



**Week of April 20, 2015**

### **State Education Funding**

With a projected \$1.9 billion budget surplus on the horizon for the next biennium, Governor Dayton and the legislature have an opportunity to adequately fund public education this session. School Districts across the state believe that in order to meet the basic needs of Minnesota's public schools, the legislature must add at least three percent increase on the general education funding formula.

The general education funding formula is the core for school districts' finances. The general formula is fair and treats all students as valuable. The formula gives schools the most flexibility to meet student needs.

Article XIII of the Minnesota Constitution states that the legislature must provide funding to "secure a thorough and efficient system of public schools throughout the state." For 11 of the past 13 years, the legislature has not done that, as increases to the state's general funding formula was less than inflation.

Despite having a sizable surplus, the legislature has come up short with their budget targets for education funding this session. The House's current target of \$157 million doesn't even allow a 1 percent increase in the funding formula. The Senate's \$350 million target also falls below 3 percent. And though Governor Dayton's \$695 million target is wonderful, he has proposed only a 1 percent increase to the funding formula in each year of the next biennium.

In a few weeks, our District will be placing a number of staff on a proposed Unrequested Leave of Absence (ULA) and probationary termination list. The reason is because of the uncertainty of the size of state funding increase for next year. We are projecting an increase in expenses of 3 percent and currently, the state legislature's funding proposal is at a 1 percent increase. The District's general fund reserve is not sufficient to absorb a 2% growth in expenditures.

Please urge our legislators to make a positive impact on our children. Urge them to make at least a 3 percent increase on the general education funding formula.