



THE COSTS OF LOCKDOWNS AND SHUTDOWNS

How school closures became a policy decision that held Minnesota students hostage.

CATRIN WIGFALL



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The Costs of Lockdowns and Shutdowns Part II

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Executive Summary

In March 2020, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz shut down the state's public education system, impacting over 838,000 K-12 public school students. While pausing how school normally operated when COVID-19 first began that spring was an understandable precaution, data quickly emerged showing that prolonged school closures would have devastating effects on students' cognitive, social, and emotional well-being. Data also began showing that children were at much lower risk for contracting the coronavirus and transmitting it to family members.

But this evidence-based picture did not result in meaningful effort to resume in-person instruction, and **what started as a public health intervention soon expanded into a public policy response that brought considerable and unnecessary cost upon our next generation of leaders.**

Make no mistake: The pivot to online instruction and all the challenges that came with that, from digital divides and asking teachers to change their medium and style of teaching very quickly with little training, was not an easy transition to shepherd. Yet, given what we already knew about the shortcomings of Minnesota's education system, state leaders should not have allowed anything to worsen them.

As the 2022-2023 school year begins, fewer than half of Minnesota students are proficient in math (44.6 percent), as measured by the state's Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs). Just under 50 percent of students can't read at grade level.

These results add to the long-term trend of mediocre academic performance, declining test scores, and persistent achievement gaps that existed pre-COVID — despite the state continually spending more on education — and that were exacerbated by school closures.

The excessive caution with school reopening decisions has added to the growing awareness of the failing realities of our state's education system.

As the least vulnerable to COVID-19, children have

been hit the hardest by state leaders' public policy responses. The alarm on the risks of school closures was sounded quite clearly during summer and fall 2020, but unfortunately **state guidance and pressure from teachers' unions continued to prioritize a countermeasure with little health benefit — and significant cost — to school-age children.**

Key Points:

- » **As of the start of the 2022-2023 school year, fewer than half of Minnesota students are proficient in math (44.6 percent),** as measured by the state's Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs). **Just under 50 percent of students can't read at grade level.**
- » The state's 2020 graduation rate was 83.8 percent, yet only 45 percent of those graduates were performing at grade level in math the previous year as 11th graders. Based on spring 2022 test results, **only 36.3 percent of Minnesota 11th graders are proficient in math.**
- » Guiding school districts' mode of learning during the onset of COVID-19 was an overtly complicated, arbitrary matrix from Gov. Walz and his Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).
- » During the entire pandemic, over the course of three years, only eight school-aged children in Minnesota (ages 5-17) died with or from COVID-19.
- » **Politics, far more than science, shaped school district decision-making.** The consequences — from learning loss to readiness gaps to economic impacts — deserve a clear-eyed accounting and should serve as a call to carefully reflect on future policy choices. ■

Introduction

The impact of school closures on Minnesota schoolchildren has been devastating. Media and other outlets have been quick to blame COVID-19 for the academic, social and emotional toll borne on our schoolchildren.

But with studies emerging as early as April 2020 on the risks of school closures,¹ and data on the minimal danger COVID-19 posed to children that continued to emerge while students were kept out of classrooms, school closures were not an inevitable decision.

According to Burbio, an online school data aggregator, Minnesota ranked 37th out of the states for average in-person instruction over the course of the 2020-2021 academic year.² Only 4 percent of Minnesota students were in districts that offered very high levels of in-person instruction. Students in districts with either little or very little in-person instruction experienced the greatest declines in reading proficiency in both spring 2021 and 2022 compared to spring 2019.³

School disruptions continued throughout the 2021-2022 school year, with several districts shuffling in and out of distance learning. Those that offered more in-person instruction tended to experience less learning loss, as described in subsequent sections of this paper.

Medical professionals from across the world, including the American Academy of Pediatrics⁴ and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health,⁵ followed the science, wrote UCLA biostatistics professor Christina Ramirez in August 2020.⁶ Both organizations stated that summer that “the risk of keeping children out of school greatly outweighs the dangers of school-age children contributing to increases in COVID-19 cases,” according to Ramirez. In July 2020, the American Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine also urged schools — based on then-available evidence — to open fall 2020.⁷ Worse, data continued to emerge that low-income, Black, and Hispanic communities would

bear the brunt of school closures, adding on to the achievement gaps that were cumulative and growing pre-COVID-19.⁸

In October 2020, economist Emily Oster and a group of data scientists collected data on almost 200,000 students in 47 states. The results? “Schools do not, in fact, appear to be major spreaders of COVID-19.”⁹

Guiding school districts’ mode of learning was an overtly complicated, arbitrary matrix from Gov. Walz and his Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), which required districts and charter schools to follow bi-weekly case rate data per 10,000 by county to determine what base learning model could be used for the 2020 school year.¹⁰ Governor Walz’s Executive Order 20-82 stated

that all Minnesota public schools must adhere to parameters determined by MDH in implementing or shifting between the three learning models laid out in the 2020-21 school year planning guidance: in-person learning, hybrid learning and distance learning.

While the state’s “Safe Learning Plan” acknowledged that transmission of COVID-19 in younger children was “much more limited” and that “distance learning is more difficult with younger learners,” the set parameters for in-person learning made it challenging for schools to fall within them. And if the education commissioner deemed in-person instruction no longer safe, she retained statutory authority to order the transition to a distance learning model. In November 2020, state health and education officials added to the “guidance,” stating that “the number of cases inside school buildings, the rate of virus spread within local communities, and the number of people showing flu-like symptoms should be given just as much weight as the county numbers.”¹¹

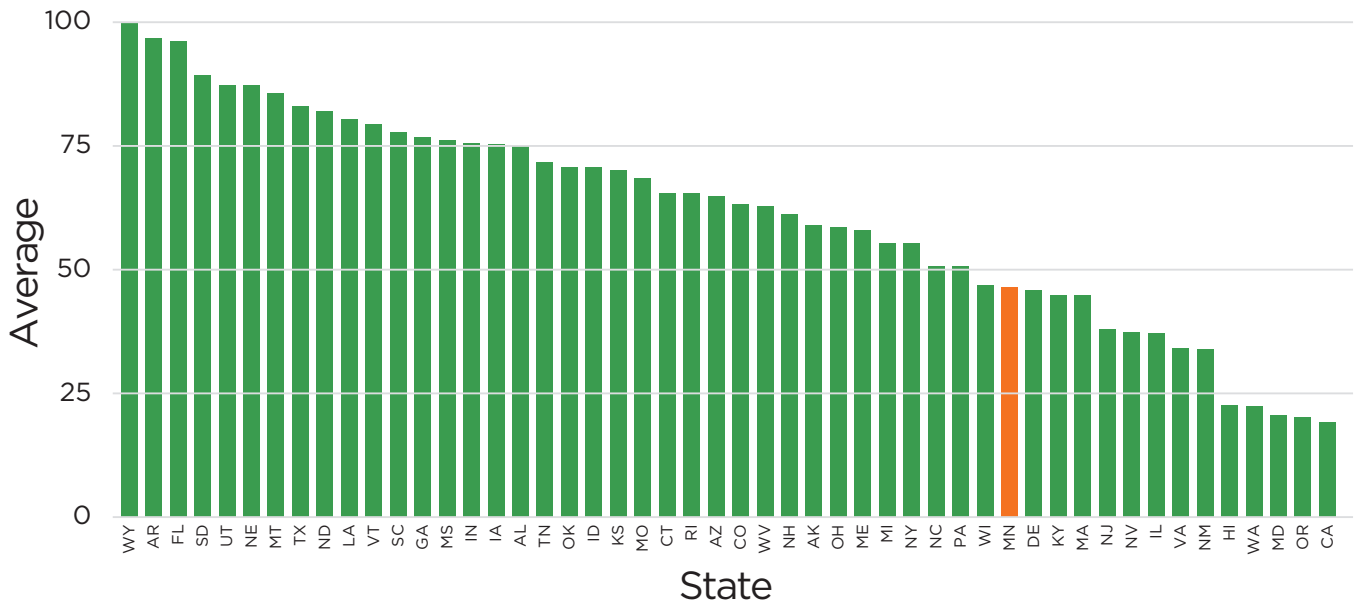
“It’s not as scientific as it is artful,” said then Deputy Education Commissioner Heather Mueller.

Such an approach created much confusion for school leaders, caused districts to shift back and forth between learning models out of uncertainty, and did not offer a particularly promising model of how to ensure all students were provided with a free and

appropriate public education.

Finally there is more voiced agreement that school closures have contributed to higher educational inequality and potential long-term impacts on students that have yet to be fully realized. It’s unfortunate it took so many students being left behind for that to happen. ■

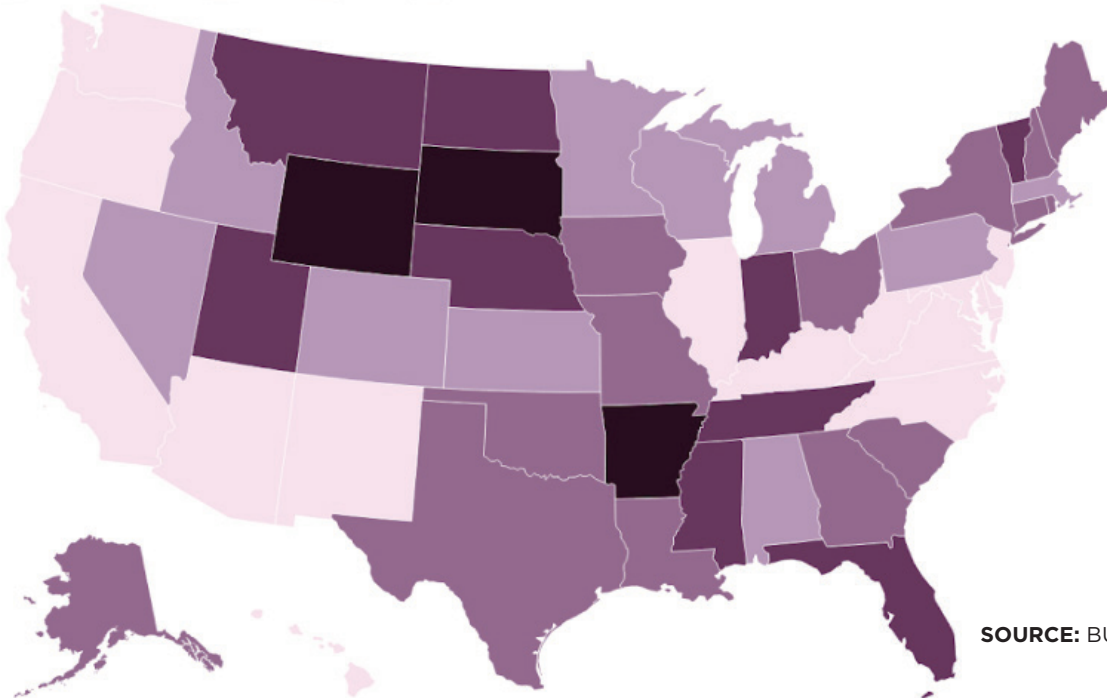
Average In-Person Index by State (excluding D.C.)



