



# **CITIZEN'S GUIDE**

## **TO SCHOOL DISTRICT FINANCES**

Osseo Area Schools  
**FISCAL YEAR 2014**  
*(2013-2014 School Year)*

OSSEO AREA SCHOOLS  
ISD  279

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Building  
**PUBLIC** Trust

Engaging  
Our **COMMUNITY**

Delivering  
**CLEAR** and **ACCURATE**  
Financial Reporting

# BACKGROUND

This Citizen's Guide provides a summary of ISD 279-Osseo Area Schools finances for Fiscal Year 2014 (2013-2014 school year). Its purpose is to help members of the public understand where the school district's revenues come from and how funds are used to educate the 20,500 learners in our E-12 schools.

This document describes revenues and expenditures in the General/Transportation Fund, which represents nearly 81% of all funds managed by the school district. In addition to the General/Transportation Fund of \$240 million, the district manages approximately \$57.6 million among seven other fund categories: Food Service, Community Service, Capital Projects, Debt Service, Operating Capital, Internal Services, and Trust.

The information in this document has been reviewed by the Financial Involvement School-Community Accountability Liaisons (FISCAL) advisory team. The FISCAL team provides community-based input and feedback on school financial issues, reviews financial data across ISD 279, and advises the school district on economic issues.

This publication is not an audited opinion of the school district's finances. Rather, it is a brief overview of ISD 279's revenues, use of funds, and overall financial position. Malloy, Montague, Karnowski, Radosevich, & Co. (MMKR), a certified public accounting firm that specializes in school district accounting, provides an annual independent audit of ISD 279.

Data sources for this report include the independent annual audit by MMKR, financial and management reports, information from the Minnesota Department of Education, and Minnesota legislative documents on education finance.

For more information, visit the ISD 279 website at [www.district279.org](http://www.district279.org)

## Recognition for excellence in financial management

- ISD 279 received a **clean audit** of its FY 2014 finances. The independent auditor noted that the district's financial position is solid; the audit went well; and our financial records are in excellent condition.
- Moody's Investors Service has assigned an underlying rating of Aa1 to the district's general obligation bonds. Aa1 is the **second highest bond rating** Moody's has assigned to a Minnesota school district; only three school districts in Minnesota have a higher underlying bond rating from Moody's.
- For the past ten consecutive years ISD 279 has received the Minnesota Department of Education **School Finance Award** for demonstrating timely submission of financial data and compliance with state statutes; presence of select indicators of fiscal health; and accuracy in financial reporting.
- For the 25th consecutive year, the Osseo School District was awarded the Association of School Business Officials International's **Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting**.
- The Minnesota Association of School Business Officials (MASBO) named Kelly Benusa, director of business services, the **2014 Minnesota School Business Official of the Year**.

## Leveraging taxpayer dollars through careful stewardship

- The school district maintains an **intense focus on classroom instruction**. More than 78% of the operating budget goes directly to classroom instruction for students.
- By refinancing debt at a lower rate, the school district has **saved local taxpayers nearly \$11.3 million in interest costs since 2005**.
- ISD 279 received **\$33.8 million in grant funds** in FY 2014. Grant funds leveraged local dollars and allowed schools to provide value-added programs and services that meet student needs. FY 2014 saw an increase of \$3.4 million in grant funds over the prior year, due to an increase in the state compensatory aid and achievement and integration aid.

## Success in cost containment

- The School Board approved \$3.1 million of programs and services reductions in to align staffing with a projected enrollment decline and to preserve fund balance for the fiscal year 2014.
- Belt-tightening across the system resulted in nearly **\$1.4 million in savings** in the area of purchased services and supplies for FY 2014.
- Significant progress has been made in **containing health insurance costs** by providing employees with a deductible plan that results in lower insurance costs to the school district.

# GENERAL/TRANSPORTATION FUND REVENUES

For the year ended June 30, 2014



State Aid	\$191,674,840	82.2%	↑
Property Taxes	27,849,067	11.9%	↑
Federal Aid	8,805,345	3.8%	↑
Other	4,902,566	2.1%	↑
<b>Total General/Transportation Fund Revenues</b>	<b>\$233,231,818</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**ISD 279 receives money from several sources:** state aid, property taxes, federal aid and categorical revenues. The amount from any one source may vary from year to year. Because of this fluctuation, the district annually estimates its revenue, then allocates the money to school sites through a formal budget process. Each dollar received in the General/Transportation Fund for FY 2014 was derived from the funding sources noted above.

