



ST. MICHAEL-ALBERTVILLE SCHOOLS

EXCELLENCE IS OUR TRADITION

KNIGHT VIEW

DISTRICT NEWS

Facing the Future: Navigating STMA's Financial Challenges with Strategic Action

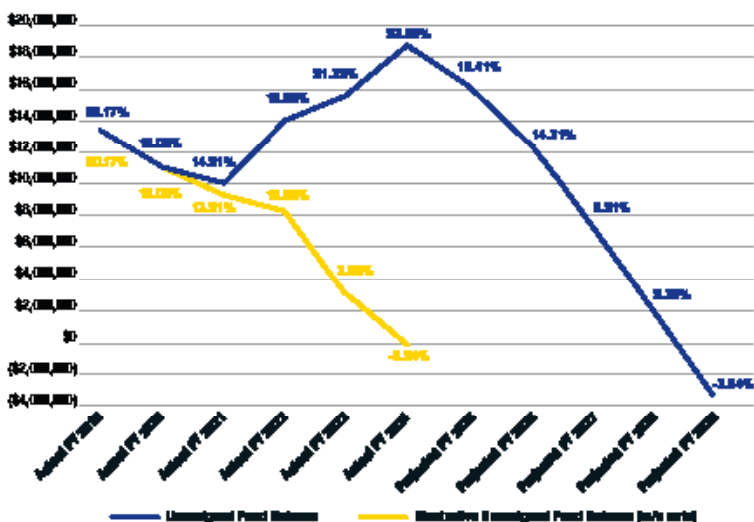
Our district, like many others across Minnesota, is facing a challenging financial reality. While we remain committed to providing high-quality education, rising costs, inflation, and stagnant state funding have created significant budget pressures. Our current financial standing is stable, but projections over the next five years indicate a growing deficit that will require difficult decisions to maintain fiscal responsibility. Without action, our fund balance will fall below the board-mandated threshold of 12%, forcing reductions that will impact students, staff, and programs.

Financial Forecast for FY2025-FY2029

The graph shows unassigned fund balance trends from Actual FY2019 to Projected FY2029.

Two lines are illustrated:

- **Blue Line** — Actual and projected Unassigned Fund Balance with board-approved reductions.
- **Yellow Line** — Projected balance without reductions, illustrating the impact without staff, program, and fee cuts.



- In FY2019, both lines started at 20.17%, meeting the school board's 12% minimum fund balance policy.
- The yellow line (no cuts) sharply declines after FY2021, dropping below 12% by FY2022 (10.96%), then plummeting to -3.24% by FY2024, entering negative territory.
- Without action, the district would have entered statutory operating debt (SOD) by FY2024. SOD means the district

is in financial trouble and must work with the state to create a plan to fix its budget.

- The blue line (with school board fiscal action) rises to a peak of 23.60% in FY2024, showing the effect of responsible financial decisions.
- Even with board actions, the fund balance is projected to decline gradually, reaching 2.35% in FY2028 and -3.24% in FY2029, highlighting serious financial challenges.

The school board's difficult but necessary decisions — including staff reductions, program cuts, and fee increases — prevented financial insolvency and maintained compliance with policy. The graph underscores the importance of proactive financial stewardship to avoid statutory operating debt and ensure the district's long-term stability.

Beyond the Numbers: The Story Behind STMA's Budget Forecast

1. Inflation: The costs of labor, goods and services, health and property insurance, and other essential expenditures continue to rise. However, state revenue—our primary funding source, accounting for 83.6% of our budget—has remained relatively stable. This growing gap between rising costs and stagnant funding is creating financial strain on school district budgets across Minnesota.

2. Underfunded and Unfunded State Mandates: While programs mandated by the 2023 legislature provide valuable benefits to students and staff, their unintended financial burden significantly impacts STMA. For instance, just four of the many mandates introduced in 2023 are costing the district \$1.5 million annually—equivalent to the salaries of 19 staff members. These rising costs place additional strain on the district's financial resources, limiting its ability to invest in programs and personnel.

3. Enrollment: State funding is primarily determined by student enrollment. Based on county birth rates, a district demographic study, and a thorough analysis of enrollment data, student enrollment in our district is stabilizing. While new homes and apartments continue to be built in the community, our graduating class this year is 603 students, while our incoming kindergarten class is 425. This means we are graduating more students than we are enrolling. To maintain our current enrollment levels, we would need to add approximately 178 new students each year just to break even.

Moving Forward

We are committed to balancing fiscal responsibility with the needs of our students, staff, and community by collaborating with stakeholders to gather input and explore solutions.

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To navigate these financial challenges, we will:

- Maintain current staffing levels for FY2026, with no cuts and no additional positions.
- Implement budget reduction strategies immediately.
- Enforce a hiring freeze for FY2026, except as required by statute.
- Reduce staffing by approximately 19 to 25 positions in FY2027 to address a \$1.5 to \$2.0 million shortfall, primarily impacting teachers, as other staff categories have already faced significant reductions with no recovery. This follows \$7.3 million in budget cuts and the loss of 77 staff members in recent years.
- Explore additional revenue-generating options, such as an operating levy or bond.