SOURCE: BURBIO

In-Person Index as of 9/10/20

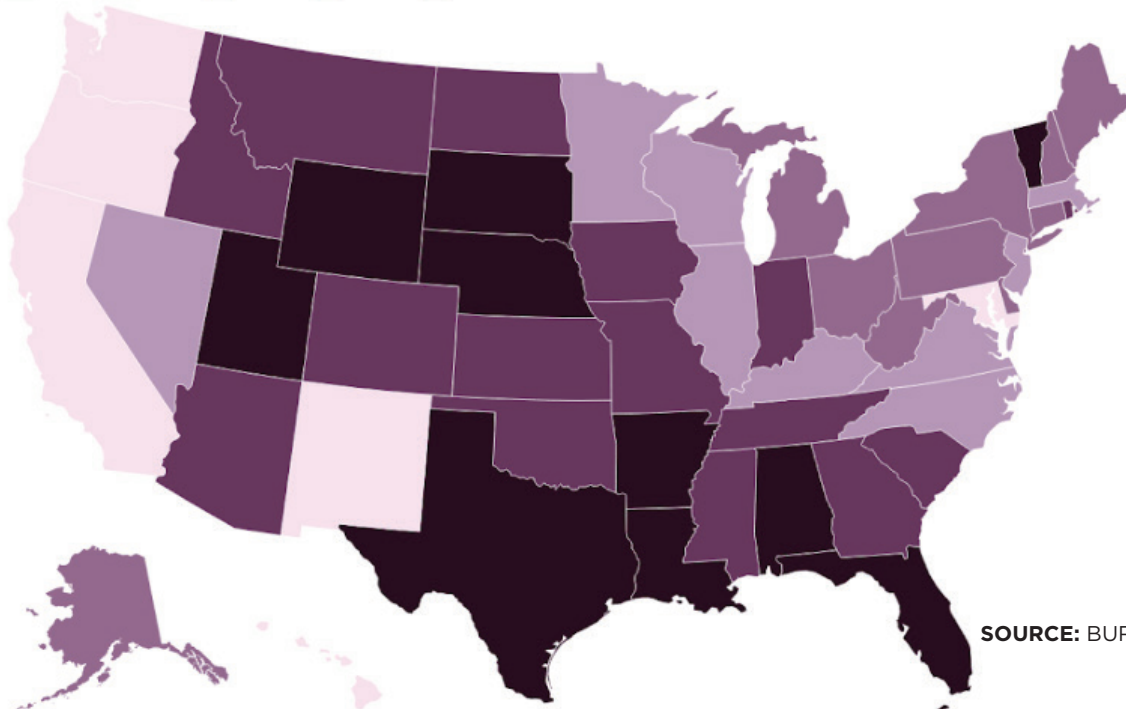
0-20 20-40 40-60 60-80 80-100



SOURCE: BURBIO

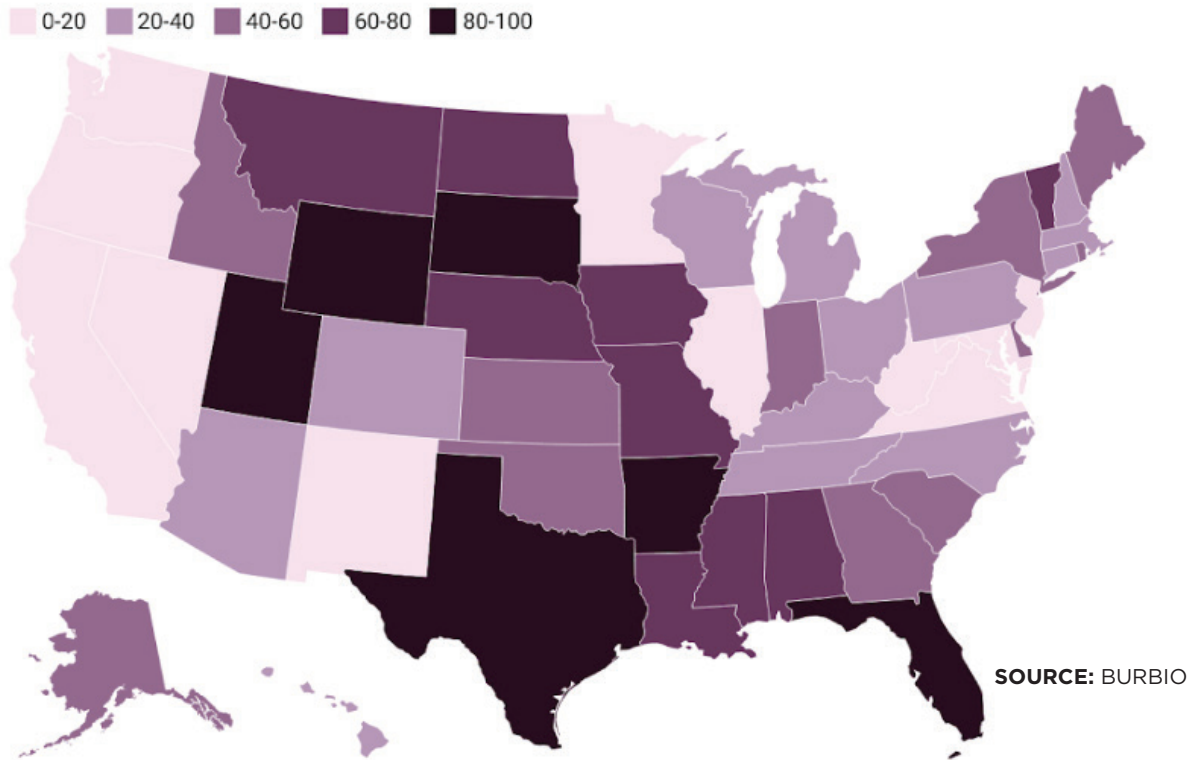
In-Person Index as of 11/10/20

0-20 20-40 40-60 60-80 80-100

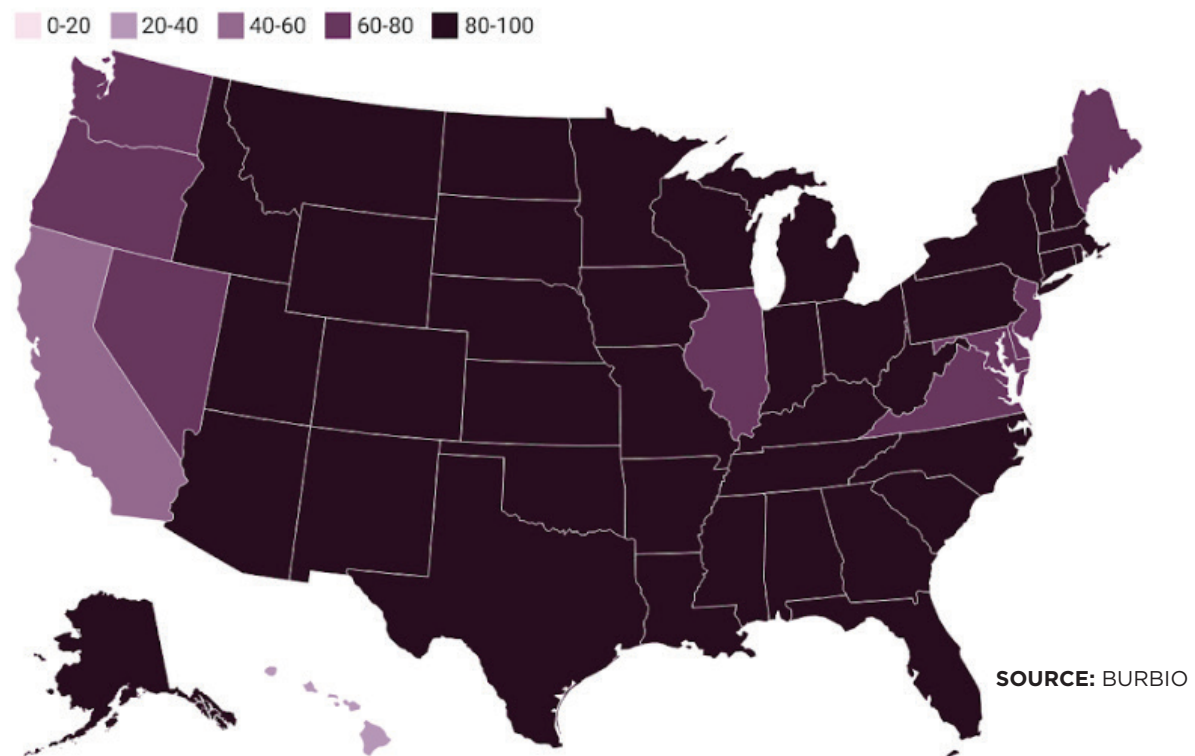


SOURCE: BURBIO

In-Person Index as of 1/11/21



In-Person Index as of 6/1/21





School closures and COVID-19

Critics will argue shutting down in-person learning was worth the risk to protect students from getting and spreading COVID. An April 2020 systematic review of literature found “that children can be asymptomatic carriers of the virus.”¹² Concern over asymptomatic students spreading the coronavirus to teachers and the community was certainly understandable. But the significant tradeoffs of school closures that were known for some time outweighed the unknown benefits.

Studies on the severity of illness in children were coming out as early as February 2020. A report from the World Health Organization-China Joint Mission stated: “Disease in children appears to be relatively rare and mild with approximately 2.4 percent of the total reported cases reported amongst individuals aged under 19 years. A very small proportion of those aged under 19 years have developed severe (2.5 percent) or critical disease (0.2 percent).”¹³

In March 2020, a systematic review of COVID-19 in

children showed milder cases and a better prognosis than adults.¹⁴ Studies from China, South Korea, Japan and Iran also published in March on household transmission clusters suggested that children were unlikely to be the source of viral transmission within households.¹⁵

An April 2020 study published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* showed that less than 1 percent of coronavirus cases were in children younger than 10 years of age.¹⁶ Nearly 1,400 children with contact were then investigated, and 171 were found infected with only three requiring intensive care — all of whom had coexisting conditions.

Another April 2020 study looked at data from the SARS outbreak in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Singapore, which suggested that

“school closures did not contribute to the control of the epidemic” and that policymakers needed “to be aware of the equivocal evidence when proposing or implementing national or regional school closures for COVID-19, given the very high costs of lengthy school closures during pandemics.”¹⁷

Students in districts with either little or very little in-person instruction experienced the greatest declines in reading proficiency in both spring 2021 and 2022 compared to spring 2019.

Commentary published in *The Lancet* in April 2020 noted that “although scientific debate is ongoing with regard to the effectiveness of school closures on virus transmission,” extended school closures would likely “exacerbate existing inequalities” between children and would likely “widen the learning gap between children from lower-income and higher-income families.”¹⁸

A systematic review of literature published in May 2020¹⁹ and one published in June 2020²⁰ proposed that children and school transmission are not major drivers of COVID-19 transmission. Another June 2020 study by Institute Pasteur found no significant transmission of the coronavirus among children or from students to teachers.²¹

A July 2020 report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention listed children under 18 accounting for less than 0.1 percent of COVID deaths in the United States.²² A literature review also released in July looked at studies published from February 2020 to June 2020, noting that children then accounted for 1.7 percent to 2 percent of the diagnosed cases of COVID-19.²³ Later on, the authors write: “While children are not the face of this pandemic, its broader impacts on children risk being catastrophic and amongst the most lasting consequences for societies as a whole.”

Data from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) & World Bank survey “show no relationship between the extent of school closures and COVID-19 infection rates across countries,” wrote the OECD on July 1, 2022. “This shows that school closures were not inevitable but, rather, a policy choice...”²⁴

Also noteworthy was the ample guidance²⁵ available about how to reopen schools safely and the hundreds of schools and school systems that were actually doing so nationwide — including many of the country’s biggest school districts, charter schools, and private schools.

The evidence-based picture that schools weren’t the super-spreaders they were feared to be and that

the costs of keeping students from in-person learning outweighed the benefits was there early on in the onset of COVID-19.

During the entire pandemic, over the course of three years, only eight school-aged children in Minnesota (ages 5-17) died with or from COVID-19.²⁶ During the summer of 2020 when the Minnesota Department of Education was designing its complicated metric for schools to return, an infant (nine months old) was the first child COVID-related death in ages 0-17 in the state. While each child’s death is a tragedy, the risk level was well documented, and many parents, school leaders and legislators were calling for a safe return to school that fall. ■

Minnesota COVID-related Deaths in Ages 0-17

	0-4	5-11	12-17	Total
2020	1	0	0	1
2021	0	2	3	5
2022	1	0	3	4
Total	2	2	6	10

SOURCE: MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



Health concerns or politics?

Many teachers' unions across the country made it very clear summer of 2020 how they felt about fall 2020 school reopening plans. A look at their responses to the numerous and varied reopening plans — even when the science said reopening could be safely done — confirms unions offered more resistance than cooperation.²⁷

The United Teachers Los Angeles called California's reopening plan "a recipe for propagating structural racism." The Chicago Teachers Union tweeted and then deleted that, "The push to reopen schools is rooted in sexism, racism and misogyny." The United Teachers of Dade in Miami sued the state in July 2020 to stop the "reckless and unsafe reopening of schools" in the fall.

On August 3, 2020 the St. Paul Federation of Educators joined other teachers' unions, the Democratic Socialists of America and other left-leaning organizations in endorsing demonstrations as part of a "National Day of Resistance" over school reopenings.²⁸ In conjunction with the demonstrations, the coalition listed a number of school reopening demands, includ-

ing an ambiguous demand of not reopening until the scientific data supported it, and other demands such as police-free schools, a moratorium on new charter schools and private school choice, a moratorium on standardized testing, and a "massive infusion" of federal money.

"Rather than work to open schools safely, the unions are issuing ultimatums and threatening strikes until they are granted their ideological wish list," wrote *The Wall Street Journal* Editorial Board in August 2020. "Children, who would have to endure more lost instruction, are their hostages."²⁹

National studies released fall 2020 suggested that reopening decisions were driven more by

teachers' union influence than actual safety concerns. Using data on the reopening decisions of 835 public school districts in the United States, Corey DeAngelis and Christos Makridis found that "school districts in locations with stronger teachers' unions are less likely to reopen in person...when full-time in-person instruction is available as an option to all students."³⁰ Additionally, they found no "evidence to suggest

"The risk of keeping children out of school greatly outweighs the dangers of school-age children contributing to increases in COVID-19 cases."

—UCLA biostatistics professor
Christina Ramirez

that measures of COVID-19 risks are correlated with school reopening decisions.”

Political scientists Michael Hartney and Leslie Finger reached similar conclusions in October 2020, analyzing national data and finding that “politics, far more than science, shaped school district decision-making,” and that “mass partisanship and teacher union strength best explain how school boards approached reopening.”³¹ ■



The extent of learning loss may not be fully realized for some time, but Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy produced an online calculator that has estimated reading and math loss in districts across the country through the fall of 2021.³² How long a school district operated in-person or remotely, demographic makeup of the district, and prior academic performance levels were factored into the estimated learning loss calculation. In addition, Georgetown University's calculator has estimated costs to remedy the magnitude of learning loss for each district and identified the funds the district could tap to pay for suggested tutoring intervention, which is considered a higher impact investment.

For example, students in the Minneapolis school district lost an average of 17 weeks of learning in math and 14 weeks of learning in reading through the fall of 2021, according to the calculator. Additional learning loss has occurred since then, as is evidenced by student performance on spring 2022 statewide assessments, discussed in greater detail below, with just un-

der 33 percent of the district's students performing at grade level in math and just over 42 percent proficient readers, which is a continual decline from 2021 scores and pre-COVID scores.³³ (See Appendix for a more

robust listing of districts, estimated learning loss through the fall of 2021, and math and proficiency scores.)

National studies have also identified the negative impacts of distance learning. A Harvard University study found that remote instruction was the primary driver of widening achievement gaps.³⁴ For Minnesota, high poverty schools — serving predominantly

low-income families — spent double the weeks in distance learning in the 2020-2021 school year than the state's low- and mid-poverty schools (14 weeks compared to 6-7 weeks).

