

[[AUDIO](#)] Listen to audio from Governor Dayton's morning news conference. [[Link](#)]

[[INTERACTIVE](#)] See an interactive map of schools currently receiving preK funding, and those at risk of losing it. [[Link](#)]

[[SPREADSHEET](#)] See a list of all schools currently receiving preK funding in Minnesota, including those at risk of losing preK funds. [[Link](#)]

[[FACT SHEET](#)] Get the facts on Governor Dayton's proposed investments in excellent educations for every Minnesota student. [[Link](#)]

[[MAP](#)] See a graphic map of schools currently receiving preK funding, and those at risk of losing it. [[Link](#)]



## Office of Governor Mark Dayton

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
March 27, 2018

**Contact: Sam Fetting**  
651-201-3408 office  
612-214-2886 cell  
[sam.fetting@state.mn.us](mailto:sam.fetting@state.mn.us)

### **Governor Dayton: Protect PreKindergarten Opportunities for 4,000 Minnesota Kids and their Families**

*Governor Dayton's budget would protect preKindergarten programs from being eliminated*

*Without action by the Minnesota Legislature, 59 school districts and charter schools across Minnesota would lose state funding for free, voluntary preKindergarten programs*

ST. PAUL, MN – Governor Mark Dayton today called on the Minnesota Legislature to protect preKindergarten programs from being eliminated for 4,000 students at more than [59 school districts and charter schools across the state](#). These schools stand to lose state funding unless the Legislature takes action to protect preKindergarten investments for Minnesota four-year-olds. Governor Dayton's [Budget for a Better Minnesota](#) would secure permanent preKindergarten funding for 59 school districts and charter schools, which were only provided temporary funding by the Legislature last session.

**“Voluntary preKindergarten programs have given more than 6,100 Minnesota four-year-olds the high-quality early learning opportunities they need to succeed in school and in life,”** said Governor Dayton. **“We cannot let these programs expire for 4,000 kids, their younger siblings, and their**

**families. I urge the Legislature to work with me this session to ensure these programs continue for thousands of children and families across Minnesota.”**

In addition to preventing the elimination of preKindergarten programs, Governor Dayton’s budget proposal would also increase preKindergarten funding by five percent each year to help thousands more four-year-olds attend free, voluntary preKindergarten in the future.

**“Governor Dayton gets it right once again by prioritizing our youngest Minnesotans with this supplemental budget,”** said Education Commissioner Brenda Cassellius. **“By taking the long view and adding funding in future years, the Governor puts us on a solid path to every 4-year-old having access to free high-quality pre-K, giving them the great starts they deserve.”**

In his 2017 budget proposal, Governor Dayton called for \$175 million in permanent funding to ensure every Minnesota child could attend high-quality, voluntary preKindergarten programs, free of cost. Unfortunately, the Legislature only agreed to provide \$50 million in one-time funding. Across the state, 6,100 four-year-olds are currently attending free, voluntary preKindergarten this year in 109 school districts. However, because the Legislature only provided one-time funding last year, [\*\*59 of those school districts and charter schools would lose state funding\*\*](#) if the Legislature does not agree to make that funding permanent, and 4,000 kids each year would lose out on the great starts they need in school.

**“The Governor’s preKindergarten program does not discriminate based on geography; districts slated to lose funding are located in urban, suburban, and rural communities throughout the state,”** said State Senator Greg Clausen. **“My constituents in the Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan School District would see 46 children have their access to preKindergarten cut should the program not receive continued support.”**

**“We’ve made significant progress to create opportunities for our youngest learners, and as a teacher, I’ve seen the direct impact this has on their success,”** said Representative Julie Sandstede. **“If we don’t continue these investments, over 100 kids in the region I represent could lose access to quality preK education. Making this funding permanent isn’t just critical for these children, but is critical for the future of our state.”**

**“Every day I see firsthand how transformational early learning programs are for young students,”** said Sara Birkeland, preKindergarten teacher at Maxfield Elementary. **“We are making sure that students are ready for Kindergarten, that they get a great start to their school experience. I can’t believe that we are actually facing the potential of taking this crucial opportunity away from our schools.”**

**“This funding is essential to closing the achievement gap, by giving kids that otherwise wouldn’t have a preschool experience, the opportunity to get ready for Kindergarten,”** said Cori Thompson, Principal of Valley View Elementary School. **“We are seeing positive results from our preschool programming. Students in our preK program had significantly higher Kindergarten readiness scores when compared to a similar group of students who did not attend our program. If we lose this funding, we will likely see more students coming to Kindergarten unprepared to learn and missing out on important social-emotional and academic skills. It would also delay building relationships with students and families that are so vital to a strong school community.”**

## **Excellent Educations for Every Minnesota Student**

When Governor Dayton took office in 2011, he promised to increase state investments in public education every year he was Governor; no excuses, no exceptions. Governor Dayton has delivered on that promise, increasing E-12 education investments by nearly \$2 billion, including \$262 million for high-quality early learning programs. These investments are helping to educate the next generation of

Minnesota workers for good jobs and bright futures, while supporting economic opportunity for local communities all across our state.

This year, Governor Dayton's Budget for a Better Minnesota would build on those successes, investing an additional \$46.8 million in education to ensure more students receive excellent educations, everywhere in Minnesota. The Governor's budget would invest in school safety, early learning, special education, world-class higher educations, and more. It would reduce standardized testing, stabilize teacher pensions, and connect more students with stable housing.

To learn more about how Governor Dayton's Budget for a Better Minnesota would help students get the world-class educations they need and deserve, [CLICK HERE](#). To learn more about which school districts and charter schools would lose funding for voluntary preKindergarten if the Legislature does not support the Governor's proposal, [CLICK HERE](#).

## **\$2 Billion in Education Investments for Every Student in Minnesota**

Since taking office in 2011, Governor Dayton has secured nearly \$2 billion in new investments in E-12 education. This new funding has made it possible for 22,500 kids to attend high-quality early education programs this year, along with more than 57,400 kids now attending all-day Kindergarten, and more.

- **Early Education** – Since taking office, Governor Dayton has secured nearly \$2 billion in new E-12 education investments, including \$262 million to help young learners across Minnesota attend early learning programs. This year, 22,500 kids are attending high-quality early learning programs thanks to these investments.
- **K-12 Education** – When Governor Dayton took office, Minnesota faced a \$6 billion projected budget deficit, and more than \$2 billion had been unilaterally "borrowed" from our school districts. The Governor worked hard to repay our schools and has successfully pushed for an additional \$2 billion in new education investments, including a historic \$134 million investment that made all-day Kindergarten a reality across Minnesota, with more than more than 57,400 Kindergarteners now enrolled. And, these new investments have included more funding for special education, school counselors and support staff, funding for facilities improvements, and initiatives to boost math and reading proficiency and close opportunity gaps for students of color and indigenous youth.

###

**Office of Governor Mark Dayton, Communications Department**  
130 State Capitol, 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55155  
T: 651-201-3400 | [Dayton.Media@state.mn.us](mailto:Dayton.Media@state.mn.us)