As we navigate these financial challenges, our unwavering commitment remains the same—putting our students first. Every decision we make is guided by our core value of ensuring the best possible educational experience for every learner. We recognize that maintaining financial stability requires collaboration, and we deeply value the partnership of our staff, families, and community members. Together, we will continue working tirelessly to find solutions that uphold the high standards of excellence that define STMA.



ANN-MARIE FOUCAULT
Superintendent

Join the STMA
School Board for
a Community
Listening Session



SCHOOL NEWS

ALBERTVILLE PRIMARY

Each May, our kindergarten students get the opportunity to tour the elementary school that they will be attending for first grade. The tour provides students with a brief exposure to their new elementary school and helps students with a successful transition to first grade. Our students love seeing their new gym, cafeteria, and playground. First grade, here we come!



BIG WOODS ELEMENTARY

Each spring the Big Woods 4th grade leadership team partners with the Albertville Food Pantry to collect items for families in need. This year, students in grade 1-4 will be collecting food items and monetary donations to support local families. We have a friendly competition to see which grade level brings in the most items. Big Woods students are generous and filled with compassion. Great job, Big Woods.

FIELDSTONE ELEMENTARY

Our whole school gathered in the gym to kick off the start of trimester 3! We also celebrated the efforts and work the students and staff have done so far this year. Glow necklaces were distributed to everyone and we ended the celebration with a dance party!



ST. MICHAEL ELEMENTARY

Each year, our 4th graders finish their time at St. Michael Elementary and prepare for middle school. To help them, they watch band and choir demonstrations, learn about daily life in middle school from staff, visit the middle school, and practice using lockers to get their materials. These activities help them feel ready and more comfortable for this big change.



4th graders watch a band demonstration from current middle school students.

MIDDLE SCHOOL EAST

Culture Club hosted an after-school event to bring students together to enjoy snacks, games, conversation, and a movie. Thank you to our Advisors Ditlevson and Ronsen, for creating a welcoming environment that flourishes on building community within our school.



MIDDLE SCHOOL WEST A spotlight on Destination Imagination.

Since November, this group of seven creative thinkers have been hard at work designing their solution to the “Breaking Point” Technical Challenge. They’ve created assembly and destruction devices, props, scenery, and a story to bring it all together. On March 1 the team competed and placed 2nd in their category.



HIGH SCHOOL

As we move through trimester 3 at STMA High School,

graduation approaches. Soon our seniors will celebrate earning their diplomas, marking the end of high school. The skills gained and relationships built have equipped them to face the future confidently. Student experience matters.



KNIGHTS ACADEMY

Every six week term, Knights Academy has an honor roll presentation in front of the entire school to recognize students that have made the A and B Honor Roll. In an alternative school setting, where students may face unique challenges, an honor roll can be especially meaningful in recognizing progress and perseverance, not just traditional academic success.



A Honor Roll



B Honor Roll

STUDENT ACTIVITIES



2025 Wrestling State Champions.

WRESTLING

The STMA wrestling team won their 11th state title in program history on February 27, winning the championship match 46-18. It was an outstanding season as the team was undefeated. Well done, wrestlers and coaches.

Individual Wrestlers

STMA had 5 individual wrestling state champions in 2025. Sophomore **Landon Thoennes** (42-2), freshman **Lincoln Robideau** (45-5), senior **Landon Robideau** (48-0), and junior **John Murphy** (51-0) all were state champions for boys. Eighth grader **Emma Antoni** (36-3) became the first girls state champion in school history. Congratulations to all five on an incredible season.

ONE ACT PLAY

The STMA one act play participated in the MSHSL AA State Festival on February 7. Their show, *Aunt Leaf*, was unique and powerful. The

cast, crew, and directors should be proud!

ADAPTED FLOOR HOCKEY

The Buffalo/Monticello/STMA Coyotes qualified for the state tournament for the first time in program history. Great season by our players and coaches!



Buffalo/Monticello/STMA Coyotes qualified for the state tournament.

GYMNASTICS

The STMA gymnastics team competed in the state meet on February 21 for the 4th straight season. It was an amazing season for the gymnasts and coaches!

MINNESOTA SCHOLASTIC ARTS

STMA was honored to host the Minnesota Scholastic Art Awards ceremony on February 23. STMA had numerous winners in a variety of categories. Outstanding job students and teachers!



EXCEL AWARD

Juniors **Faith Sigugu** and **Will Spaulding** were chosen as this year's ExCEL award winners from STMA. The ExCEL award is a unique recognition program designed exclusively for Minnesota high school juniors who are active in school activities, who show leadership qualities, and who work voluntarily in their community.



AAA AWARD

Seniors **Ari Marquette** and **Brock Cornell** were chosen as this year's AAA Award winners for STMA. They both excel in the arts, athletics, and academics and represent STMA in a positive way in all aspects! Congrats, Ari and Brock!