Students in districts that were in distance learning longer fared worse with learning loss. Even at low poverty schools — serving predominantly high-income families — the effects of distance learning are negative, with students falling behind growth expectations when schools entered this learning model.

Black and Hispanic communities would bear the brunt of school closures, adding on to the achievement gaps that were cumulative and growing pre-COVID-19.

Math achievement losses were substantially larger in mid- and high-poverty schools than in low-poverty schools. In districts that were fully in-person during the 2020-2021 school year, there was essentially no widening in math achievement gaps, according to the Harvard study.

A National Bureau of Economic Research study analyzed 12 states — including Minnesota — and found that while learning loss was evident across all included states, students in districts that offered less in-person learning had greater declines.³⁵ Minnesota students in school districts that switched to distance learning over the course of the 2020-2021 school year had greater declines in math compared to their peers in school districts that stayed mostly in-person.

Another national study used 11 states' standardized test scores in grades 3-8 paired with schooling mode to examine the value of in-person schooling.³⁶ In Minnesota, data on demographic characteristics and schooling mode were available for 340 districts. Only 16.2 percent of districts in the study's sample offered exclusively in-person instruction during the 2020-2021 school year, with 69.1 percent using a hybrid model — a mixture of remote learning and in-person instruction. Achievement declines were larger in districts with less in-person schooling, and the effects were larger, on average, in lower grades.

The study also found in-person instruction was more common in more politically conservative areas — as measured by a high Republican vote share in the 2020 presidential election — and in areas with higher community COVID-19 rates. ■



State test scores

To measure learning loss in Minnesota, the above studies analyzed the state's standardized assessments. Test results from at least a decade ago reveal a familiar tale of woe for Minnesota's public schools: Academic outcomes stagnant or in decline and an achievement gap that won't budge.

While assessment scores are not the only indicator of success, they play a key role in evaluating learning because they are objective, standardized measures of student achievement on academic or proficiency standards. Tests can also place healthy pressure on schools, helping to identify which schools are struggling to meet the minimum academic expectations.

The state measures student academic achievement primarily through the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) and the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS), an alternate assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Most students take the MCAs, but students who receive special education services may take the alternate assessment MTAS instead. The reading MCA or MTAS is administered in

grades 3-8 and grade 10, and the mathematics MCA or MTAS is administered in grades 3-8 and grade 11. Science knowledge is assessed in grades 5, 8, and once in high school. As reading and mathematics are the primary assessments Minnesota uses to meet state and federal accountability requirements, these are the test results that will be discussed below.

The MCA assigns four levels of achievement: Exceeds the Standards (proficient), Meets the Standards (proficient), Partially Meets the Standards (not proficient), and Does Not Meet the Standards (not proficient). Students receive an achievement level based on their scale score.

Minnesota student achievement is also measured by National

Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores. Participation in NAEP is required by federal law, and the math and reading assessments are administered to a sample of students from grades 4 and 8 who represent the student population of the states and nation as a whole. It is the only objective student learning outcome measure available to compare states' academic performance, and it assesses how states

National studies released fall 2020 suggested that reopening decisions were driven more by teachers' union influence than actual safety concerns.

are doing in preparing their students (i.e., whether state standards are rigorous enough). NAEP state test results for 2022 will be released fall 2022, but NAEP’s 2019 results are discussed in American Experiment’s paper titled, “Allergic to Accountability: Minnesota’s public schools have little to show for decades of increased spending.”³⁷

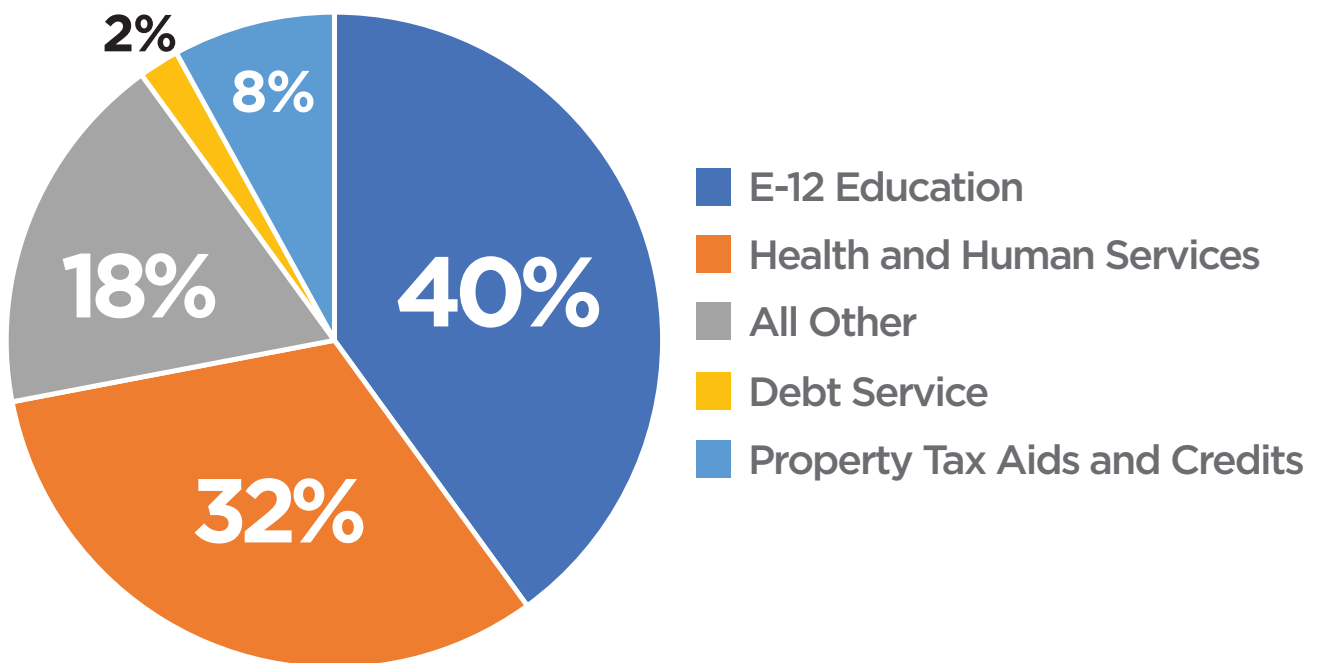
In spring 2020, all states received an initial federal waiver to bypass requirements around statewide assessments, but the U.S Department of Education required states to administer their annual 2021 standardized tests. Teachers’ unions were less than thrilled with the assessment news.³⁸ These tests, although administered during a not-so-standard school year, along with spring 2022 data, provide baseline information of the extent of student learning loss from school closures. Additionally, pairing this data with pre-COVID assessment results confirms the concerning trend of students struggling to meet grade-level proficiency. For that long-term trend, MCA test scores from 2013 are used to ensure an

apples-to-apples comparison between annual test results. The reading MCA was revamped that year to align with national “Common Core” academic standards, and the mathematics MCA was revised in 2011 based on the state’s amended math standards. Both of these changes resulted in achievement drops for all students.

Even a 10-year dataset show the passage of time has not been kind to our hope for improved academic progress, despite Minnesota consistently appropriating more money for education spending. At 40 percent of the state budget (\$20.5 billion), E-12 education spending is the largest expenditure of the state.³⁹ It is over \$4 billion higher than the next largest spending category — Health and Human Services.

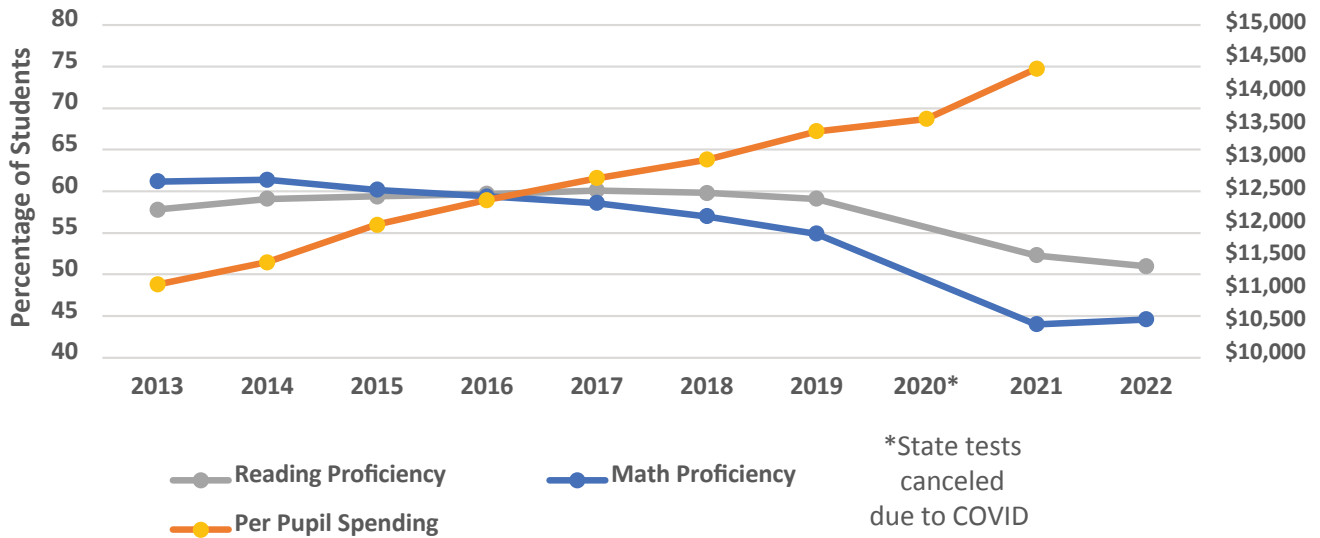
Since 2020, Minnesota’s public schools have also been awarded nearly \$2.7 billion in federal aid through three coronavirus spending bills. While school districts have published spending plans, much of that money is yet unspent, as of reports in August 2022.⁴⁰

