue Lee*

**“All Minnesota kids deserve a world-class education, and the opportunity to do well and succeed. Despite a surplus, Republicans are consistently shortchanging our students so they can continue to put the wealthy and corporations first. By prioritizing this emergency aid, we’re protecting our public schools, students, teachers and support staff for the future.”**

*– Representative Raymond Dehn*

**“I am proud of our community's commitment to strong schools, preschoolers, and K-12 students. Education has made our state successful. We won't continue to lead if we shortchange our schools. Securing emergency school aid for our students will help ensure our progress won't be jeopardized for the sake of tax cuts for corporations. Preschool and K-12 students deserve every opportunity to succeed and have a bright future.”**

*– Representative Connie Bernardy*

**“As a parent of three children who went through public schools, I know how important quality education is. I want the next generation of students to have the access to quality public schools that my children had. We need to be doing all we can to protect critical school funding for our students, teachers and support staff. The Governor's Emergency School Aid plan should be a priority, especially in a time of budget surplus. Our students deserve this secured funding.”**

*– Representative Cheryl Youakim*