

## Education Minnesota

# Education Minnesota hopeful record grad rates, achievement gap improvements continue

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ST. PAUL, Minn., Feb. 27, 2018 – The graduation rate for Minnesota high school students has reached a record rate and the rates for students of color continue to grow. Education Minnesota President Denise Specht said Tuesday she hopes the trends will continue.

“We are hopeful this momentum will continue and our state’s achievement gaps will continue to close,” Specht said. “Reaching a record rate of high school graduation comes after the state has invested in education through increased funding and proven supports such as all-day, every-day kindergarten and full-service community schools.”

“These gains are also thanks to the hard work of students and the highly-trained, professional educators throughout the state. The support of educators, combined with parents and communities, is key for how we will continue to make progress on closing the achievement gap and preparing all students to enter a diverse and changing world.”

While the Legislature’s 2015 investment in full-service community schools expanded the reach, they are only available in select communities and there is no current funding for the program. Full-service community schools have been shown to improve educational outcomes for all students, but especially for students of color.

“Minnesota needs to invest more into this type of programming around the state, because every student deserves an equal opportunity for success,” Specht said.

A need for more investment into student supports is also needed to continue to raise student achievement.

“We need to increase funding for school districts to hire more student support staff, including counselors, social workers, psychologists, nurses and other job classifications,” Specht said. “We know that when students feel comfortable and welcome in schools, they do better.”

### About Education Minnesota

Education Minnesota is the voice for professional educators and students. Education Minnesota’s members include teachers and education support professionals in Minnesota’s public school districts, faculty members at Minnesota’s community and technical colleges and University of Minnesota campuses in Duluth and Crookston, retired educators and student teachers. Education Minnesota is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers, National Education Association and AFL-CIO.

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