

## Education Minnesota

# Referendum results show growing unfairness in school finance

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*ST. PAUL, Minnesota. May 15, 2019* – Minnesota voters approved increasing their local taxes on Tuesday to pay for nearly \$540 million in repairs, expansions and new construction of their local school buildings, according to results gathered by Education Minnesota.

Preliminary results indicate voters approved seven of 15 bond referendums on ballots around the state, including suburbs, regional centers and small towns, such as Pillager. All the referendums that failed were in Greater Minnesota. They were for about \$250 million in building projects.

“Some Minnesota students will soon be learning in new classrooms filled with natural light while others will go to schools with asbestos, leaking roofs and brown water coming from the taps,” said Denise Specht, president of Education Minnesota. “We live in a wealthy state, in the richest nation in the world. This is a scandal.”

“The way we fund public education in Minnesota grows more unfair and unequal after every levy election because there are always winners and losers,” Specht said. “The quality of our students’ education shouldn’t depend on the political skills of their educators and generosity of their communities.”

“Legislators must increase the state’s investment in all of its students and reverse the growing dependence on local levies,” Specht said. “No child’s future should be determined by their ZIP code, but that is what happens when the state government fails to fully fund its schools.”

Earlier this year, Education Minnesota released its definition of fully funding E-12 public education, including reducing class sizes so students can get individual attention, bringing the state’s ratio of counselors to students in line with national standards, giving every 4-year-old access to a high-quality pre-K program, raising educator pay and reducing educators’ education debt. The cost was \$3.7 billion to \$4.3 billion for the biennium.

### 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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