# GENERAL/TRANSPORTATION FUND EXPENDITURES

For the year ended June 30, 2014



Instruction	\$179,893,542	78.2%	↑
Transportation/Pupil Support Services	21,381,700	9.3%	↑
Buildings & Grounds	13,956,139	6.1%	↑
District Administration	9,560,101	4.1%	↑
School Administration	4,824,781	2.1%	↑
Other	531,895	0.2%	↑
<b>Total General/Transportation Fund Expenditures</b>	<b>\$230,148,158</b>	<b>100%</b>	

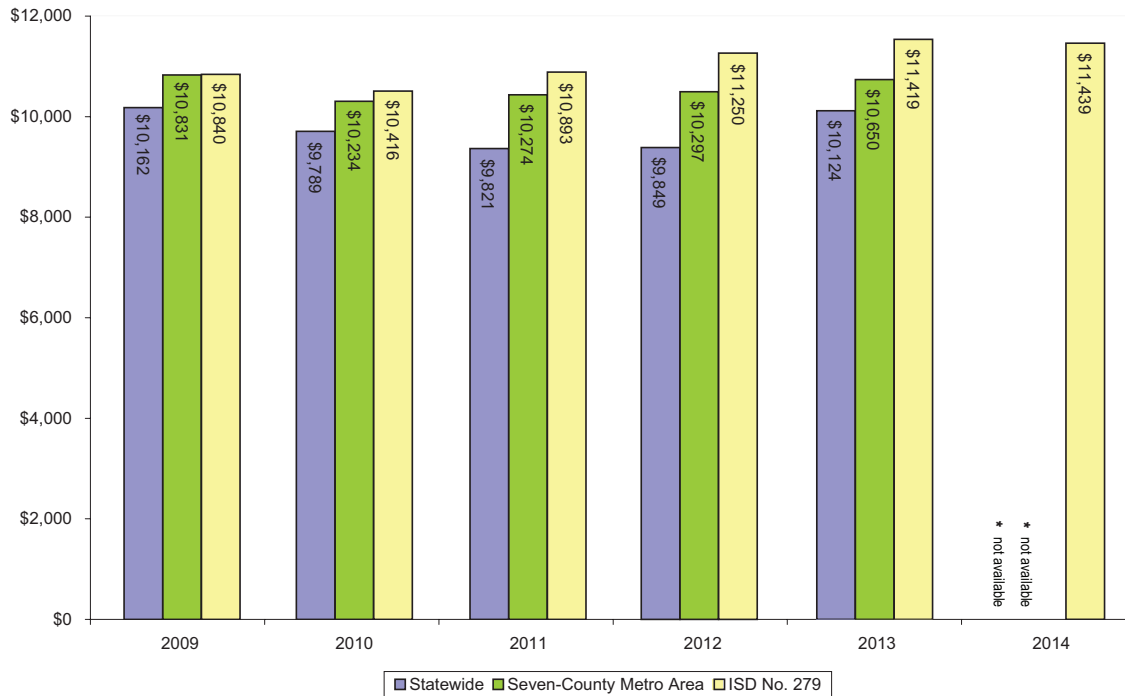
**ISD 279 spending priorities are focused on student instruction.** More than 78% of the operating budget goes directly to classroom instruction for students.

Source: FY 2014 independent audit by Malloy, Montague, Karnowski, Radosevich and Co.

# EXPENDITURES PER STUDENT SERVED

*Administrative and district support services costs per pupil are consistently lower than the seven-county metro area and statewide averages.*