General Fund Spending by Category 2022-2023 Biennium



SOURCE: MINNESOTA MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

Minnesota Math/Reading Proficiency & Per Pupil Spending



SOURCES: MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

According to Georgetown University’s Edunomics Lab, only eight Minnesota school districts as of September 13, 2022 have reported any spending from the third wave of education-related federal funding the state received (ESSER III) for assistance returning to school safely and addressing learning loss.⁴¹

Data from the state’s 2022 reading and math MCAs show much work remains to ensure students acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills, particularly given how school closures have exacerbated academic proficiency challenges among all student groups. Fewer than half of students statewide are performing at grade-level in math (44.6 percent) and just under 50 percent of students can’t read at grade level.⁴² (The results are similar when both MCA and MTAS test scores are factored in.)

Academic achievement disparities from pre-COVID are largely unchanged — both across racial/ethnic groups and income levels. Nearly 41 percent of white students did not demonstrate proficiency in reading on the MCA, compared with nearly 70 percent of Black and Hispanic students who aren’t

reading at grade level. Around 53 percent of Asian students, nearly 73 percent of American Indian students and over 51 percent of students who identify as two or more races are not proficient in reading. Math proficiency is even more bleak — nearly 46 percent of white students, 58 percent of Asian students, 78 percent of Hispanic students, nearly 81 percent of Black students, nearly 83 percent of American Indian students, and 60 percent of students who identify as two or more races can’t do grade-level math. Low-income white students also significantly trail higher-income white students in academic achievement across Minnesota.

Participation in the state’s 2021 and 2022 MCAs was lower than pre-pandemic participation — around 7 percent of students in 2022 and 24 percent in 2021 didn’t take the math MCAs, with just under 5 percent and 22 percent opting out of the reading MCAs in 2022 and 2021. Typically, opt-outs hover around two percent. Given the lower participation, there is a high possibility that learning losses could be even higher. ■

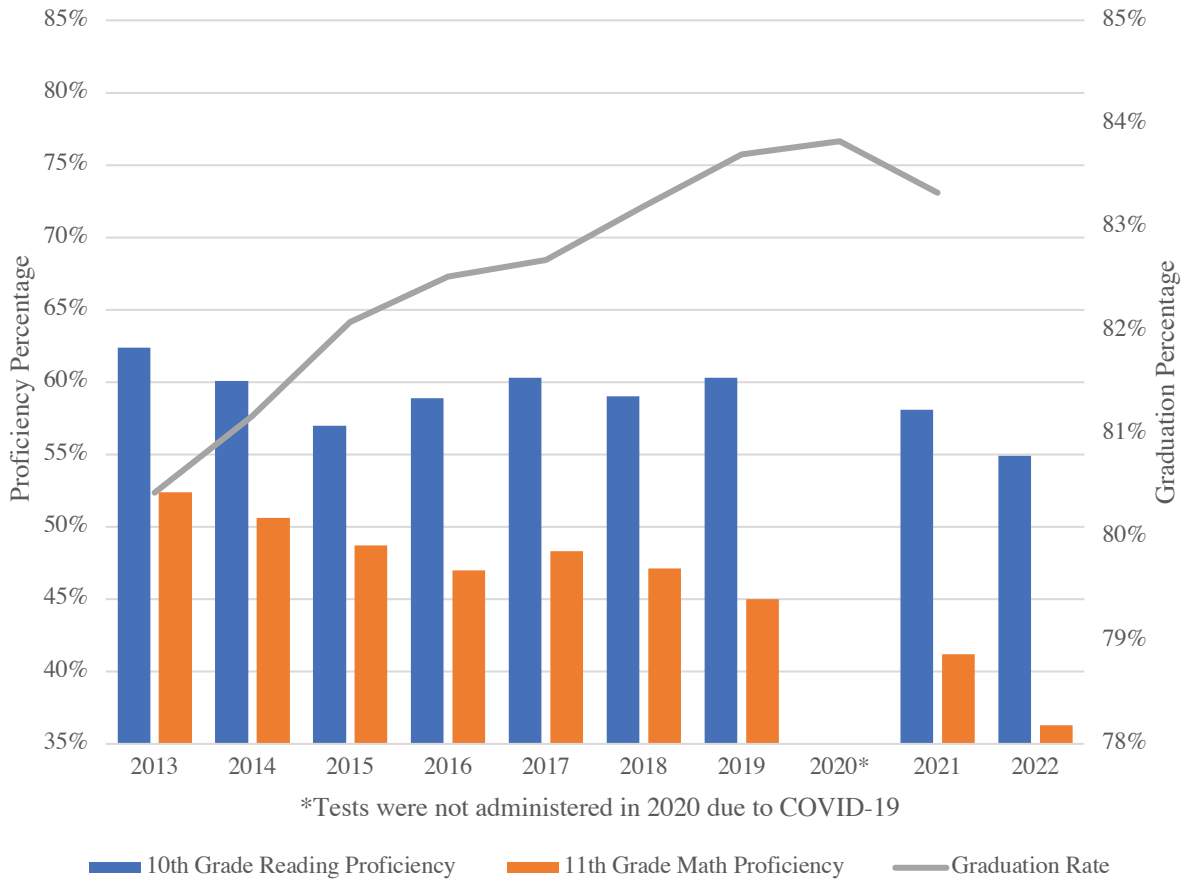


Graduation rate and proficiency

Increases in graduation rates do not automatically equate to improved learning. In 2013, the state legislature diluted Minnesota's high school graduation requirements, and now students do not have to demonstrate proficiency on statewide tests in order to graduate.⁴³ This is reflected in Minnesota's graduation rate maintaining a fairly consistent upward trend over the years, yet high school math and reading proficiency have not consistently im-

proved. In 2020, for example, the state's graduation rate reached its highest since at least 2013 at 83.8 percent. Yet, only 45 percent of those graduates were performing at grade level in math the previous year as 11th graders. Based on spring 2022 test results, only 36.3 percent of Minnesota 11th graders are proficient in math.⁴⁴ Graduation data for the 2021-2022 school year was not yet available at the printing of this report. ■

Minnesota High School Proficiency & Four-Year Graduation Rate



SOURCE: MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



North Star Accountability Report

In 2018, Minnesota launched its North Star accountability system to satisfy the requirements of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the state's World Best Workforce law (WBWF). The system is intended to identify schools and districts requiring improvement support based on academic achievement levels, progress toward English language proficiency, academic progress from one year to the next, graduation rates, and consistent attendance.⁴⁵ The North Star 2022 report identified 371 public schools, including 15

entire districts, that require support over a three-year period. Nearly a third of Minneapolis Public Schools (29 out of 96) were identified for support, and over 40 percent of St. Paul Public Schools (27 out of 67) were also identified. Both of these districts were slow to resume in-person instruction.

Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan district maintained in-person instruction for the entire 2021-2022 school year, and only one alternative school in the district was identified as in need of support.⁴⁶ ■



Economic impacts

Without mastery of the basics, children will grow up to be less productive and earn less.⁴⁷ According to the World Bank, school closures could cost children \$21 trillion in earnings over their lifetimes, or equivalent to 17 percent of 2022 global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), reported *The Economist*.⁴⁸ If fewer students are graduating with the skills

necessary for today's jobs, the economic impact from this will affect all parts of society. For Minnesota, the immediate economic costs of the state's government policy responses to COVID-19 on each resident amount to \$1,866 in lost Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by the end of the first quarter of 2021, or \$7,464 for a family of four.⁴⁹ ■



Conclusion

While restrictions finally loosened and in-person instruction finally became more of a reality for more Minnesota students, the learning loss from two years of on-and-off distance schooling remains. Since March 2020, prolonged school closures — outside of the understandable necessity of them during the early months of COVID-19 — have contributed to significant and profound academic learning loss that risks having long-term impacts.

No matter the level of justification for extended school closures, the effects on K-12 education are devastating. Will we ever really be able to “catch” these students up? Not if we continue to protect the status quo and push for education “reforms” that have been tried ad nauseum. Academic achievement lagged pre-COVID, and it’s clear we are not prioritizing the right solutions.

The decision to close schools is widely recognized now as a profound mistake. It is unfortunate it took as long as it did to come to terms with the life-altering impacts such a choice is having and could continue to have on hundreds of thousands of Minnesota students.

