



MINNEAPOLIS  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Urban Education. Global Citizens.

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Bernadeia H. Johnson, Ed.D.  
*Superintendent of Schools*

March 24, 2014

Dear families,

Planning for the fiscal year 2015 (FY15) budget – which runs from July 1, 2014, to June 30, 2015 – is in full swing, with schools and departments receiving their initial budget allocations. We want to make sure that all Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) stakeholders are informed about the process of maintaining a sustainable financial foundation to support academic achievement.

The release of budget allocations is just one step in the budget process. Initial allocations are not a final budget; they simply provide a starting point for discussion. Now is the time for school leaders to work with their school communities on how to use their budget for next school year and, in a few cases, identify whether more resources are necessary at their school site.

As with any budget process, we have uncovered a few issues that still need to be addressed at a number of our schools. The MPS finance team is responding as quickly as it can to make necessary adjustments to school allocations. The team met with principals this morning to respond and problem-solve their questions and concerns.

We acknowledge that some mistakes occurred during the initial release of allocations. I apologize for the unnecessary confusion that these errors created. We hope to have most of the issues resolved this week. In some cases, schools should expect to receive additional funding with the adjustments. The additional budget allocations will come from shifting funds from central office budgets to individual school budgets. We remain committed to operating the school district with a structurally balanced budget. Adjustments can be made to school budgets without dipping into the school district's reserves.

To accommodate these budget allocation changes, we are extending the budget tie-out process for a few days to give principals more time to plan for these changes and share the accurate information with their staff, site councils and other stakeholder groups.

I am pleased that, more than ever, school support is at the heart of this year's budget. In our efforts to increase funding to individual schools, we are proposing a \$33 million increase of funds that are directly allocated to schools. That increase equates to \$336 million to schools overall, compared to the current fiscal year's \$303 million. The adjustments that we make this week will help ensure that more resources go directly to schools.

The FY15 budget provides an increase of \$2 million to support lower class sizes (K-3) in high priority schools, which are lower-performing schools designated for special focus to raise student achievement. There is also

an increase of \$10 million that includes additional spending to support academic intervention strategies, including:

- More math and reading specialists
- Additional support for International Baccalaureate, talent development and advanced learner education, arts and English learners at schools

About \$5.4 million in additional funding has been budgeted to support enhanced services in the areas of transportation and plant operations. Furthermore, we plan to add two districtwide sports and increase funding for adaptive sports in order to allow more students across MPS to participate in athletics.

Our goal with the FY15 budget allocations is to provide principals and their site leadership teams with more flexibility to better meet the needs of their students. The school district's budget recommendation continues to be preliminary and will be discussed in board committee meetings, schools and the community this spring. I encourage you to participate in one of the many upcoming engagement sessions. A complete calendar of events is available on the MPS website at [www.bit.ly/MPSbudget](http://www.bit.ly/MPSbudget). The school board is scheduled to vote on the FY15 budget in late June.

Thank you for your continued interest, involvement and investment in Minneapolis Public Schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bernadeia H. Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Bernadeia H. Johnson, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools