

SECTION II:

THE DAMAGE DONE

CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS AND THE INCREASE IN UNMET NEEDS

Increase in Students of Color

There are 21 school districts in Minnesota where students of color make up more than half of the student population. In 2003, students of color made up more than half the students in just five districts: Minneapolis, Saint Paul, and Brooklyn Center, along with school districts on two Indian reservations – Cass Lake and Red Lake. There has been a very large increase in the number of students of color since 2003 in the sixteen other districts.

School Districts	Percentage of District's Students Who Are Students Of Color		Percentage Increase
	2003-2004 ³⁶	2019-2020 ³⁷	
St. Cloud	14.5%	55.6%	292%
Austin	18.8%	52.1%	177%
Fridley	26.7%	69.1%	158%
Fairbault	20.3%	56.6%	179%
North St. Paul/ Maplewood/Oakdale	21.3%	65.5%	207%
Burnsville	23.9%	64.5%	170%
Roseville	24.4%	58.1%	138%
Willmar	29.1%	61.1%	120%
Columbia	38.1%	82.1%	116%
West St Paul	26.4%	50.7%	92%
Robbinsdale	33.1%	62.3%	88%
Bloomington	28.3%	52.4%	85%
Osseo	32.9%	58.0%	76%
Worthington	41.0%	67.9%	76%
St. James	33.8%	54.2%	60%
Richfield	45.6%	71.1%	56%

The number of students of color has more than doubled in ten of these districts since 2003.

Some of the changes in school district demographics were especially dramatic, such as in St. Cloud, where students of color made up just one in seven students in 2003. Today, more than half of the student body is made up of students of color. In the North St. Paul/Maplewood/Oakdale district, students of color made up just one in five students in 2003, but now more than two-thirds of the district's students are students of color.

MN School Districts where more than half of student body are low-income	NUMBER OF STUDENTS OF COLOR		PERCENTAGE INCREASE
	2003-2004 ³⁶	2019-2020 ³⁷	
St. Cloud	1,421	5,756	305%
Austin	768	2,761	260%
Fridley	690	2,058	198%
Worthington	941	2,733	190%
North St. Paul/ Maplewood/Oakdale	2,422	7,011	189%
Roseville	1,560	4,464	186%
Fairbault	822	1,984	141%
Columbia	1,131	2,694	138%
Willmar	1,247	2,744	120%
West. St Paul	1,265	2,705	114%
Burnsville	3,011	5,552	84%
Bloomington	3,011	5,552	84%
Osseo	7,148	12,468	74%
Robbinsdale	4,555	7,718	69%
Richfield	1,873	3,052	63%
St. James	424	556	31%

³⁴ 2003-2004 Enrollment data from the Minnesota Department of Education

³⁵ 2019-2020 Enrollment data from the Minnesota Department of Education

³⁶ 2003-2004 Enrollment data from the Minnesota Department of Education

³⁷ 2019-2020 Enrollment data from the Minnesota Department of Education

CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS AND THE INCREASE IN UNMET NEEDS

Increase in Low-Income Students

There are twenty-one districts where low-income students (students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch) make up more than half of the students. In 2003, low-income students made up more than half the students in just six districts: **Minneapolis, Saint Paul, Brooklyn Center**, and **Menahaga**, along with school districts on two Indian reservations – **Cass Lake** and **Red Lake**. In twelve of the other fifteen districts, there was a very large increase in the number of low-income students since 2003. (Crookston, St. James, and Greenway had small increases in the number of low-income students but large reductions in total enrollment).

SCHOOL DISTRICT	NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO QUALIFY FOR FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH		PERCENTAGE INCREASE
	2003-2004 ³⁸	2019-2020 ³⁹	
Worthington	1,048	2,542	143%
Burnsville	1,934	4,505	133%
North St. Paul/ Maplewood/Oakdale	2,510	5,834	132%
Fridley	902	1,905	111%
Austin	1,522	2,957	94%
St. Cloud	3,444	6,327	89%
South St. Paul	938	1,721	83%
Columbia Heights	1,350	2,403	78%
Richfield	1,612	2,548	58%
Willmar	1,796	2,821	57%
Fairbault	1,449	2,195	51%
Albert Lea	1,249	1,888	51%
Crookston	593	642	8%
St. James	521	565	8%
Greenway	524	544	4%

At the same time that these school districts were seeing large increases in the number of low-income students, the funding designed to boost achievement of low-income students was decreasing. For instance, in Worthington, the number of low-income students more than doubled since 2003, but the district receives almost \$1,700 less per pupil in real dollars for Compensatory, Basic Education, Extended Time, and English Learner programs than it would if funding had kept up with inflation.

³⁸2003-2004 Enrollment data from the Minnesota Department of Education

³⁹2019-2020 Enrollment data from the Minnesota Department of Education

CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS AND THE INCREASE IN UNMET NEEDS

Increase in English Learner Students

Since 2003, several Minnesota school districts have seen enormous increases in the number of immigrant and refugee students. These school districts need additional resources to properly serve these students, many of whom require additional educational services and may have limited reading ability in their first language.

