



# STATE FUNDING IMPACT REPORT

## 2023-2024 & 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEARS

### Impact of State Funding on Fargo Public Schools

The 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years have been a period of growth, development, and achievement for the Fargo Public School District (“District”). The purpose of this impact report is to communicate the positive effects of state funding on our students, faculty, and community. State funding has been instrumental in expanding opportunities for all students and addressing critical needs. This report outlines how state funding has directly contributed to the District’s strategic objectives, including our progress in achieving desired student outcomes, and our continued focus on educational justice and academic excellence.

This impact report is distinct from the District’s legislative priorities document. While the impact report focuses on showcasing the results of state funding and its benefits for Fargo Public Schools, the legislative priorities document

outlines specific areas where continued or increased support is necessary to further enhance student outcomes. Legislators should use this impact report to understand the tangible effects of their past support, whereas the legislative priorities document serves as a guide for future actions that will address ongoing challenges and opportunities.



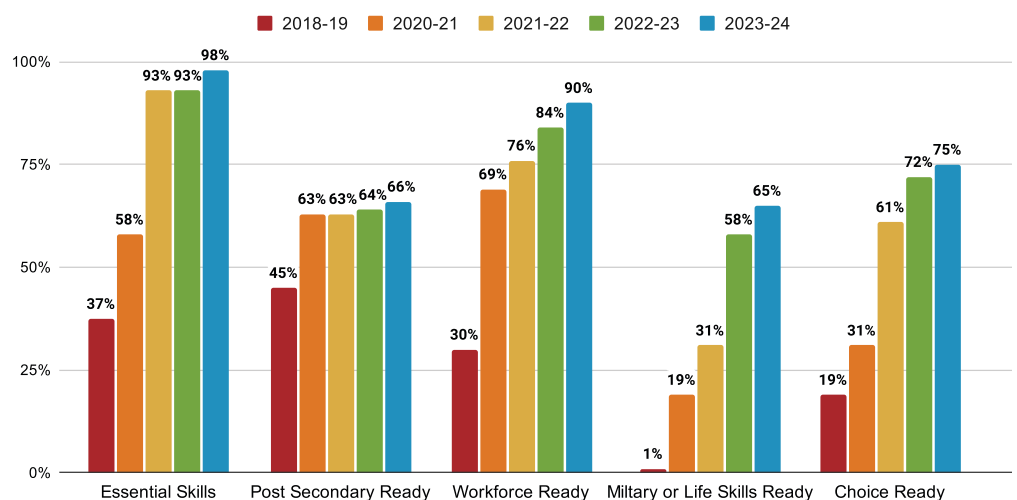
## 1. ENHANCING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

State funding has enabled the District to support our ambitious academic goals as defined in our Unified Strategic and Operational Plan. In the fiscal 2025 school year, the District has been able to increase its investments in high-impact instructional resources, providing students and teachers with innovative curriculum materials, such as the Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) curriculum for elementary literacy and the College Preparatory Mathematics (CPM) curriculum for middle school math. These investments align with the District’s Strategic Initiative 1, which emphasizes tiered instruction and standards-based education. As a result, elementary student proficiency in essential learning outcomes (ELOs) increased, with reasonable progress towards our goal of over 80% of students scoring a three (3) or four (4) on targeted ELOs in literacy and mathematics.

The Choice Ready progress metric also indicates steady growth, with

the percentage of students classified as Choice Ready rising from 72% in the 2022-2023 school year to more than 75% in 2023-2024. This growth is directly tied to funding for career and technical education (CTE) programs, enhanced dual credit opportunities, and partnerships with institutions such as North Dakota State College of Science (NDSOS), which has expanded career pathways for students.

FPS CHOICE READY RESULTS (SOURCE: ND INSIGHTS)



2. SUPPORTING TEACHER SALARIES & BENEFITS

A significant portion of the legislative increases in state funding was allocated to teacher salaries and benefits. Investing in our educators is crucial to maintaining a high-quality education system, and state funding has enabled the District to provide competitive salaries and benefits, which are key factors in attracting and retaining skilled teachers. The retention of experienced teachers directly impacts student outcomes, as consistency in staffing helps build strong relationships between teachers and students and improves instructional quality.

