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# Districts with Statutory Operating Debt

## Fiscal Year 2019

Report to the Legislature

As required by Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.83, subdivision 3

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## For more information

Molly Koppes  
Division of School Finance  
Minnesota Department of Education  
1500 Highway 36 West  
Roseville, MN 55113  
651-582-8249  
[Molly.Koppes@state.mn.us](mailto:Molly.Koppes@state.mn.us)  
[education.mn.gov](http://education.mn.gov)

As requested by Minnesota Statutes, section 3.197: This report cost approximately \$245.13 to prepare, including staff time, printing and mailing expenses.

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## Legislative Charge

Under Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.81, subdivision 2, a school district or charter school is in Statutory Operating Debt (SOD) when it reports a year-end Net Negative Unreserved General Fund Balance exceeding more than 2.5 percent of its unreserved/undesignated operating expenditures.

## Introduction

This report is notification to the Legislature of school districts and charter schools<sup>1</sup> in Statutory Operating Debt (SOD), as required by Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.83, subdivision 3:

“If a district does not limit its expenditures in accordance with this section, the commissioner may so notify the appropriate committees of the legislature by no later than February 15 of the year following the end of that fiscal year.”

The information in this report has been compiled from FY 2019 Uniform Financial Accounting and Reporting Standards (UFARS) financial data. All Minnesota school districts and charter schools<sup>2</sup> must report their audited financial data for the previous fiscal year to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) by November 30 and submit an audited financial statement to MDE by December 31 (Minn. Stat. § 123B.77, subd. 3).

By January 31 of the following fiscal year, a district/school in SOD and its board of education are required to create and implement a special operating plan that is formally approved through a board resolution and submitted to the commissioner of MDE for approval. SOD plan requirements consist of narratives on the district or charter school’s current SOD position; budget development and financial management processes; ongoing financial monitoring processes and procedures; special operating plan budget projections; and, school board resolution. MDE staff work with school districts and charter schools in preparation of the special operating plan and monitor district/school progress.

Note: Effective for FY 2011 and later years, UFARS fund balance account codes were modified to accommodate the implementation of Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement 54, Fund Balance Reporting and Governmental Fund Type Definitions. Under these new accounting standards, general fund ending balances formerly reported in 422 Unreserved/Undesignated are now classified into one of five categories:

1) Nonspendable; 2) Restricted; 3) Committed; 4) Assigned; or, 5) Unassigned. The SOD calculation for FY 2015 includes the following fund balance accounts: 418 Committed for Separation/Retirement Benefits; 460 Nonspendable Fund Balance; 461 Committed Fund Balance; 462 Assigned Fund Balance; 464 Restricted Fund Balance; and 422 Unassigned Fund Balance.

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<sup>1</sup> Under Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.16, subdivision 1, charter schools must comply with Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.81.

<sup>2</sup> Under Minnesota Statutes, section 124E.16, subdivision 1, charter schools must comply with Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.77.

## Analysis

There were six active schools in SOD at the close of FY 2018: two independent school districts and four charter schools. Fiscal Year 2019 had a total of three independent schools districts and seven charter schools in SOD status (Table 1).

One charter school in SOD for FY 2018 was no longer in SOD at the close of FY 2019: Minnesota Excellence in Learning Academy #4230.

One charter school in SOD at the end of FY 2019, Learning for Leadership Charter #4163, closed at the end of FY 2019.

Among the entities in SOD at the close of FY 2019, two school district had been in SOD in prior periods: Truman Public School #458 in FY 2003, 2004, 2006-11 and FY 2016-18, and Waconia #110 in FY 2018. Three charter schools in SOD at the close of FY 2019 were previously in SOD in the close of FY 2018: El Colegio #4057, Rochester Beacon Academy #4238, and Phoenix Academy #4253.

**Table 1: Active School Districts and Charter Schools in SOD at the Close of FY 2019**

Number	Type	Name	Unreserved General Fund Balance	General Fund Expenditures	FY 2019 SOD Calculation	Final UFARS Received	Final Audit Received	FY 2019 SOD Plan Received <sup>3</sup>	Fiscal Years in SOD
110	1	Waconia	\$-6,435,563	\$41,590,079	-15.47%	Yes	Yes	No	2018
458	1	Truman	\$-454,704	\$2,502,616	-18.17%	Yes	Yes	No	2003, 2004, 2006-11 and 2016-18
2365	1	Gibbon, Fairfax, Winthrop (GFW)	\$-509,068	\$8,777,787	-5.80%	Yes	Yes	No	
4057	7	El Colegio	\$-54,461	\$1,727,283	-3.15%	Yes	Yes	No	2018
4238	7	Rochester Beacon Academy	\$-187,071	\$2,849,928	-6.56%	Yes	Yes	No	2018

<sup>3</sup> SOD plan due date of January 31 is after the due date of this report.

Number	Type	Name	Unreserved General Fund Balance	General Fund Expenditures	FY 2019 SOD Calculation	Final UFARS Received	Final Audit Received	FY 2019 SOD Plan Received <sub>3</sub>	Fiscal Years in SOD
4253	7	Phoenix Academy	\$-82,020	\$1,195,810	-6.86%	Yes	Yes	No	2018
4263	7	Progeny	\$-2,986	\$89,696	-3.33%	Yes	Yes	No	
4264	7	Gateway STEM	\$-178,759	\$2,360,731	-7.57%	Yes	Yes	No	
4273	7	Modern Montessori	\$-4,138	\$25,463	-16.27%	Yes	Yes	No	
4277	7	Metro Tech	\$-23,389	\$51,720	-45.22%	Yes	Yes	No	

## Conclusion

Table 2 illustrates historical data. Since Fiscal Year 2000, Statutory Operating Debt has been calculated using the sum of the Unreserved/Undesignated fund balance accounts of the general fund only.

**Table 2: School Districts (Types 1, 2, 3, 6, and 8) and Charter Schools (Type 7)**

**Fiscal Years 2000–19**  
**Net Negative Unreserved General Fund Balance and Statutory Operating Debt**

Category	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
School Districts	346	345	343	343	343	343	343	340	340	340	340	340	340	339	338	336	336	336	335	335
Charter Schools	56	68	82	87	112	134	139	149	156	157	154	154	150	156	157	167	176	169	168	176
Total	402	413	425	430	455	477	482	489	496	497	494	494	490	495	495	503	512	505	503	511
Net Negative Unreserved General Fund Balance	71	69	55	40	32	31	36	44	35	23	20	10	12	17	12	15	16	9	12	21
Active Units in Statutory Operating Debt	33	45	40	25	25	24	22	24	17	11	9	8	10	12	11	3	5	4	6	10

## Bibliography

Minnesota Department of Education Data Bridge Database for School Year 2018-19