

Education Minnesota

Education Minnesota calls for fully funding public education with new taxes on the wealthy

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ST. PAUL, Minnesota. Feb. 15, 2019 – Education Minnesota called on Gov. Tim Walz and the members of the state House and Senate on Friday to fully fund E-12 public education in Minnesota even it requires raising taxes on large corporations and the wealthiest Minnesotans.

“Effective solutions to the challenges facing Minnesota schools cost money, and there’s a price paid in lost learning and burnt-out educators when our society neglects the schooling of its children,” said Denise Specht, president of Education Minnesota.

Four classroom educators joined Specht at a news conference in the state Capitol. The group, three teachers and a paraprofessional, shared examples of how adequate funding from the state or from local taxpayers had improved the quality of education in their classrooms.

“It doesn’t have to be like this,” said Shelby Erickson, a first-grade teacher in St. Cloud with more than 25 years of experience, who described the difficulties of packing more students into a classroom. “I remember a time when teachers could give all their students individual attention. We need to give that back to the parents of Minnesota. Our schools need to be fully funded and class sizes must be addressed.”

Specht said educators wanted to ensure that every student could benefit from new investments in education, which is why so many educators were attracted to the expansive vision of fully funding public education Gov. Walz presented during the 2018 campaign.

The presentation included discussions of increasing the state’s share of special education costs, linking school funding to inflation, reducing class sizes, hiring counselors and expanding access to pre-K, among other topics.

After making certain assumptions about policy details, the union calculated the cost of the governor’s education vision at **\$3.70 billion to \$4.33 billion** in the next biennium. Specht said educators agree on the size of the problem, and she said the state would need to raise taxes to solve it.

“People say there’s no money to pay educators what they’re worth and provide a good education for every child, no matter their ZIP code,” Specht said. “But it only feels that way because the economy wasn’t rigged for us, the Minnesotans who make less than a million dollars a year.”

Specht said top earners and large corporations were prospering in the current economy and could afford to pay more to educate the next generation of Minnesota citizens.

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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