

**Resettled Refugee's Impact on the Educational Costs for
ISD 742 (St. Cloud Area Schools)**

By

John W. Palmer, Ph.D.

May 2018

Shortly after making my presentation on the “Economic Status and Costs of Refugees in Minnesota” I received this suggestion:

I suggest that your group of citizens research the cost the school’s spending to meet the needs of students who are Non native English speakers. There are teachers who teach English Language classes, there is an English Academy for students who are new to the United States, each building has bilingual communicators and additional interpreters hired for conferences. I think the school district spends huge \$\$ for this (non English speakers) population of students.

My investigation began by determining the number of English Learner students attending ISD 742. The Minnesota Department of Education has information on the number of students who come from homes where the primary language spoken in the home is a language other than English. This information is available for school years 2007-6 thru 2016-17. The following charts, appearing on page 3, show the changes over time in the number and percent of student homes where English is the primary language spoken and the number of student homes where English is not the primary language.

Over the past 11 years district 742 has experienced an accelerating rate of change in the composition of students based on language spoken in their homes. In the 2006-7 school year nearly 90% of the enrolled students came from homes where English is the first language and by the 2016-17 school year the percent of students enrolled coming from homes where English is the first dropped by over 30 percentage points. This change occurred when overall enrollment remained flat. That means there was an absolute drop (from 8269 to 6483) in English as a first language students and increase (1106 to 3074) in the number of non English speaking students.

Who are the primary drivers of the increase in non English as a first language students in ISD 742?

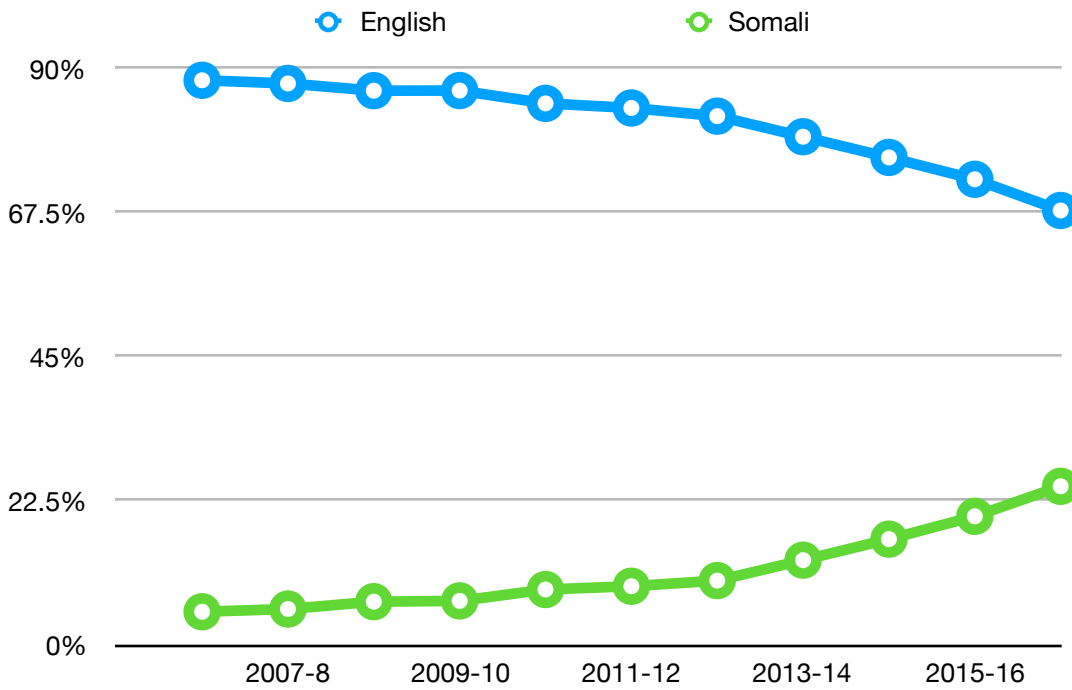
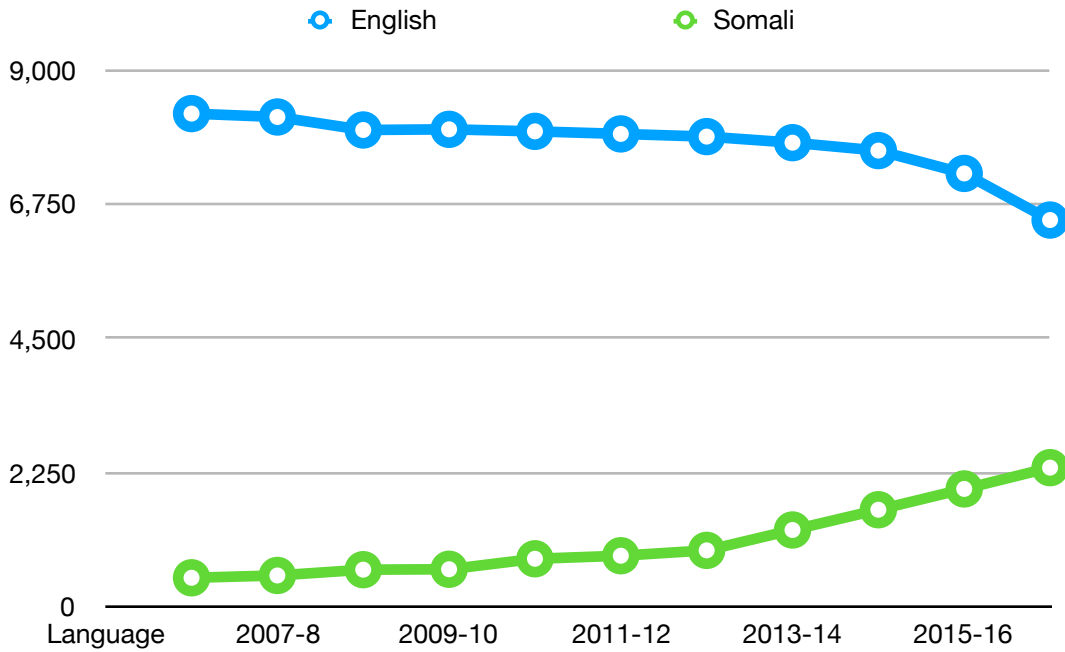
The answer is clear. Primary and secondary resettled Somalian refugees make up 2265 of 3074 (75%) of the Non English as a first language students in ISD 742 during the 2016-17 school year. The number of Non English as a first language speakers from countries other than Somalis are compared (See top of page 4) over the previous 11 years, you find the number of Non English as a first language students from countries other than Somali has only increased 83 students while the number of students from Somali increased 1882 students. It is not until the 2009-10 school year that students from Somali exceed Non English as a first language students coming from other countries.