Enrollment in Minnesota’s public school system has dropped by thousands of students since pre-COVID.⁵⁰ Families considered, pursued, and are now becom-

ing accustomed to schooling options outside of their neighborhood district — from private schools to home-schooling to learning pods.

“It seems like the families that have come [to private schools] found the academic rigor they would like, and they found community in these schools,” Tim Benz, president of MinnIndependent, told the *Star Tribune* in February 2022.⁵¹

“I think that families have realized that there are a lot of options for students,” Minnesota Association of School Administrators Executive Director Deb Henton told the *Pioneer Press* that same month.⁵²

A May 2022 *Thinking Minnesota* Poll revealed an overwhelming plurality (41 percent) of Minnesotans chose academic excellence as their top priority for local school leadership. The next closest answers were “supporting teachers” at 17 percent and “student mental health” at 13 percent. No other answer received more than nine percent.⁵³

Minnesota’s education system has been leaving students behind long before school closures and distance learning. The consequences — from learning loss to readiness gaps to economic impacts — deserve a clear-eyed accounting and should serve as a call to carefully weigh future policy choices. ■

Endnotes

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Appendix

Estimated Learning Loss by District and Proficiency Scores (All Accountability Tests)

SOURCE: GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY MCCOURT SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY AND THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

District	Georgetown University — Learning Loss Calculator		Minnesota Department of Education — All Academic Accountability Tests			
	Math learning loss in weeks through fall 2021	Reading learning loss in weeks through fall 2021	2019 Math proficiency	2022 Math proficiency	2019 Reading proficiency	2022 Reading proficiency
A.C.G.C.	10	7	47.4%	39.6%	56.4%	39.6%
Ada-Borup	11	7	58.7%	48.5%	58.7%	60.9%
Adrian	10	7	52.2%	44.7%	57.3%	53.4%
Aitkin	8	6	56.7%	56.3%	57.8%	52.1%
Albany	6	2	71.4%	59.2%	68.5%	56.0%
Albert Lea	13	11	43.9%	36.6%	47.6%	40.4%
Alden-Conger	*	*	55.4%	42.7%	56.9%	44.3%
Alexandria	10	5	65.5%	54.4%	65.7%	53.8%
Annandale	9	3	65.5%	59.7%	67.0%	61.7%
Anoka-Hennepin	14	9	63.5%	52.4%	65.1%	54.9%
Ashby	*	*	54.0%	46.6%	59.5%	50.0%
Austin	13	11	37.1%	27.5%	43.6%	35.5%
Badger	*	*	57.5%	42.2%	70.6%	51.8%
Bagley	14	13	45.5%	23.6%	49.8%	30.0%
Barnesville	*	*	75.8%	65.3%	76.7%	63.5%
Barnum	*	*	62.9%	43.2%	70.5%	60.6%
Battle Lake	*	*	70.5%	66.7%	71.7%	63.4%
Becker	8	4	66.2%	54.6%	64.9%	58.5%
Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa	*	*	55.1%	30.7%	64.2%	48.1%
Belle Plaine	10	5	54.6%	45.5%	63.2%	54.4%
Bemidji	12	8	51.6%	45.9%	55.4%	49.6%
Benson	7	10	51.1%	41.5%	51.6%	41.1%
Bertha-Hewitt	*	*	53.9%	48.5%	59.5%	55.5%
Big Lake	8	4	63.0%	48.5%	63.1%	54.0%
Bird Island-Olivia-Lake Lillian	10	7	56.1%	42.6%	59.0%	49.8%
Blackduck	*	*	45.6%	38.4%	47.8%	38.0%
Blooming Prairie	*	*	60.0%	55.5%	63.8%	54.6%
Bloomington	13	9	47.0%	36.6%	53.5%	48.6%
Blue Earth Area	10	7	47.7%	34.0%	54.1%	42.8%
Braham	*	*	59.9%	43.8%	59.5%	48.7%
Brainerd	12	7	62.2%	50.2%	67.9%	55.8%
Brandon-Evansville	7	5	71.2%	62.0%	61.7%	49.1%

District	Georgetown University — Learning Loss Calculator		Minnesota Department of Education — All Academic Accountability Tests			
	Math learning loss in weeks through fall 2021	Reading learning loss in weeks through fall 2021	2019 Math proficiency	2022 Math proficiency	2019 Reading proficiency	2022 Reading proficiency
Brooklyn Center	18	15	13.8%	4.5%	22.4%	17.1%
Browerville	*	*	37.9%	48.1%	41.6%	39.7%
Browns Valley	*	*	42.9%	41.1%	39.6%	35.6%
Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart	*	*	57.5%	46.9%	64.0%	46.8%
Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose	8	4	65.0%	54.7%	65.2%	55.3%
Burnsville-Eagan-Savage	15	13	43.3%	31.4%	48.2%	40.5%
Butterfield	*	*	21.6%	24.8%	32.7%	29.1%
Byron	7	1	74.3%	64.2%	76.3%	65.6%
Caledonia	7	4	58.4%	50.6%	60.6%	63.0%
Cambridge-Isanti	8	3	59.2%	45.9%	62.2%	50.1%
Campbell-Tintah	*	*	32.8%	38.6%	51.5%	35.8%
Canby	*	*	62.5%	48.4%	67.9%	57.9%
Cannon Falls	*	*	60.2%	48.9%	62.7%	53.9%
Carlton	8	4	50.8%	32.1%	57.3%	46.8%
Cass Lake-Bena	17	14	26.3%	14.7%	35.3%	22.4%
Cedar Mountain	*	*	52.9%	33.2%	58.5%	44.4%
Centennial	8	3	71.6%	63.6%	68.8%	61.8%
Central	9	5	60.2%	49.6%	63.7%	52.6%
Chatfield	7	1	67.9%	56.8%	70.9%	62.7%
Chisago Lakes	8	4	62.8%	51.2%	65.6%	56.3%
Chisholm	13	7	45.3%	28.0%	59.7%	40.6%
Chokio-Alberta	*	*	53.2%	32.9%	55.0%	42.3%
Clearbrook-Gonvick	*	*	46.4	37.2	55.6	49.1
Cleveland	*	*	55.8%	49.3%	66.8%	58.8%
Climax-Shelly	*	*	32.5%	26.9%	50.4%	44.3%
Clinton-Graceville-Beardsley	*	*	53.1%	49.0%	76.4%	62.4%
Cloquet	10	6	58.9%	39.4%	67.2%	54.0%
Columbia Heights	15	13	26.0%	15.9%	35.1%	26.1%
Comfrey	*	*	26.8%	42.4%	56.3%	44.3%
Cook County	18	10	30.2%	27.2%	56.2%	57.8%
Cromwell-Wright	*	*	51.8%	47.9%	55.2%	58.2%
Crookston	9	7	56.2%	42.1%	55.9%	45.0%
Crosby-Ironton	*	*	45.6%	45.7%	64.3%	57.7%
Dassel-Cokato	6	2	70.5%	63.3%	72.8%	68.3%
Dawson-Boyd	*	*	59.2%	41.9%	64.7%	56.5%
Deer River	13	7	40.2%	33.0%	53.5%	44.7%
Delano	7	1	78.4%	73.4%	79.2%	74.3%
Detroit Lakes	10	7	55.4%	44.8%	61.1%	54.1%
Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton	*	*	57.5%	47.2%	62.1%	53.1%
Dover-Eyota	9	4	65.3%	49.0%	63.4%	52.7%
Duluth	15	10	55.2%	46.0%	62.6%	56.6%
East Central	8	6	46.6%	36.0%	51.8%	40.5%

