



SAMPLE LETTER TO YOUR SENATOR

The following is a sample letter to your senator that can be modified as you see fit to advocate for public schools in your community, as well as those across the state. Consider adding some information about the accomplishments of your local public schools along with what would need to be cut if we receive a 1 percent increase on the general education formula over both years of the next biennium. Please include your school district story.

The Honorable Sen. _____:

I am a [board member, parent or student] in the [_____ school district].

I am writing you today regarding the basic education funding target set by the Minnesota Senate.

With a \$1.9 billion surplus, the Senate has come up woefully short with their budget target for education funding this session. The Senate’s \$350 million target falls below 3 percent on the education funding formula.

In order to meet the basic needs of Minnesota’s public schools, the Legislature must add at least a 3 percent increase to the general education funding formula.

The general education funding formula is the core, the mission, and the bread and butter for school districts’ finances. The formula can’t be ignored and should not be underfunded. Now that we have a budget surplus, the time is now to reinvest.

The general formula is fair and treats all students as valuable. The formula demonstrates our respect for the teaching profession. The formula authentically respects the long-term commitment of school board members and gives schools the most flexibility to meet students’ 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.

Let’s not send education backward with inadequate funding. Instead, let’s invest in every school district, every school and every student equally and fairly.

If the Legislature and Gov. Dayton agree to an investment of 1 percent or less on the basic education funding formula, our schools will see widespread teacher cuts, increased class sizes, less technology for students, larger achievement gaps, and additional operating levy referendums that put more burden on taxpayers.

Underfunding education is short-sighted and short-changes our students and the future of our state. I urge you to make a positive impact on our children. I urge you to make at least a 3 percent increase on the general education funding formula.

Sincerely,

[Your name, school district, title]