**ADM: Average Daily Membership (each ADM roughly represents one student)**



	Statewide*					Seven-County Metro Area*					ISD 279					
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Administrative and district support services	\$854	\$807	\$813	\$823	\$849	\$876	\$781	\$788	\$805	\$837	\$716	\$726	\$747	\$763	\$721	\$725
Elementary and secondary regular instruction	5,112	4,885	4,829	4,866	4,982	5,411	5,069	5,107	5,103	5,273	5,512	5,186	5,489	5,772	5,869	5,715
Vocational education instruction	153	149	144	138	138	152	150	136	136	132	142	162	141	167	86	151
Special education instruction	1,817	1,832	1,904	1,866	1,909	2,002	1,992	3,015	2,004	2,055	2,152	2,128	2,172	2,167	2,273	2,253
Instructional support services	502	461	446	459	477	598	550	526	537	562	655	557	571	594	599	716
Pupil support services	874	861	874	895	919	968	937	937	957	991	970	1,014	987	982	1,047	1,039
Sites and buildings and other	850	794	811	802	850	824	755	765	755	800	693	643	786	805	824	840
<b>Total General Fund operating expenditures</b>	<b>\$10,162</b>	<b>\$9,789</b>	<b>\$9,821</b>	<b>\$9,849</b>	<b>\$10,124</b>	<b>\$10,831</b>	<b>\$10,234</b>	<b>\$10,274</b>	<b>\$10,297</b>	<b>\$10,650</b>	<b>\$10,840</b>	<b>\$10,416</b>	<b>\$10,893</b>	<b>\$11,250</b>	<b>\$11,419</b>	<b>\$11,439</b>

The largest variances were in elementary and secondary regular instruction (\$154). This change was mostly due to severance payments to retirees, which were paid in FY 2014, decreasing \$2.6 million from the previous year. The School Board approved programs and services reductions of \$3.1 million for Fiscal Year 2014.

Expenditure patterns vary from district to district for various reasons. Factors affecting the comparison include, among others, the growth cycle or maturity of the district, average employee experience, availability of funding, population density, and methods of allocating costs.

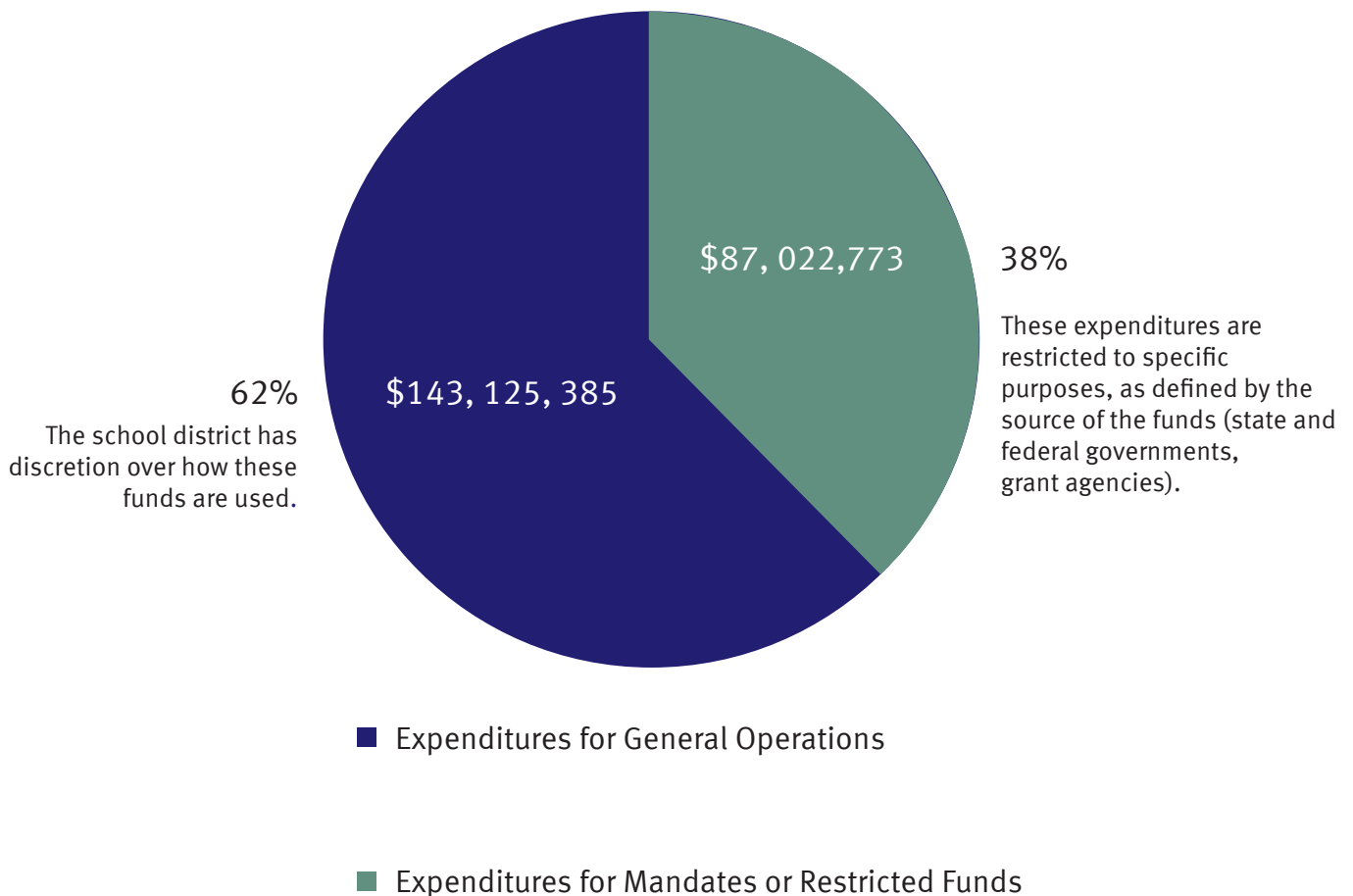
Source: FY 2014 independent audit management report, Malloy, Montague, Karnowski, Radosevich and Co., P.A.

