

FACT SHEET | A State of Educational Excellence

2015 Budget for a Better Minnesota

During his first term, Governor Dayton and the Minnesota Legislature made historic investments in education; enacting free all-day Kindergarten, expanding access to early learning opportunities, and increasing funding for K-12 schools. But there is more work to do to help narrow our state's achievement gap, strengthen our schools, and ensure all children receive excellent educations.

Investing in Early Learning

This session, Governor Dayton and the Legislature invested an additional \$100 million in early learning initiatives, expanding access to child care and preschool for thousands of young learners. These new investments included more early learning scholarships, expanded school readiness programs, increased enrollment in Head Start, more funding for Early Childhood Family Education, and community partnerships aimed at narrowing the achievement gap among at-risk students in low-income communities. These important investments will build on the successes of all-day Kindergarten, help narrow the achievement gap, and help students succeed in school and life.

- **Expanding Early Learning Scholarships** – Governor Dayton and the Legislature invested an additional \$48 million in early learning scholarships this session, bringing total funding for the FY16-17 biennium to \$104 million. This will allow thousands more young children to access high quality early education and care. They also invested \$3.5 million in the Parent Aware initiative, which will allow the Quality Rating System to continue to add providers.
- **Expanding Access to Head Start** – Head Start 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. Governor Dayton and the Legislature invested \$10 million in Head Start this session, providing access to over 1,200 young learners.
- **Investing in Community Partnerships** – The Governor and Legislature invested \$4 million in community partnerships that will provide wrap-around services to families and children in the Northside Achievement Zone and Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood. Both programs partner with families and the community to permanently close achievement gaps.

Investing in K-12 Schools

- **More Funding for Every School** – Governor Dayton and the Legislature increased the basic per pupil funding formula by \$346 million over the next two years, bringing the formula to \$6,067 per pupil by 2017. This new funding will help ensure every Minnesota child receives an excellent education, and the support they need to succeed in school.
- **Helping Kids Read** – The Minnesota Reading Corps provides trained tutors for students who are struggling with their literacy skills. This session, Governor Dayton and the Legislature invested an additional \$3.5 million in the program, helping expand the program to serve 2,500 more students.
- **Reducing Testing Time** – Governor Dayton and the Legislature reduced the amount of time students are required to spend on testing in school. Schools may now spend no more than 10 hours per school year testing students in grades 1 through 6 on districtwide or schoolwide assessments. For students in grades 7 through 12, the limit is 11 hours. A district may exceed this limit if an agreement is reached with its teachers to do so, and public notice is provided.
- **Improving School Facilities** – The Governor and Legislature invested \$32 million to help school districts statewide provide important maintenance to classrooms and other school facilities.

Investing in American Indian Students and English Language Learners

- **Helping American Indian Students** – Governor Dayton and the Legislature invested \$17.5 million this session for schools serving American Indian students, and Bureau of Indian Education schools. This new funding will help eligible schools develop plans to support academic achievement, decrease the dropout rate, and improve the school climate for American Indian students. It will benefit over 19,000 American Indian students across Minnesota.
- **Supporting English Language Learners** – There are over 68,000 students in Minnesota for whom English is not their first language. In 2014, Governor Dayton and the Legislature extended the number of years schools can serve these students from 5 to 6 years. This year, the Governor and Legislature invested \$3 million to extend those services to a total of 7 years per student – giving them the educations and support they need to succeed in school and life.