STAFF NEWS

STMA World Class Staff Keep Us Strong

As STMA looks towards the end of another school year, STMA continues to recruit and retain high quality staff to meet the needs of students, families and our community. Our success is directly linked to our ability to put great people in front of our students and community.

With approximately 750 permanent staff including over 400 certified staff, STMA remains one of the largest employers in Wright

County. Our staffing decisions focus on trying to place our resources and staff on the areas of greatest student impact. The efficiency the district retains from maintaining comparatively low overall turnover rates within respective job classifications while recruiting high quality people is one ingredient that keeps STMA strong.

Looking ahead

The Minnesota school labor landscape is shifting as teachers across the State exit the profession and wages. With fewer and fewer licensed teachers graduating from college, there is a significantly

smaller supply of teachers. The result is increased competitiveness across all school districts for fewer and fewer licensed teachers.

These staffing challenges have been compounded by recent changes in state labor laws extending paid time off to staff. These laws will further create even greater demand for teachers and high quality substitute or temporary staff.

Celebrates Staff Excellence with Hall of Fame Introductions

STMA is proud to celebrate our staff with the 2025 STMA Hall of Fame Inductees:

Ms. Dolores Helgeson and **Mr. Gregg Greeno**, who have dedicated years of service to the district and contributed to our tradition of excellence. They will be formally inducted on May 19, 2025, and we invite you to join us in celebrating their achievements at this special recognition event.



COMMUNITY EDUCATION

SUMMER BROCHURE

We are thrilled to announce that summer registration opened on April 2. We are incredibly proud of both the programs that have become community favorites and the exciting new offerings we continue to introduce. Our commitment to growing and enhancing opportunities for our community is stronger than ever.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to our amazing staff and instructors who create a safe, engaging, and enriching environment. Your dedication and passion are the heart of our success, and we truly appreciate everything you do for our community.

EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY EDUCATION

Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) offers a range of classes designed for families with children from birth to kindergarten. Each session provides a mix of parent-child activities, parent education, and opportunities to connect with other families. Whether you're looking for toddler playtime, preschool prep, or parenting support, ECFE has something for everyone!

This summer, we're excited to offer a variety of mixed aged class sessions that offer play experiences, outdoor explorations, and family-friendly activities! We are also excited to offer a special class focused on helping preschoolers prepare for school success! We encourage families to sign up early, as classes fill quickly.

Employment Opportunities for Great People

STMA has openings for 2025-26 in food service, maintenance, child care, special education paraprofessionals, and student support. School employment lets you impact our community while balancing work/life needs. Explore opportunities at stma.k12.mn.us (click Employment in navigation) or contact Human Resources: 763-497-3180.

YOUTH RECREATION

Get ready to turn up the fun and turn down the boredom with our summer youth recreation programs! We've got something for every energetic kid out there. Check out the following offerings and register now to give your athlete an outlet for all that summer excitement.

- **Ball Activities:** A perfect blend of fun and foundational skill-building. Your child will discover the excitement of playing with soccer balls, kickballs, and more, all while developing coordination and social skills.
- **Knights T-Ball:** Children will learn the fundamentals of the game in a fun, positive environment.
- **Cedar Creek Golf Camps:** Participants will receive instruction on basic golf rules and etiquette, short-game play, and the fundamentals of the golf swing.
- **Dash Sports:** Soccer, Basketball, Flag Football, Pickleball, Track and Field camp, Multi-Sport camp.

YOUTH ENRICHMENT CLASSES

Get ready for an exciting summer with STMA Community Ed! We're offering fresh new classes in culinary arts, STEM, and visual arts, along with trendy options like Shark Tank Jr. and Taylor Swift-themed sessions. With something for all ages and interests, there's plenty to explore! Be sure to secure your spot soon.

ADULT ENRICHMENT CLASSES

This summer, we are excited to offer some new adult enrichment classes, including Bob Ross-inspired painting, pet portrait painting, and a culinary

course called Delicious Flavors of Africa. With a variety of opportunities to learn and connect, there is something for everyone to enjoy. We cannot wait to see you in class!

Instructors Wanted!

We are always looking to expand our offerings and bring fresh ideas to the community. Whether you have a passion for art, fitness, cooking, gardening, languages, finance, or hands-on DIY skills, we would love to hear from you. If you have a skill to share, consider becoming an instructor and inspiring others. Reach out to **Amber Hall** at amberha@mystma.org with your ideas and questions.

ACTIVITY CENTER

Adults over 62 years of age that reside in the STMA school district are eligible for a FREE walking track membership on the upper track at the Activity Center. Individual and family memberships are available for purchase at the High School Activity Center. The Activity Center has eight courts, baseball/softball cages, a fitness center, and an indoor walking track. Memberships are available online at stmaactivitycenter.recdesk.com or at the Activity Center Office. For information, contact **Colin Downs** at Colind@mystma.org or call the Activity Center at 763-497-6541.

STAY CONNECTED

Stay updated on new sessions and offerings by checking our weekly Peachjar flyers, following us on Facebook, visiting our website, and reading our monthly Community Education newsletter. Don't miss out on a summer full of fun and learning!



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