\*Statewide and seven-county metro area information for 2014 is not yet available.

# HOW MUCH OF THE ANNUAL BUDGET IS WITHIN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT'S CONTROL?

*The school district has discretionary control of 62% of the annual budget*

About 38% of FY 2014 expenditures were tied to mandates or restricted to specific purposes. Unrestricted expenditures, about 62% of the budget, allow for discretion and can be spent on the general operations of the district.



**Mandated Programs** - Particular programs for which schools are required to provide services, even if a revenue stream is not available or fully funded. Examples include special education and English language learner services.

**Restricted Funds** - Funds received for a specific purpose that carry spending restrictions.

# GENERAL FUND OPERATIONS AND FINANCIAL POSITION

*This balance sheet demonstrates the school district's financial position, which is an indicator of the overall financial health of district finances.*

	2013 Actual	% Change From Prior Year	2014 Actual	% Change From Prior Year	2015 Projected	% Change From Prior Year	2016 Projected
<b>Beginning Fund Balance</b>	\$ 47,343,264		\$ 40,881,611		\$ 43,965,271		\$ 48,983,645
Revenue	0.1% 223,896,832	4.2%	233,231,818	-6.2%	218,849,342	-0.6%	217,481,630
Expenditures	2.4% 230,358,485	-0.1%	230,148,158	-7.1%	213,830,968	2.8%	218,906,717
Ending Fund Balance	<u>\$ 40,881,611</u>		<u>\$ 43,965,271</u>		<u>\$ 48,983,645</u>		<u>\$ 46,558,558</u>
Unassigned Fund Balance	38,613,941		43,465,778		48,484,152		46,059,065
Nonspendable/Restricted/Assigned Fund Balance	2,267,670		499,493		499,493		499,493
<b>Total Fund Balance</b>	<u>\$ 40,881,611</u>		<u>\$ 43,965,271</u>		<u>\$ 48,983,645</u>		<u>\$ 46,558,558</u>
How many weeks of expenditures can the unassigned fund balance cover?	8.7		9.8		11.8		10.9
Unassigned fund Balance as a Percentage of Expenditures	16.8%		18.9%		22.7%		20.9%
Student Enrollment (ADM)	20,549		20,580		20,556		20,095
Poverty (Free/Reduced Price Meals)	47.6%		49.3%				
English Learners (EL) per ADM	6.3%		6.6%				
Special Education	15.3%		15.1%				

Unassigned fund balance is generally considered the amount of money left after paying bills. However, due to accounting requirements, the fund balance does not reflect the amount of money actually in the bank; a significant portion of state aid must be recorded in the year before it is received. Therefore, the fund balance is usually larger than the actual amount of cash on hand.

The unassigned fund balance provides cash flow for operations and keeps the district out of debt. To put the fund balance in perspective: The district's monthly operating costs average \$19.2 million, 85% of which is used to cover employee payroll and benefits. On June 30, 2014, the unassigned fund balance would have covered 9.8 weeks of operations.

