

Senator Mary K. Kunesh
Chair, Education Finance Committee
3209 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St Paul, Minnesota 55155

Honorable Senator and Committee members,

It is hard to believe that one year after historic educational funding was enacted that many or most rural schools in the Northeastern Minnesota area are making cuts due to budget deficits.

I've been a school board director for over 20 years and have been through several years of budgetary cuts due to declining enrollment. However, this year the Rock Ridge School District is scheduled to cut \$2.6 million because of continuing unfunded mandates from the federal government, and now in the state of Minnesota.

Unfunded mandates are undermining any gains that schools have made since covid. This summer's projected unemployment costs for Rock Ridge are \$350,000 which amounts to approximately 7-1/2 FTE teachers. This will affect not only class sizes but class offerings as well.

I'm writing in support of S.F. 2188 which will appropriate \$105 million to the summer unemployment fund for the next year and a half.

Timothy Riordan
Rock Ridge School District #2909
1214 North 7th Avenue
Virginia, Minnesota 55792
218-780-5524
tim.riordan@rrps.org