

Minnesota's Educational Opportunity Gap

Where Do You Live?

School District	Annual Cost to the Residential or Business Taxpayer for \$2,504 per Pupil in School Operating Levies per \$200,000 Assessed Property Value
Hopkins	\$365
Minneapolis	\$381
Northland	\$430
Cook County	\$429
St. Louis Park	\$415
West St. Paul	\$494
Duluth	\$651
Rochester	\$777
Faribault	\$845
Northfield	\$952
Belle Plaine	\$1,006
Owatonna	\$1,152
New Prague	\$1,147

State funding for E-12 public schools has not kept pace with rising expectations, mandates and annual inflation. Districts rely on school operating levies just to maintain current programming or reduce budget cuts. State law allows school districts to raise additional revenue through local property taxes - up to \$1,780 per pupil in voter-approved operating referendum and \$724 per pupil in board-approved local optional revenue for a total of \$2,504 per pupil. The cost to the local taxpayer for these school operating levies is based on the individual property wealth of the school district. Without significant commercial and industrial development to expand the tax base, taxpayers in low-property wealth districts pay much more than taxpayers in high-property wealth school districts to provide the same amount of operating levy revenue for their local schools. Taxpayers in low-property wealth districts struggle to support such large school levies, which creates considerable funding inequities among school districts. This unfair tax advantage for high-wealth districts results in significant disparities in educational opportunities for students based merely upon where they live. (Property taxes paid in 2020 for the 2020-21 school year.)