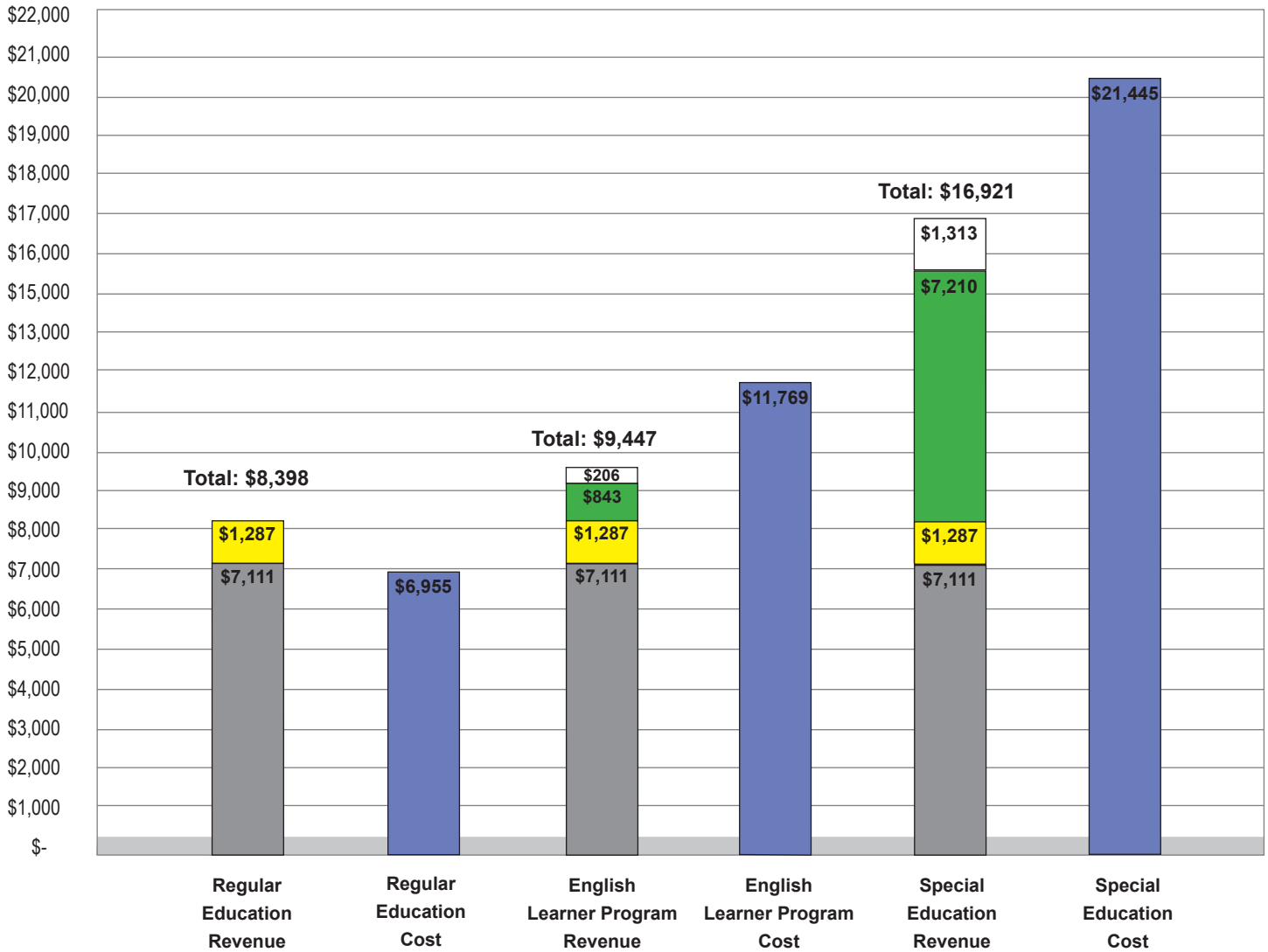
School Board policy regarding fund balance states "the Board will endeavor to maintain an unappropriated fund balance that will not fall below 5% of the District's general fund operating expenditure budget, excluding operating capital programs."