This funding also supported health benefits and professional development opportunities for educators, ensuring they are well-equipped to handle the demands of the classroom and can continue to grow in their professional practice. By maintaining competitive compensation and benefits, the District is continuing to address the challenges of teacher shortages. These investments contribute to improved student learning environments and underscore the district’s commitment to providing every student with access to an excellent education.

Beginning in the 2023-2024 school year, the District implemented a \$6,000 annual stipend for special programs staff who handle both special education case management and direct service provision. This stipend is distributed in monthly installments over a 10-month period. The additional compensation has significantly enhanced retention rates among special programs staff for the 2024-



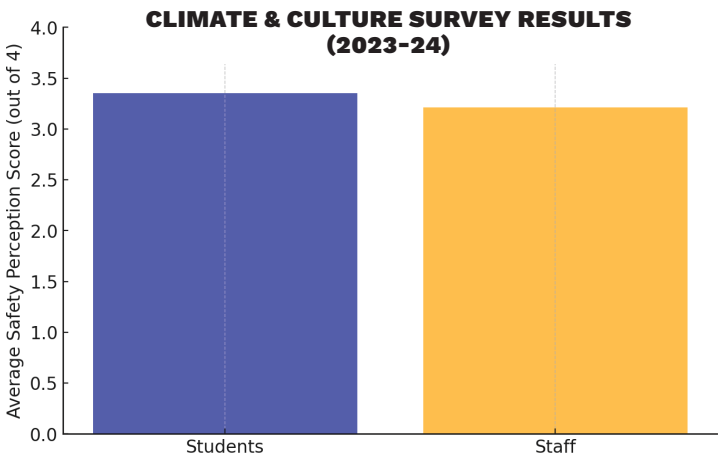
2025 school year and has boosted recruitment efforts, particularly for roles that are traditionally challenging to fill, such as speech and language pathologists.

The District’s commitment to supporting special programs staff, including special education teachers and speech and language pathologists, has not only strengthened the retention and recruitment of highly qualified personnel but has also improved instructional capacity by sustaining a stable and dedicated workforce.

3. SUPPORTING STUDENT WELL-BEING

The District remains committed to fostering a positive school culture where every student feels safe, supported, and capable of success. State funding has been vital in implementing our Positive School Culture and Safety initiatives under Strategic Initiative 2. These initiatives aim to create physically and psychologically supportive environments for all students and staff, emphasizing the importance of social-emotional learning (SEL).

The District successfully implemented a new Climate and Culture Survey, administered twice per school year, to evaluate and address student and staff well-being. Although our participation goals were not fully met, the survey data provided essential insights into areas of improvement and



highlighted overall safety perception scores of 3.35 for students and 3.21 for staff on a 4-point scale.

The District expanded mental health services with state funding in fiscal 2025, connecting more than 500 students to community partners for support with basic needs and mental health. Fourteen (14) buildings house co-located mental health services, students at the Explorer Academy began receiving therapeutic mental health services, and in partnership with grant funding, the Communities in Schools program was started, empowering school social workers to help connect families to community services.

In addition, the availability of school counselors, social workers, and behavioral specialists has enhanced vital mental health support for our students. This includes group sessions led by these professionals on anxiety management and emotional regulation, grief and loss, and healthy relationships, all of which contribute to fostering a safe and nurturing school climate.

4. ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF VULNERABLE STUDENTS

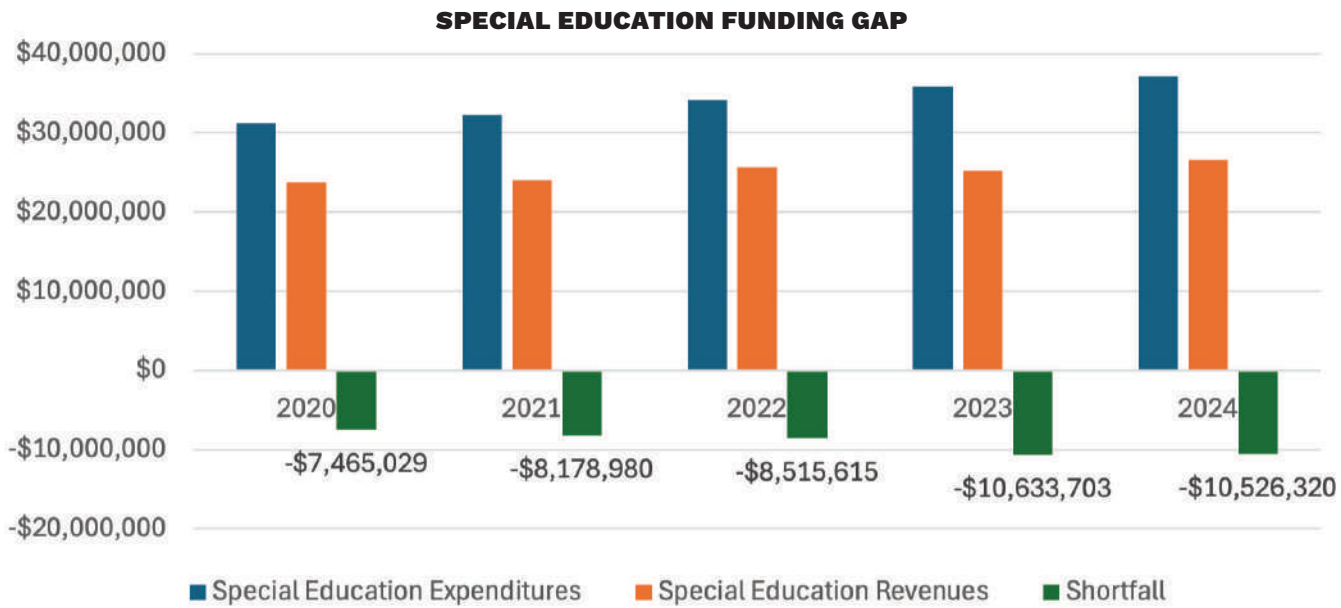
FPS recognizes that educational justice means ensuring every student—regardless of background—receives an excellent education. State funding has allowed us to address equity challenges, particularly for our most vulnerable students, including those with disabilities and English Learners (“EL”).

State funding was used to offset rising costs associated with providing specialized services to a growing population of students with disabilities, which increased by 27% in the past five years. This funding was crucial in ensuring students had access to individualized support plans, behavioral interventions, and specialized instruction tailored to their needs.

For our EL students, funding helped increase the availability of specialized language instruction, removing barriers to learning and allowing students to access the general curriculum on par with their peers.



*The number of students with disabilities in our district has grown by 27% over the past five years, requiring a steadily increasing dollar amount to support their specialized needs.*



## 5. TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION & LEARNING SUPPORT

Integrating technology into education is an essential component of our Strategic Plan. State funding has enabled the District to enhance technology infrastructure and support its use across all grade levels. The District implemented initiatives to increase the availability and effectiveness of technology in classrooms, as reflected by a technology access survey that showed 46% of students agreeing that technology enhances learning. While this is an improvement from prior years, it remains a focus area for continued development.

State funding also facilitated the expansion of online instructional tools, which helped maintain equitable access to educational resources for all students. This has

been especially valuable in improving access to specialized services, including those offered through our K-12 Virtual Academy and new programs like the Self-Directed Academy for middle school students.



## 6. LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY & THE NEED FOR CONTINUED SUPPORT

The accomplishments of this past year highlight the importance of continued legislative support. We advocate for ongoing increases to per-pupil funding, adjustments to special education funding that fully cover federally mandated services, and funding for the recruitment and retention of high-quality educators. The challenges associated with rising costs, increasing numbers of vulnerable students, and the need for innovative learning environments make sustained funding essential.

Without this continued support, our progress in achieving educational justice and excellence is at risk. For instance, rising discrepancies between the cost of educating students with disabilities and the federal and state provided special education funding would directly impact our ability to serve students with complex needs effectively. Similarly, underfunding school safety initiatives could compromise the physical and psychological well-being of students and staff, hindering our efforts to provide safe and supportive learning environments.



**THANK YOU!**



We are immensely grateful for the support and funding provided by our state legislators over the past two school years. Your commitment to public education has been crucial to our success, and we look forward to continuing to work together in support of our North Dakota students. However, the challenges we face are significant, and continued legislative support is crucial to ensuring we can maintain and expand these programs. Together, we can ensure every child receives an excellent education.