

2019 LEGISLATIVE SESSION OVERVIEW

It took a special session, but the 2019 Legislature approved a 2 percent increase on the per-pupil funding formula each of the next two years for preschools through high schools.

E-12 education funding

The E-12 funding bill includes a total of \$543 million in new spending over the next biennium.

- \$388 million for the 2 percent annual formula increase each year (\$6,312 per-pupil in fiscal year 2019 to \$6,567 per-pupil in fiscal year 2021).
- \$90 million to address the shortfall in special education funding.
- \$47 million to continue offering voluntary pre-K for 4,000 Minnesota children.
- \$11 million for grants to attract and retain teachers of color. Another \$1.5 million was in the higher education bill for teacher of color student teacher candidate grants and a loan forgiveness program for shortage areas.

E-12 education policy

Very little policy passed this session – including our priorities, such as fixes to the tiered teacher licensing system and ABE/ECFE contract parity – but there were some victories.

- Schools must inform guardians they have the right to request a meeting with members of an IEP team if they object to a portion or a refusal in a student’s individualized education program. If requested, the meeting must take place within 10 calendar days of the district receiving the request.
- School districts were allowed to designate days missed due to cold weather and snow as instructional days. Districts that took advantage of the law were instructed to pay hourly employees for those days, although some districts decided not to pay their ESPs for lost hours.
- Wage theft was made a felony and consequences were outlined for employers who retaliate against employees reporting it. Money also was appropriated to enforce the new law.

Higher education funding

Higher education spending increased \$150 million over the next two years. Minnesota State received \$81.5 million including:

- \$64.5 million for campus support.
- \$8 million for the Next Gen/ISRS.
- \$7 million for workforce development scholarships, with \$250,000 to administer the program.
- \$1 million for workforce partnerships.
- \$500,000 for textbook affordability programs.
- \$500,000 for leveraged equipment.
- \$250,000 for mental health services on college campuses.

The bill earmarks \$43.5 million for the University of Minnesota and \$18 million for the state grant program, and caps tuition at 3 percent each year of the biennium.