[www.district279.org](http://www.district279.org) / for current curricular, financial, and other School District information.  
[www.education.state.mn.us](http://www.education.state.mn.us) / for current state-wide educational information.

# REVENUES VS EXPENDITURES PER STUDENT

**More than \$87 million (38%) of the General Fund paid for underfunded mandates in FY 2014**

This graph shows the gap between revenues and expenditures per pupil for various special programs compared to regular education. The gap, called the “cross-subsidy,” requires that the general operating budget subsidize the costs of underfunded mandates. In FY 2014, more than \$87 million was drawn from the General Fund to subsidize underfunded mandates.



- Federal Aid - Grant Specific
- State Aid - Grant Specific
- Other - Interest Earning, Tuition, Gifts, Fund Raising, Clearing, Refunds, Resale, etc.
- Basic Formula, Referendum Aid & Local Levy
- Cost



# GLOSSARY

**Achievement and Integration Revenue** - Beginning in FY 2014, achievement and integration revenue replaced integration revenue. Revenue for FY 2014 consists of two components, initial revenue and incentive revenue. Initial revenue equals \$350 per Adjusted Pupil Unit (APU) times a minority concentration factor, plus 66 percent of the difference between FY 2013 integration revenue and FY 2014 revenue computed using the new rate. Incentive revenue equals \$10 per APU. Achievement and integration revenue is part state aid, part local levy.

**Actual** - A number that has been audited.

**ADM** - (Average Daily Membership) - The total headcount of students. The ADM may be different from the official enrollment reported, since enrollment is usually reported as of a particular date. ADM adjusts for fluctuations in enrollment over the course of a school year.

**Assigned Fund Balance** - Amounts intended to be used by the District for specific purposes but do not meet the criteria to be classified as restricted or committed. In governmental funds, assigned amounts represent intended uses established by the governing body itself or by an official to which the governing body delegates the authority.

**Basic Formula** - Basic revenue comes from the "formula," which sets the minimum level of per-pupil funding from the state. The base amount was \$5,302 in 2013-2014.

**Compensatory Revenue** - Comes from a formula based on the number of students in a school who are eligible for free or reduced-price school lunch.

**English Learners (EL)** - For students entering school with little or no command of the English language.

**General Fund** - The general operating fund of a school district. Similar to a household checking account, the General Fund pays the day-to-day school operating expenses.

**Levy** - Property taxes collected from local district taxpayers as a component of the overall educational funding formula.

**Nonspendable Fund Balance** - Amounts that are not in spendable form, such as prepaid items, inventory, and other long-term assets.

**Operating Levy** - A type of property tax that must be approved by voters. In 2013, voters renewed an expiring levy that supports operating expenses such as employee salaries, supplies, heat and lights.

**Other Revenue** - Tuition, fees, admissions, rentals, sale services/resale, interest earnings, and other miscellaneous revenues collected and/or received.

**Regular Instruction Students** - Students who do not qualify for specialized services in specific areas, such as special education, English learners, and Title I.

**Restricted Funds** - Funds specifically restricted for expenditures on certain items (such as construction or training). Some restricted funds also carry an additional restriction against carrying over unexpended fund balances from one year to the next.

**Restricted Fund Balance** - Amounts for which allowable use is related to externally imposed constraints established by creditors, grantors, or contributors; or constraints imposed by state statutory provisions.

**Special Education** - An education program for students who are identified as disabled.

**Student Instruction** - Includes costs of teachers, supplies, paraprofessionals, and curriculum development costs associated with the subjects taught.

**Title I** - An Elementary and Secondary Education Act program that provides resources for extra help for students who are behind grade level in reading and/or math achievement. The money is provided on the basis of students living in poverty.

**Unreimbursed** - Costs that are not reimbursed by the requiring agency or other entity.

**Unassigned Fund Balance** - Funds in excess of expenditures that may be carried over from an earlier year and may be used on any legal educational expenditure.

**Unassigned Funds** - Funds that may be used on any legal educational expenditure.

## ISD 279 School Board

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Tammie Epley, Vice Chairperson  
Jacki Girtz, Clerk  
Jim Burgett, Treasurer  
Linda Etim, Director  
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For more information about education finance in Minnesota, visit:  
[Minnesota School Finance: A Guide for Legislators](#)  
[Financing Education in Minnesota, 2013-14](#)