



MONTICELLO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Independent School District No. 882

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Dear Monticello School Community,

As many of you likely remember, Representative Marion O'Neill and Senator Bruce Anderson introduced bills on Monticello School District's behalf last year that aimed to restore funding that the district lost due to a forced change in the status of Monticello's special education cooperative. Those bills made it all the way to the education omnibus bill, only for the entire bill to be vetoed by Governor Mark Dayton (for reasons having nothing to do with Monticello's small portion of the bill.)

The dedicated effort of our community, as well as the hard work of Rep. O'Neill and Sen. Anderson, played a huge role in helping our funding push get as far as it did last year. You were incredible advocates for what we strongly believe is a very just cause. Now, with the 91st Legislature in session in Minnesota, we are back to ask for that same kind of incredible effort and support that we've grown to know in this community. Rep. O'Neill has again drafted a bill that aims to alleviate Monticello School District's funding pinch brought on by those changes in the state special education funding formula. Her bill has been moved to the education committee and is in good standing. What we need next is for the Senate to get the companion bill heard at the Senate E-12 Finance and Policy Committee.

First, a quick refresher. Several years ago, when Monticello was forced to change from the fiscal host of a special education cooperative to a joint powers agreement, the Minnesota Department of Education assured the district there would be no financial harm. While the special education funding gap has hurt many districts across the state of Minnesota, Monticello felt a significant, and we believe unfair, impact due to our unique situation. During the first two years of that forced status change, the switch, combined with a change in the formula used to fund special education, cost Monticello \$1.6 million. The bill introduced by Representative O'Neill ([HF207](#)) asks the state to reimburse ISD 882.

The bill states that funding must not be reduced in the fiscal year 2019 to offset the fiscal year 2018 increase, and that special education aid payments to Monticello School District must be increased by \$200,000 per year for fiscal years 2020 to 2023.

For this bill to become closer to reality, it needs to make it through committees in both the House and the Senate. In order for us to get this bill to be heard in the Senate, it is **IMPERATIVE** that supporters and stakeholders of the Monticello School District make their voices heard. We are asking all community members to reach out to Senator Anderson, who has introduced a companion bill ([SF370](#)), to implore him to push for the bill to be heard at the Senate E-12 Finance and Policy Committee. Likewise, we are asking community members to reach out to E-12 Finance and Policy Committee Chair Carla Nelson (District 26) to share with her the impact that this lack of funding has had in Monticello, including the \$2 million budget alignment last year, while encouraging her to give SF370 a hearing in her committee.

Senator Nelson can be contacted [HERE](#), and Senator Anderson can be reached via email at sen.bruce.anderson@senate.mn.

Monticello School District is an equal opportunity employer.

As a district, we know how fortunate we are to live in a community where so many citizens are passionately involved with and supportive of the education system. The power of our collective voices was put on full display last spring, and we know we can use that same power to push these bills forward to the omnibus bill once again.

As we asked last year, we ask again: Make your voice heard. Join the Monticello School District and local unions. Stand up for our students. Stand up for our staff. Stand up for special education. And stand up for our future.

For more information on this matter, including video of the Public Education Funding Forum that was held in Monticello last winter, please visit [HERE](#).

Sincerely,

Monticello School District