



### **SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

***The following is a sample letter to the editor 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 you received a 1 percent and 1 percent increase on the general education formula. Please include your school district story. If you plan to submit your letter to a newspaper, be sure to check with the publication about the maximum word count allowed for letters to the editor.***

---

Dear Editor:

With a projected \$1.9 billion budget surplus on the horizon for the next biennium, Gov. Dayton and the Legislature have an opportunity to right many past wrongs by adequately funding public education this session.

In order to meet the basic needs of Minnesota’s public schools, the Legislature must add at least 3 percent increase on 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 student 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.

Despite having a sizable surplus, the Legislature has come up woefully short with their budget targets for education funding this session. The House’s current target of \$157 million doesn’t even allow a 1 percent increase in the funding formula. The Senate’s \$350 million target also falls below 3 percent. And though Gov. Dayton’s \$695 million target is wonderful, he has proposed only a 1 percent increase to the funding formula in each year of the next biennium.

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 spends 1 percent or less on the 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. Urge our legislators to make a positive impact on our children. Urge them to make at least a 3 percent increase on the general education funding formula.

Sincerely,

[Your name, school district, title]