



STATE OF MINNESOTA

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FAX TRANSMITTAL

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Date: _____ Pages 3, Including Cover

Re: _____ CC: _____

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Per Our Discussion

Governor Ventura Calls for Full Federal Funding Of Special Education

Minnesota Stands to Gain Millions in Federal Funding

- Governor Ventura's proposal seeks federal funding to cover 40% of the total cost of special education. When the federal government mandated special education, it promised to pay 40% of the total cost. This promise has never been realized. The cost for this is \$342 million.
- Minnesota currently pays \$854 million¹ per year for special education.
- The federal government currently contributes \$73 million per year for special education in Minnesota.
- The potential increase for Minnesota under this proposal is \$250 million.

Would Minnesota use the whole \$250 million increase for special education?

Absolutely, but we would have to choose carefully. Minnesota supplements special education funding with general education funds to the tune of \$250 million. Full federal funding would allow investment of that \$250 million into special education or into the general education system.

What could a \$250 million increase mean for Minnesota's special education system?

- 5,000 more special education teachers (calculated at \$50,000 each).
 - ◆ 20% of our special education teachers left the field in 1998. 25% of the state's Learning Disabled teachers are age 55 or over now. More resources could mean more teachers.
 - ◆ 55% of the Emotional Behavioral Disorder special education students drop out of school by 9th grade. More resources could help these students stay in school, graduate and live self sufficiently.
 - ◆ Work loads for special education teachers continue to rise. More resources could mean more teachers, which would mean fewer students per teacher.
- 14,285 more para-professionals (calculated at \$17,500 each) to aid teachers working with special education students and to complete student related paperwork, freeing up teacher time to work with students.
- 12,500 home-to-school liaisons (average annual salary of \$20,000) to serve as interpreters and to encourage more parent involvement supporting the special education needs of their children.

¹ These are the 1998-99 numbers. They are the latest numbers available.

What could a \$250 million increase mean for Minnesota's public schools?

- 5,000 new teachers (calculated at \$50,000 each).
- 3,571 new school counselors or school liaison police officers (calculated at \$70,000 each).
- 277,857 computers for classrooms (cost \$700/computer, bringing the current computer to student ratio of 1 to 8.6 students down to 1 to 2.5) and adding a T1 data/video connection to every school building (\$55.5 million).
- \$120 million would allow all day kindergarten for all of the districts that don't have it now.
- \$100 million would allow 100% enrollment of the 3-5 year olds that currently qualify for Head Start. \$200 million would allow enrollment of 75% of the qualifying 0-3 year olds.
- 11 more instructional days (\$22 million/day).
- 15 more staff development days (\$16.5 million/day).