District	Georgetown University — Learning Loss Calculator		Minnesota Department of Education — All Academic Accountability Tests			
	Math learning loss in weeks through fall 2021	Reading learning loss in weeks through fall 2021	2019 Math proficiency	2022 Math proficiency	2019 Reading proficiency	2022 Reading proficiency
Eastern Carver	9	3	60.6%	55.5%	67.1%	60.5%
Eden Prairie	8	3	68.8%	59.3%	73.5%	68.0%
Eden Valley-Watkins	6	2	71.0%	53.0%	68.3%	49.7%
Edgerton	*	*	51.0%	33.9%	53.0%	37.3%
Edina	7	1	76.5%	67.0%	77.5%	73.2%
Elk River	8	3	71.3%	59.1%	70.1%	59.5%
Ellsworth	*	*	48.7%	30.6%	63.4%	46.8%
Ely	12	8	49.5%	43.6%	62.7%	56.1%
Esko	*	*	75.8%	66.8%	80.7%	70.7%
Fairmont	*	*	57.6%	41.2%	58.5%	48.6%
Faribault	13	11	34.7%	19.8%	41.6%	32.7%
Farmington	10	5	55.2%	44.1%	58.6%	49.2%
Fergus Falls	12	8	59.0%	54.2%	65.0%	59.7%
Fertile-Beltrami	*	*	64.4%	54.3%	71.2%	60.7%
Fillmore Central	11	6	55.2%	35.1%	60.5%	53.2%
Fisher	*	*	39.9%	29.2%	41.5%	47.7%
Floodwood	11	11	44.0%	32.5%	52.5%	51.3%
Foley	9	3	68.3%	54.0%	69.3%	57.4%
Forest Lake	8	3	60.1%	47.5%	61.0%	50.6%
Fosston	*	*	60.5%	57.1%	66.2%	59.2%
Frazee-Vergas	*	*	55.1%	39.8%	61.9%	46.7%
Fridley	13	11	37.8%	21.5%	44.3%	32.5%
Fulda	*	*	57.7%	45.6%	54.7%	44.2%
GFW	*	*	52.4%	34.3%	61.3%	46.9%
Glencoe-Silver Lake	8	3	54.2%	40.2%	60.2%	49.1%
Glenville-Emmons	*	*	50.4%	34.9%	45.9%	35.5%
Goodhue	*	*	52.5%	50.0%	56.5%	51.0%
Goodridge	*	*	48.4%	25.9%	47.5%	37.9%
Granada Huntley East Chain	12	11	35.2%	26.1%	47.9%	42.5%
Grand Meadow	11	3	41.7%	26.1%	53.2%	40.5%
Grand Rapids	8	6	53.4%	45.9%	61.7%	53.9%
Greenbush-Middle River	*	*	58.4%	48.8%	60.5%	54.5%
Greenway	10	7	50.4%	45.7%	61.2%	44.3%
Grygla	*	*	70.7%	47.2%	51.3%	40.5%
Hancock	*	*	68.0%	66.4%	67.8%	64.5%
Hastings	8	4	68.0%	48.6%	65.5%	52.1%
Hawley	11	5	67.3%	59.1%	69.4%	62.3%
Hayfield	*	*	42.1%	34.8%	48.8%	42.0%
Hendricks	6	4	57.9%	43.3%	71.4%	48.6%
Henning	*	*	59.9%	46.9%	65.4%	55.3%
Herman-Norcross	*	*	53.4%	30.4%	70.0%	29.4%

District	Georgetown University — Learning Loss Calculator		Minnesota Department of Education — All Academic Accountability Tests			
	Math learning loss in weeks through fall 2021	Reading learning loss in weeks through fall 2021	2019 Math proficiency	2022 Math proficiency	2019 Reading proficiency	2022 Reading proficiency
Heron Lake-Okabena	*	*	38.4%	18.5%	45.7%	34.3%
Hibbing	10	6	56.8%	47.4%	66.8%	56.0%
Hill City	9	9	39.1%	29.5%	46.0%	35.4%
Hills-Beaver Creek	*	*	67.5%	58.0%	68.0%	62.6%
Hinckley-Finlayson	11	10	32.8%	24.0%	41.5%	35.3%
Holdingsford	*	*	71.3%	54.3%	67.1%	61.0%
Hopkins	12	8	54.5%	41.8%	59.5%	51.9%
Houston	16	9	40.6%	32.9%	58.1%	50.9%
Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted	8	4	53.4%	40.4%	60.8%	49.5%
Hutchinson	11	6	65.6%	56.1%	66.3%	57.6%
International Falls	*	*	54.3%	42.5%	62.9%	53.2%
Inver Grove Heights	13	9	47.6%	32.5%	51.6%	42.2%
Isle	17	10	34.2%	44.4%	54.2%	43.6%
Ivanhoe	*	*	67.3%	69.6%	55.1%	64.4%
Jackson County Central	10	7	55.2%	43.0%	55.5%	45.3%
Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton	*	*	45.0%	44.2%	54.6%	49.0%
Jordan	6	2	61.4%	53.3%	66.8%	58.6%
Kasson-Mantorville	6	2	62.7%	58.5%	66.6%	59.4%
Kelliher	*	*	40.3%	31.7%	44.7%	42.3%
Kenyon-Wanamingo	11	3	44.6%	35.1%	53.6%	49.2%
Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg	*	*	55.0%	43.5%	54.1%	44.5%
Kimball	*	*	59.5%	44.4%	69.2%	53.3%
Kingsland	*	*	47.5%	44.8%	62.3%	57.1%
Kittson	*	*	68.8%	52.9%	70.0%	49.6%
La Crescent-Hokah	12	7	47.1%	35.8%	55.3%	46.0%
Lac Qui Parie Valley	8	6	57.5%	42.0%	52.8%	44.1%
Lake Benton	*	*	68.3%	63.9%	78.0%	67.2%
Lake City	*	*	54.8%	46.8%	56.0%	47.4%
Lake Crystal-Wellcome Memorial	8	4	53.9%	58.5%	62.6%	60.5%
Lake of the Woods	*	*	39.4%	28.6%	48.2%	38.1%
Lake Park-Audubon	*	*	56.0%	40.4%	61.4%	46.9%
Lake Superior	9	4	57.6%	35.3%	61.6%	44.1%
Lakeview	*	*	58.0%	52.9%	64.9%	59.1%
Lakeville	10	5	69.3%	56.8%	73.2%	63.2%
Lancaster	*	*	52.3%	47.1%	72.9%	51.2%
Lanesboro	*	*	59.1%	52.6%	62.8%	55.7%
Laporte	13	12	24.4%	22.3%	48.7%	39.3%
Le Sueur-Henderson	12	7	52.8%	51.0%	52.3%	50.0%
LeRoy-Ostrander	*	*	47.7%	31.6%	63.4%	45.9%
Lester Prairie	*	*	52.0%	47.0%	55.4%	45.8%
Lewiston-Altura	12	8	49.2%	44.9%	62.7%	53.4%

District	Georgetown University — Learning Loss Calculator		Minnesota Department of Education — All Academic Accountability Tests			
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Little Falls	9	9	42.3%	33.5%	48.1%	37.5%
Littlefork-Big Falls	*	*	58.9%	50.0%	61.4%	49.4%
Long Prairie-Grey Eagle	*	*	32.1%	19.3%	38.3%	29.3%
Luverne	9	7	69.5%	62.3%	61.0%	61.2%
Lyle	*	*	25.4%	19.6%	40.0%	32.4%
Lynd	*	*	31.1%	25.6%	39.2%	36.0%
Mabel-Canton	*	*	48.0%	57.0%	63.3%	56.6%
Maccray	10	7	51.2%	48.2%	52.9%	47.4%
Madelia	9	7	50.7%	40.9%	53.4%	46.7%
Mahnomen	13	11	32.1%	20.3%	33.3%	20.4%
Mahtomedi	8	2	76.7%	69.1%	78.6%	68.8%
Mankato	12	8	59.2%	48.4%	64.2%	55.2%
Maple Lake	*	*	58.6%	54.3%	58.3%	52.1%
Maple River	6	2	67.3%	52.7%	67.0%	57.6%
Marshall	15	10	59.5%	46.0%	59.0%	46.5%
Marshall County Central	7	4	49.8%	42.2%	62.7%	54.8%
Martin County West	10	7	50.6%	43.4%	57.9%	42.7%
McGregor	9	9	33.3%	32.6%	49.4%	41.4%
Medford	*	*	48.8%	41.6%	53.0%	45.5%
Melrose	10	7	59.1%	48.5%	54.6%	48.2%
Menahga	8	6	51.6%	46.1%	57.5%	48.8%
Mesabi East	*	*	43.5%	29.1%	55.4%	44.1%
Milaca	11	8	58.5%	47.4%	58.3%	48.1%
Milroy	*	*	50.0%	52.4%	46.2%	42.9%
Minneapolis	17	14	42.2%	33.1%	46.9%	42.4%
Minneota	*	*	70.6%	60.4%	74.2%	61.5%
Minnetonka	8	2	79.2%	72.6%	81.5%	73.3%
Minnewaska	10	7	62.8%	55.9%	62.1%	55.3%
Montevideo	11	7	54.0%	50.6%	58.5%	48.7%
Monticello	7	2	66.7%	59.4%	67.0%	58.3%
Moorhead	11	7	47.1%	41.9%	52.5%	45.0%
Moose Lake	*	*	55.8%	46.6%	54.2%	51.0%
Mora	9	7	58.9%	51.9%	66.1%	61.3%
Morris	*	*	65.8%	55.0%	60.6%	55.7%
Mounds View	15	10	66.9%	54.6%	67.6%	59.8%
Mountain Iron-Buhl	*	*	45.8%	36.9%	63.2%	51.2%
Mountain Lake	*	*	59.0%	43.6%	56.9%	45.9%
Murray County Central	*	*	60.3%	64.6%	65.7%	58.5%
Nashwauk-Keewatin	14	12	45.4%	36.0%	50.5%	46.3%
Nett Lake	*	*	48.6%	26.3%	56.8%	57.9%
Nevis	10	5	58.0%	56.1%	68.1%	60.8%
New London-Spicer	7	1	63.9%	57.0%	69.3%	62.3%