- In 2003, there were under 600 English Learners in the St. Cloud public school district, and they made up 6 percent of the total student population.⁴⁰ The number of English Learner students has more than quadrupled since then, and English Learners now make up almost a quarter of the student population (24 percent).
- The number of English Learner students in the Austin public schools has more than tripled since 2003, and they now make up 20 percent of all students, up from just 8 percent in 2003.
- Despite the huge increase in need, the St. Cloud school district receives over \$1,600 less per pupil in real dollars for Compensatory, Basic Education, Extended Time, and English Learner programs than it would if funding had kept up with inflation. The Austin school district receives almost \$1,500 less than it would if funding had kept up with inflation.

SCHOOL DISTRICT	NUMBER OF ENGLISH LEARNER STUDENTS		PERCENTAGE INCREASE
	2003-2004 ⁴¹	2019-2020 ⁴²	
St. Cloud	579	2,400	315%
Austin	324	1,062	228%
Worthington	458	1,265	176%
North St. Paul/ Maplewood/Oakdale	523	1,436	175%
Roseville	451	1,156	156%
Rosemount/ Apple Valley/Eagan	1,022	2,275	123%
Burnsville	788	1,601	103%
Bloomington	720	1,434	99%
Shakopee	582	1,023	76%
Willmar	680	1,164	71%

⁴⁰2003-2004, 2011-2012, and 2017-2018 Annual reports on class size to the Minnesota Legislature from the Metropolitan Educational Cooperative Service Unit (Metro ECSU)

CLASS SIZES⁴³

One of the consequences of this lack of resources is overly large class sizes. Small class sizes allow for better individualized instruction and foster stronger relationships between educators and students. Additionally, they lead to more frequent communications between teachers and families, building strong relationships between families and schools.

- Saint Paul elementary classes have an average of 3.1 students more than they did in 2003.
- Saint Paul elementary schools used to have some of the smallest class sizes in the region, but they have now fallen behind other districts. (These class sizes would be even larger had the Saint Paul Federation of Educators not fought to reduce class sizes in their contract negotiations with the district).

Studies tie smaller class sizes to improved academic achievements and student developmental outcomes. These findings are especially true for low-income students and children of color. Black students, in particular, have been shown to benefit from reduced class sizes in early grades.

GRADES	SPPS AVERAGE CLASS SIZE RANKING IN METRO REGION ⁴⁴	
	2003-2004	2017-2018
1	4	30
2	2	23
3	3	13
4	2	15

Studies tie smaller class sizes to improved academic achievements and student developmental outcomes. These findings are especially true for low-income students and children of color.⁴⁵ Black students, in particular, have been shown to benefit from reduced class sizes in early grades.⁴⁶

Of the students in the Saint Paul Public School district, over a third are English Learners and two-thirds are low-income.⁴⁷ Despite these greater challenges, class sizes in St Paul are the same or even larger than in wealthier districts.

2017-2018		PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT				
		St. Paul	Westonka	Minnetonka	Orono	Edina
ELEMENTARY AVG CLASS SIZE		24.5%	20.8%	22.3%	23.7%	24.5%
Percentage of Students ⁴⁸	Are English Learners	29.1%	0.3%	1.8%	1.5%	5.5%
	Qualify for Free/Reduced Price Lunch	66.3%	15.1%	5.8%	6.4%	9.7%

⁴³The Metropolitan Educational Cooperative Service Unit (Metro ECSU) produces an annual report about class sizes in Twin Cities area school districts. The study only includes those districts that choose to provide their information. (Minneapolis Public Schools do not provide their information.) The participating districts vary from year to year. The most recent data from the Saint Paul Public Schools is for the 2017-2018 school year.

⁴⁴Metro ECSU Annual Class Size Study report to Minnesota Legislature

⁴⁵Research-Based Options for Education Policymaking," National Education Policy Center, William J Mathis, June 2016

⁴⁶Class Size Reduction: A Proven Reform Strategy," An NEA Policy Brief, 2017

⁴⁷2019-2020 Enrollment data from the Minnesota Department of Education

⁴⁸2019-2020 Enrollment data from the Minnesota Department of Education

CLASS SIZES

Districts with the largest percentages of low-income students (those who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch), such as Saint Paul, Columbia Heights, and Fridley, have bigger class sizes than wealthy districts, such as Minnetonka.

- There are nine districts in the metro area where low-income students (those who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch) make up more than half the student population. All of the districts for which class size information is available have average elementary class sizes **larger** than the region-wide average of 23.8 students.
- In contrast, many of the districts that have the lowest percentage of students who are low-income have average class sizes that are **smaller** than the region-wide average.

School District	Percentage of Students Who Qualify for Free/Reduced Price Lunch	2017-2018 Average Elementary Class Size
Brooklyn Center	74.8%	N/A
Columbia Heights	73.2	24.0
St. Paul	66.3%	24.5
Fridley	64.0	24.0
Richfield	59.4%	26.0
Minneapolis	55.4%	N/A
North St. Paul/ Maplewood/Oakdale	54.5%	24.2
Burnsville	52.4%	N/A
South Saint Paul	50.3%	24.0
REGION WIDE AVERAGE		23.8
Westonka	15.1	21.0
New Prague	12.3%	22.8
Prior Lake	11.5%	23.3
Waconia	8.9%	23.6
Orono	6.4%	23.7
Minnetonka	5.8%	22.3

An illustration of a young Black woman with a red beanie featuring a red pom-pom. The beanie has the text "WE ARE THE FUTURE" written in white, stylized, hand-drawn capital letters. She has long black braids adorned with red and teal beads. She is wearing a red top. The background is a warm, textured orange-yellow gradient with a large teal circle behind her head.

WE
ARE THE
FUTURE

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