

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 Students

- **Free Statewide PreK** – Since 2011, Governor Dayton has worked to expand access to high-quality early learning across Minnesota. From full-day kindergarten to early learning scholarships, the state's youngest learners have more access to high quality early learning than ever before. The Governor's budget proposal would invest \$109 million to expand voluntary public Pre-Kindergarten education statewide, ensuring that all Minnesota four-year-olds can attend a PreK program in their area.
- **A \$373 Million Investment in PreK-12 Schools** – The Governor's budget follows through on his promise to increase funding for schools every year he serves in office. The Governor's \$373 million investment would benefit schools across Minnesota.
- **More Funding for Every School** – The Governor's budget would increase the basic per pupil funding formula by \$174 million over the next two years, bringing the formula to \$5,948 per pupil by 2017. This new funding would help ensure every Minnesota child has access to excellent educations, and the support they need to succeed in school.
- **Giving School Districts Flexibility, Control** – Governor Dayton believes that local school districts know what is best for their kids. By increasing the per pupil formula, districts have flexibility to meet their unique needs – from lowering class sizes, hiring new counselors, investing in technology, or other providing other needed programs and services.
- **Expanding School Breakfasts** – Research shows that breakfast is considered 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 \$28.1 million over the next biennium to ensure that every child, from PreK to grade 3, has access to a nutritious meal to start their day.
- **Eliminating the Current Head Start Waiting List** – 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. While 12,070 children benefit from Head Start services, 2,485 children are stuck on the waiting list. A \$19.4 million investment would work toward eliminating the waiting list, and ensuring no child is denied service.

Regional Centers of Excellence

- **A Proven Solution for Struggling Schools** – During his first term, Governor Dayton created the state's Regional Centers of Excellence, which provide intensive, on-the-ground support to struggling schools. The six Regional Centers are staffed by education specialists who work with teachers and school leaders to identify challenges and develop and implement plans for improvement.
- **Building on a Record of Success** – This nationally-recognized model has resulted in significant improvements in student achievement. In fact, 54 percent of focus schools have made progress towards closing the achievement gap since 2011. The Governor's budget would invest \$6 million more in this initiative over the next biennium, giving the state's six Regional Centers resources to serve 200 more schools.

Education – By the Numbers

\$5,948	The Governor's budget would increase the basic formula allowance to \$5,948 by 2017 for every student in Minnesota
\$373 million	Governor Dayton's budget would invest \$373 million in PreK-12 education
31,000	Number of students who would be eligible to attend statewide PreK
83,000	Number of students who would receive free breakfasts
2,485	Number of children who would no longer be on the Head Start waiting list
200	Another 200 schools would receive support from Regional Centers of Excellence