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New Ulm	10	7	54.5%	51.0%	57.9%	50.5%
New York Mills	*	*	56.0%	53.0%	59.9%	48.7%
Nicollet	8	4	52.9%	37.7%	56.0%	51.7%
Norman County East	*	*	54.7%	46.3%	52.9%	38.9%
Norman County West	*	*	67.6%	(not available)	82.4%	(not available)
North Branch	9	4	51.2%	40.9%	55.3%	50.9%
North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale	12	12	51.8%	29.9%	50.9%	36.5%
Northfield	9	3	66.0%	59.2%	68.4%	59.5%
Northland Community	11	10	27.4%	14.6%	40.0%	24.6%
NRHEG	*	*	55.7%	39.2%	57.9%	45.3%
Ogilvie	10	11	52.4%	36.2%	44.6%	47.2%
Onamia	11	10	30.0%	20.1%	36.3%	34.6%
Orono	8	3	75.6%	68.2%	78.9%	73.1%
Ortonville	*	*	51.1%	52.6%	57.8%	56.3%
Osakis	*	*	62.7%	57.3%	62.1%	52.4%
Osseo	13	8	49.3%	41.7%	55.0%	49.5%
Owatonna	12	8	49.5%	42.2%	54.1%	47.3%
Park Rapids	9	9	45.7%	38.3%	51.4%	41.0%
Parkers Prairie	*	*	55.6%	49.8%	64.7%	44.9%
Paynesville	8	4	59.4%	33.6%	60.0%	39.1%
Pelican Rapids	11	7	56.1%	43.9%	56.8%	48.2%
Pequot Lakes	7	1	63.8%	44.4%	70.4%	60.5%
Perham-Dent	11	8	59.1%	46.8%	62.0%	56.7%
Pierz	7	4	63.7%	55.4%	60.8%	51.7%
Pillager	14	8	46.3%	45.5%	59.7%	52.6%
Pine City	9	7	48.8%	43.2%	55.7%	48.1%
Pine Island	7	2	66.9%	56.1%	69.0%	56.9%
Pine Point	*	*	24.2%	10.9%	34.4%	23.9%
Pine River-Backus	12	8	47.0%	30.6%	55.5%	44.8%
Pipestone Area	13	7	41.1%	39.9%	55.4%	48.1%
Plainview-Elgin-Millville	*	*	67.8%	56.6%	67.4%	57.9%
Princeton	8	4	59.8%	43.4%	63.5%	50.8%
Prior Lake-Savage Area	8	2	71.6%	60.1%	68.4%	61.8%
Proctor	8	3	59.0%	43.4%	59.7%	48.1%
Randolph	*	*	53.7%	44.9%	51.8%	45.4%
Red Lake County Central	8	6	54.8%	44.9%	57.7%	46.2%
Red Lake	20	19	16.6%	2.5%	23.2%	10.5%
Red Lake Falls	*	*	58.3%	53.3%	59.5%	52.5%
Red Rock Central	*	*	63.0%	53.5%	69.2%	48.6%
Red Wing	12	8	48.9%	34.0%	54.8%	42.2%
Redwood Area	11	7	52.7%	46.1%	57.9%	49.0%
Renville County West	*	*	39.6%	30.8%	54.9%	42.1%

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Robbinsdale	17	14	35.2%	25.5%	48.8%	42.9%
Rochester	12	8	49.8%	39.8%	55.5%	49.5%
Rockford	7	1	63.1%	42.4%	68.0%	53.1%
Rocori	8	4	61.6%	52.8%	65.1%	52.8%
Roseau	8	3	60.7%	43.5%	64.6%	52.1%
Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan	11	5	63.9%	52.0%	65.3%	57.0%
Roseville	16	11	49.1%	37.5%	56.4%	50.0%
Rothsay	*	*	61.3%	57.5%	57.1%	56.2%
Round Lake-Brewster	*	*	36.4%	31.6%	45.8%	39.1%
Royalton	8	5	52.9%	51.9%	52.7%	52.9%
RTR	10	7	50.5%	48.6%	60.8%	54.3%
Rush City	*	*	63.0%	37.9%	66.8%	49.8%
Rushford-Peterson	16	11	52.8%	44.1%	62.7%	49.3%
Sartell-St. Stephen	6	2	75.3%	61.2%	72.1%	65.5%
Sauk Centre	12	9	59.9%	39.3%	62.9%	40.6%
Sauk Rapids-Rice	14	10	53.8%	43.2%	57.2%	53.5%
Sebeka	*	*	56.8%	39.1%	61.2%	53.7%
Shakopee	17	11	58.5%	46.5%	62.3%	55.2%
Sibley East	11	10	44.5%	36.8%	51.1%	43.9%
Sleepy Eye	*	*	51.3%	38.1%	57.8%	38.1%
South Koochiching	9	10	44.9%	25.3%	48.5%	40.2%
South St. Paul	14	12	39.4%	23.5%	44.9%	36.6%
South Washington County	8	2	64.9%	51.4%	68.0%	56.7%
Southland	9	5	51.7%	47.2%	57.1%	55.3%
Spring Grove	*	*	45.9%	60.6%	70.1%	65.0%
Spring Lake Park	16	11	46.8%	37.7%	56.6%	45.1%
Springfield	*	*	74.7%	71.1%	69.1%	64.4%
St. Anthony-New Brighton	9	4	70.8%	48.2%	67.5%	57.8%
St. Charles	*	*	65.1%	51.1%	65.4%	52.5%
St. Clair	*	*	64.1%	49.5%	60.4%	50.7%
St. Cloud	13	11	36.2%	28.0%	43.7%	38.3%
St. Francis	8	4	57.0%	39.0%	60.8%	49.7%
St. James	11	7	56.4%	42.3%	57.3%	44.3%
St. Louis County	10	6	41.2%	31.8%	55.3%	46.1%
St. Louis Park	17	11	53.2%	43.5%	59.1%	48.1%
St. Michael-Albertville	6	2	75.4%	63.1%	76.2%	63.7%
St. Paul	15	13	32.1%	25.2%	39.5%	34.8%
St. Peter	13	8	59.2%	51.6%	59.1%	51.0%
Staples-Motley	9	9	42.7%	40.8%	49.2%	44.8%
Stewartville	8	4	59.7%	46.5%	61.6%	49.6%
Stillwater Area	10	4	63.9%	56.4%	68.3%	58.7%
Swanville	9	9	44.9%	27.7%	52.7%	37.1%

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Tracy	*	*	54.4%	50.6%	65.3%	56.7%
Tri-City United	11	7	49.5%	42.8%	57.4%	44.8%
Tri-County	*	*	63.0%	43.3%	65.2%	49.0%
Triton	6	7	49.6%	42.5%	50.2%	42.1%
Truman	*	*	34.3%	30.8%	56.0%	37.5%
Ulen-Hitterdal	*	*	53.4%	44.5%	53.5%	52.4%
Underwood	11	8	56.3%	42.4%	59.6%	43.4%
United South Central	*	*	56.3%	49.3%	61.0%	50.5%
Upsala	*	*	38.7%	38.0%	54.1%	47.4%
Virginia	*	*	58.0%	(not available)	67.5%	(not available)
Wabasha-Kellogg	11	7	62.5%	34.2%	65.1%	49.0%
Wabasso	*	*	60.7%	53.6%	56.1%	52.1%
Waconia	6	2	70.4%	61.7%	70.5%	63.3%
Wadena-Deer Creek	9	7	47.9%	33.0%	56.1%	45.7%
Walker-Hackensack-Akeley	13	7	41.8%	28.9%	54.2%	40.9%
Warren-Alvarado-Oslo	8	6	57.1%	42.5%	53.2%	51.5%
Warroad	9	6	49.0%	42.8%	66.7%	55.8%
Waseca	17	10	47.1%	36.7%	54.9%	43.6%
Watertown-Mayer	8	4	63.0%	48.5%	64.3%	56.4%
Waterville-Elysian-Morristown	*	*	62.0%	46.2%	66.4%	47.7%
Waubun-Ogema-White Earth	11	10	32.2%	27.5%	42.0%	33.7%
Wayzata	7	2	79.1%	77.8%	80.7%	77.0%
West Central Area	8	5	62.6%	53.1%	69.5%	59.7%
West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan	13	9	55.0%	41.6%	59.9%	53.8%
Westbrook-Walnut Grove	*	*	55.4%	42.9%	54.1%	42.3%
Westonka	7	3	78.7%	68.8%	77.5%	73.2%
Wheaton	*	*	60.4%	38.2%	64.1%	50.3%
White Bear Lake	11	8	62.7%	48.3%	65.1%	55.2%
Willmar	9	11	48.2%	40.6%	46.7%	36.1%
Willow River	*	*	45.7%	29.1%	58.3%	47.9%
Win-E-Mac	*	*	69.2%	62.8%	66.5%	59.1%
Windom	8	6	53.6%	43.0%	57.8%	46.4%
Winona	10	11	48.6%	36.1%	49.2%	41.5%
Worthington	12	11	35.6%	27.2%	44.6%	36.0%
Wrenshall	*	*	39.6%	28.4%	54.6%	45.9%
Yellow Medicine East	13	7	38.0%	27.3%	53.7%	41.0%
Zumbrota-Mazeppa	8	3	67.0%	59.6%	65.9%	54.8%

***Note:** Because the Georgetown University’s learning loss calculator relies on data inputs including the percentage of the 2020-2021 school year spent remote or hybrid, the inability to access that or other information resulted in a district’s estimated learning loss not being listed.



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