

Minnesota Constitutional Amendment

Vote YES | Permanent School Fund

Catholics should vote Yes on the 2026 Minnesota constitutional amendment concerning the Permanent School Fund. Catholic social teaching calls us to protect human dignity, pursue the common good, and place the needs of children and families at the center of public life. Supporting this amendment is consistent with those responsibilities. It preserves the Permanent School Fund for future generations while allowing Minnesota to use its resources more effectively for students today.

SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL PLURALISM

The Church supports a strong ecosystem of schools: public, private, charter, and homeschool. Parents are the first educators of their children, and families should have meaningful opportunities to choose the educational setting that best serves each child. But school choice means more than having choices on paper—it means having good choices. That requires healthy schools in every sector. More than 80 percent of Catholic students in Minnesota attend public schools, so the strength of public education is a direct concern for Catholic families and communities.

The proposed constitutional amendment offers a modest, responsible way to provide additional support to public school districts without raising individual income or property taxes. The constitutional language itself requires management of the fund to balance the needs of current and future beneficiaries and preserve its purchasing power over time.

WHY CHANGE THE PERMANENT SCHOOL FUND FORMULA NOW?

Minnesota's Permanent School Fund, which receives revenue from mining and timber production on state land, has grown substantially, reaching roughly \$2.3 billion or more in recent years. The amendment would change the distribution formula so that schools receive 4.5 percent of the fund's three-year average market value, rather than relying primarily on interest and dividend income. Estimates indicate that the average per-student distribution could rise from approximately \$68 to about \$101. The proposal would take effect July 1, 2027.

This additional flexibility matters, especially as Minnesota faces another looming budget deficit. School districts are already confronting rising costs, difficult budget decisions, and reductions in important programs. The amendment would not solve every education-finance problem, but it would provide districts with predictable, ongoing resources they can use where local needs are greatest, whether for instructional materials, mental-health services, staffing, student support, or other priorities.

ACCOUNTABILITY STILL NEEDED

Voting Yes does not require us to forget that Minnesota had an approximately \$18 billion budget surplus just three years ago. Nor does it require us to ignore the troubling reality that, by multiple measures, educational performance continues to decline. More money alone is not a substitute for accountability, innovation, or reform. We must improve how education dollars are spent, strengthen instruction, address achievement gaps, and insist on measurable results.

At the same time, education is one of the last areas where Minnesota should be cutting funding. Students are still living with the consequences of COVID-related learning loss, and many children need additional tutoring, mental-health support, and individualized attention. Reducing resources while academic needs remain urgent would place the greatest burden on students who are already struggling.

MORE WORK TO BE DONE

The amendment, however, is also only one small part of a broader set of solutions. For example, Minnesota should also opt into the Federal Scholarship Tax Credit program. The Federal Scholarship Tax Credit can stimulate private donations to scholarship-granting organizations, potentially generating hundreds of millions of dollars for scholarships, tutoring, special-needs services, educational supplies, technology, and other expenses. Students in public, charter, and private schools, as well as homeschool students, could benefit. The program meets students where they are at and allows individualized needs to be met, rather than hoping that educational funding will trickle down to students.

We can have debates about the right level of education funding in the aggregate. But the Federal Scholarship Tax Credit is not an either-or choice. It is an opportunity to mobilize additional resources at no cost to Minnesota's state budget. Voters should ask candidates to support Minnesota's participation in the program.

In sum, Minnesota needs an all-of-the-above approach: responsible public-school funding, strong Catholic and other private schools, thriving charter schools, support for homeschool families, meaningful choice, accountability, and reforms that improve educational performance. Voting Yes on the Permanent School Fund amendment is one way to help move Minnesota toward that goal.

MORE INFORMATION

- **Election-related information:** mncatholic.org/election2026
- **Mechanics of ballot questions:** sos.mn.gov/elections-voting/whats-on-my-ballot/constitutional-amendments/
- **Legislation authorizing the amendment and relevant statutes:** revisor.mn.gov/laws/2026/0/Session+Law/Chapter/114/
- **Vote Yes MN Students Campaign:** voteyesmnstudents.org/