

# FACT SHEET | Investing in Education

## *2015 Budget for a Better Minnesota*

Minnesotans depend on access to a great education for good jobs and bright future. That is why Governor Dayton's budget proposal would invest in strategies to ensure all Minnesotans receive excellent, affordable educations – from pre-Kindergarten to post-secondary. Overall, Governor Dayton's budget would invest \$695 million in preK-12 education. It would also provide \$288 million to improve our higher education systems, and make college more affordable for students and their families. Items below that include an asterisk are new investments included in the Governor's supplemental budget proposal.

### Investing in PreK-12 Education

Over the last four years, Governor Dayton has invested \$895 million in preK-12 education. The Governor's budget proposal would invest \$695 million more in preK-12 education to ensure every student gets an excellent education.

- **Universal Pre-Kindergarten\*** – Since 2011, Governor Dayton has worked to expand access to high-quality early learning across Minnesota. This year, the Governor's budget would invest \$343 million in free school-based pre-kindergarten for all children – benefiting 47,000 of our youngest learners. Governor Dayton's proposal would also continue Minnesota's early learning scholarship program, doubling the number of early learning scholarships available to parents.
- **More Funding for Every School** – The Governor's budget follows through on his commitment to increase school funding every year he is governor: no excuses, no exceptions. It would increase the per-pupil funding formula to \$5,948 by 2017, providing more funding for every school. These funds would give local districts the flexibility to meet the needs of their students and classrooms – from lowering class sizes, hiring new counselors, investing in technology, or providing other need programs and services.
- **Regional Centers of Excellence\*** – The proposal would invest \$12 million in the Regional Centers of Excellence initiative. Minnesota's six Regional Centers provide one-one-one support to struggling schools, working with teachers and school leaders to identify challenges and implement plans for improvement. This nationally-recognized model has helped significantly improve student achievement, with 54 percent of focus schools showing progress toward closing achievement gaps since 2011.
- **Investing in Special Education\*** – The Governor's budget would invest \$41 million in special education, freeing up additional funds for all Minnesota classrooms. Overall, this investment would benefit an estimated 130,000 students in preK-12 schools statewide.
- **Eliminating the Current Head Start Waiting List** – The Head Start program promotes school readiness for low-income children by enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional developments, and by providing their families health, educational, nutritional, and other services. Right now, more than 2,400 children are stuck on a waiting list, hoping to get into Head Start programming. Governor Dayton's budget proposal would eliminate the waiting list and ensure no child is denied a great start in life.
- **Teacher Workforce Recruitment and Retention\*** – The Governor's budget would invest \$25 million to attract and retain a diverse teaching force in hard-to-fill teaching positions. This would help an estimated 400 new teachers enter the teaching profession, help school districts that are experiencing teacher shortages, and diversify the teacher workforce.
- **Expanding School Breakfasts** – Research shows that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. But right now, only 39 percent of all elementary age students participate in the school breakfast program. The Governor's budget would invest \$29.3 million over the next biennium to ensure that every child, pre-Kindergarten through third grade, has access to a nutritious meal to start their day.
- **Helping Kids Read** – The Reading Corps provides trained tutors for students who are struggling with their literacy skills. The Governor's budget would invest an additional \$10 million in the program, focusing resources on PreK through first grade. Reading Corps would be able to grow from 1,200 to almost 1,700 AmeriCorps members, and increase the number of children served to 44,000 each year.

- **Positive Behavior in Schools** – Since its launch in 2005, the Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) initiative has spread across Minnesota. It is currently being implemented by 478 Minnesota schools, or 24 percent of the state’s nearly 2,000 schools. By working to implement behavioral interventions that curb bad behavior before it happens, PBIS schools have seen a 20 percent decrease in disciplinary incidents. That is why the Governor’s budget would invest \$4.6 million in the PBIS initiative to support this work, providing PBIS services to another 600 schools statewide.
- **Helping Every Student Succeed** – The Governor’s budget proposal would invest \$2 million in the Help Me Grow initiative – a one-stop shop that connects parents of at-risk children to a variety of early interventions, supports, and community resources for children.
- **Investing in English Language Learning** – Currently, there are over 68,000 students in Minnesota for whom English is not their first language. In 2014, the Governor extended the number of years schools can serve these students from 5 to 6 years. This year, he is proposing an additional \$7.9 million investment to continue supporting Minnesota’s ELL students by extending funding from 6 to 7 years.
- **Helping American Indian Students\*** – The Governor’s budget would invest \$15 million over the next two years to replace the competitive Success for the Future grant program with a new American Indian education aid initiative. This new initiative would strengthen and expand programs to support academic achievement, decrease the dropout rate, and improve the school climate for American Indian students in a culturally appropriate manner. This proposal would benefit over 19,000 American Indian students statewide, many of whom reside in Greater Minnesota.
- **Investing in Community Partnerships** – The Governor’s budget would provide wraparound services for children and families within the Northside Achievement Zone and St. Paul Promise Neighborhood. Both programs partner with families and the community to permanently close the achievement gap.
- **Technology for Blind and Deaf Students\*** – The Governor’s budget would provide \$1.2 million to make critical technology improvements for students at the Minnesota State Academies for the Deaf and Blind.

## Investing in Higher Education

From 2012 to 2014, the Governor and Legislature invested \$276 million in higher education, reversing a decade of deep cuts and making higher education more affordable. This year, the Governor is proposing a \$288 million investment to improve our higher education systems, and make college more affordable for Minnesota students and their families.

- **Freezing Tuitions\*** – Governor Dayton’s budget would freeze tuition for an estimated 300,000 students and their families. Under the Governor’s proposal, University of Minnesota students would save up to \$730 a year – reducing their total cost by \$2,500 over four years. And a four-year MnSCU student would save up to \$205 a year – reducing their total loan burden cost by roughly \$2,050 over four years.
- **Increasing State Grant Funding\*** – Governor Dayton’s budget proposal would make a significant investment in the State Grant Program – allowing an additional 7,500 students to receive grants, and increasing the amount of financial assistance for 93,000 students statewide. Eligible students would receive an average State Grant increase of \$352, with some getting up to \$1,800 more.
- **University of Minnesota Medical School** – The Governor is proposing a \$30 million investment in the University of Minnesota Medical School to return the School to national prominence, and train the next generation of world-class medical professionals right here in Minnesota. The proposal would allow the University to hire 50 more medical researchers over the next eight years, address Minnesota’s looming shortage of doctors statewide, secure new grants, and support medical innovation and job creation.
- **American Indian Scholarships\*** – The Governor’s budget would invest \$800,000 in scholarships to help an additional 250 American Indian students pursue a higher education.