

Dear Chair Youakim and Members,

My name is Beret Brost and I am asking for your support of HF3224, a bill that would provide relief for tax payers, and additional school revenue options across Minnesota.

I am a resident of St. Michael and have 2 children in the St. Michael Albertville Independent School District 885. My daughter is 12 and in 6th grade at Middle School West and my son is 9 and in 3rd at Big Woods Elementary School. Over the past several years, the STMA school district has fallen farther and farther behind in funding and our staff and kids are suffering. Over 70 staff members have been let go, support, sports and other extra curricular activities have cut, and class sizes have significantly increased. My son is needing reading support and because there is a shortage of paraprofessionals and reading specialists, he isn't able to get as much attention as he needs. The elementary school class sizes have increased ~65%, going from the low 20s to mid 30s in two years. During the COVID distance learning many students didn't have a computer or other device to use for school work. Because our district cannot afford to provide computers for middle and high schoolers, many kids were struggling to stay connected. We need your help!!

HF3224 is important for our community. Our school district would greatly benefit and residents without kids in the school district would also benefit. It really is a "win-win" situation. Here is a quick review of what HF3224 would do for our community:

Local Option Revenue: LOR: The cap would be increased from \$724 to \$825 per pupil creating an additional \$630,038 increase in revenue for STMA. The bill would also provide around 1.3 million in LOR Property Tax Relief, reducing the amount STMA taxpayers currently pay.

Debt Services: The state would provide approximately 2.1 million in Debt Service Property Tax Relief, reducing the amount STMA taxpayers currently pay for the bond passed by voters in 2017.

Long Term Facility Maintenance (LTFM): The cap would be increased from \$380 to \$500 creating an additional \$748,560 in revenue for STMA

Voter Approved Levy: STMA was not able to pass a voter approved operations levy in 2021. If they had passed the levy in 2021 the state would have paid \$0.28 per dollar of the per pupil cost of the levy. If this bill is made law and STMA were to pass a voter approved operations levy in the future the state would pay \$0.51 per dollar or the per pupil cost.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please vote yes on HF3224.

Sincerely,

Beret Brost

St. Michael, MN

St. Michael- Albertville School District

Dear Chair Youakim and Members,

My name is Elyse Shorez and I am asking for your support of HF3224.

My husband and I recently moved our family to a new school district with high academic success. We believed this would benefit all of our three children.

Last year our district made more than 4 million dollars in cuts. My kindergartner with special education needs has 27 children in her classroom. The talented and gifted services my son receives are being cut from the district. This past fall the district attempted to pass an operating referendum to increase revenue. Because we live in an area without commercial and industrial development the cost to taxpayers was very high, and the levy failed.

We have cut 70 teachers in the past 18 months and at the beginning of March began the process of making 1.4 million in additional cuts due to the failed levy. The district will likely try again this fall to pass an operational levy as it simply cannot operate without an infusion of funds. If action is not taken to equalize the cost of levies it will likely fail again. 71% of school districts in Minnesota rely on a voter approved operating levy, we simply want a fair chance at passing a levy to preserve the critical educational services for our children.

Children are children, they do not determine their zipcode, and their zipcode should not determine the quality of their educational opportunities.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please vote yes on HF3224.

Sincerely,

Elyse Shorez

St Michael, MN

St. Michael-Albertville School District

Dear Chair Youakim and Members,

I am asking for your support of HF3224, a bill that would provide relief for tax payers, and additional school revenue options across Minnesota. Please prioritize this for us, please don't push this until later!

My son and I moved this year for the sole reason to be in the STMA school district. STMA is a community and school that aligns with our values and goals. It was heart crushing to find out that this school district is struggling financially and it has reached a critical tipping point caused by a perfect storm of variables.

Without your action and support our students and educators will continue to suffer. I, along with other families will be faced with moving yet again to prioritize education.

The district is now down over 70 teachers! My son had 34 kids in his 3rd grade class this year (pic attached)!

Next year he is going to lose his advanced math and reading programs among other things. These classes were critical for him to stay engaged and be challenged to meet his potential each year. Cutting these classes will put his educational growth solely on me as a single parent to teach and challenge him at home next year, and my son will have to do school after school.

PLEASE do whatever you can to help STMA. Please speak up for us. Our students and educators are suffering, this isn't their fault and there is no solution in sight without help. It will take legislators and taxpayers to step up and save our schools.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please vote yes on HF3224.

Sincerely,

Beth Theriot

St Michael, MN

St. Michael- Albertville School District