Notice the change in the rate of increase from the 2012-13 thru the 2016-17 school years. If this continues ISD 742 could have 3000 Non English as a first language students from Somali during the 2018-19 school year and approaching 4000 Non English as a first language students in total.

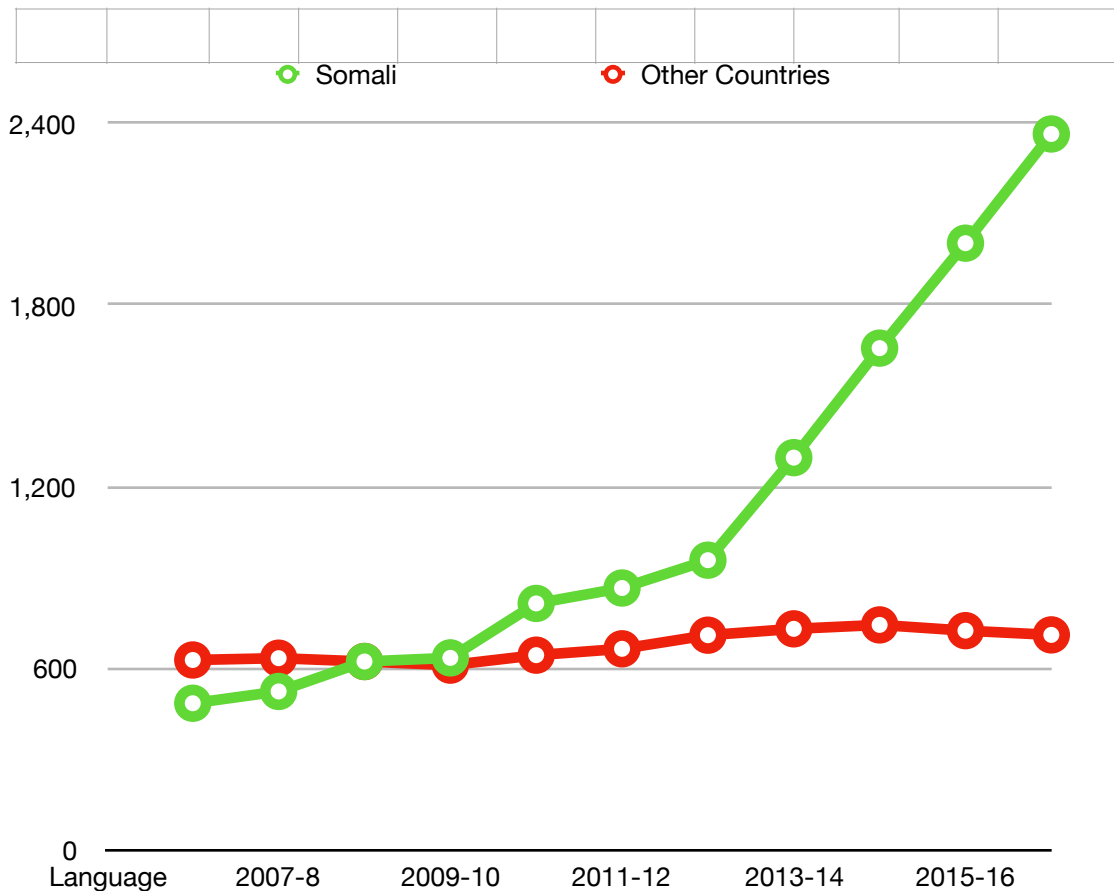
Values for Plots on Next Two Charts

2006-7	2007-8	2008-9	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
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Somali	483	522	621	633	813	864	956	1295	1657	2004	2365
Other	626	632	621	609	642	663	708	729	742	723	709
English	8269	8212	7994	8005	7971	7928	7883	7781	7648	7265	6483



Number of Non English as First Language Somali v. All Others



This rapid and dramatic change has meant that district 742 has had to commit substantial resources to conform with state law (See Appendix A) that requires the district to serve the non English as a first language students. Over the 11 years of available data the non English as a first language students have presented to the district the challenge to respond to students who speak 84 different languages. In the last school year for which data is available the district needed to provided services in 53 different languages.

It certainly looks like ISD 742 must spend a large amount of dollars to support the EL program and as the Minnesota department of Education makes clear in this statement taken from <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/el/>

The primary responsibility in meeting the needs of ELs lies with the local school district. The state of Minnesota recognizes that non-native speakers of English present unique challenges for school districts. Hence, in addition to the revenue that every Minnesota child in public education generates, English learners also generate supplementary state aid. Additionally, a variety of state and federal resources are available to supplement (but not supplant) local resources. Funding sources that can be used for quality EL programming include: general education revenue, state EL funding (the state spent

\$53,530,088 or \$703 per qualifying student last year), compensatory funding, transition revenue, Title I funding and others.

The state requirement is reinforced by what is referred to as the The May 25 Memorandum:

To clarify a school district's responsibilities with respect to national-origin-minority children, the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, on May 25, 1970, issued a policy statement stating, in part, that "where inability to speak and understand the English language excludes national-origin-minority group children from effective participation in the educational program offered by a school district, the district must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency in order to open the instructional program to the students." In addition, "School districts have the responsibility to adequately notify national origin-minority-group parents of school activities which are called to the attention of other parents. Such notice, in order to be adequate, may have to be provided in a language other than English."

From the District 742 website (<https://www.isd742.org/Page/1082>) :

How are EL classes organized?

- **Elementary EL:** In elementary schools, EL uses either a pull-out or a push-in model of instruction. English Learning students leave their mainstream classroom to spend a period of time each day in EL instruction. The amount of time a student receives English instruction depends on his/her level of language proficiency. Instruction is focused on English language development with emphasis on increasing vocabulary, reading comprehension and strategies, writing skills, and cultural understanding.
- **Secondary EL:** At North, South, Tech and Apollo, EL students are homogeneously grouped according to their level of language proficiency. Classes are at beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels. Guidelines recommend that beginning students study English up to three hours daily; as a student progresses EL time is reduced and other content area classes are added. Students receive credit for all EL classes.
- EL students are taught in the mainstream classroom through the collaboration of the classroom teacher and EL teacher.
- Title III funds support the use of bilingual paraprofessionals in classrooms with large EL student populations.

What does the EL program cost and how much EL categorical revenue does the district receive?

According to the Minnesota Department of Education district 742 has 2400 EL learners enrolled in the 2017-18 school year. At \$703 per enrolled student the district should be receiving \$1,687,200 in EL revenue for the 2017-18 school year. As previously mentioned the Title III funds are used for para professionals so these funds do not do anything more that pay for something the district would not fund.

The Federal Title III, a component of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), is to help local educational agencies (LEAs) ensure that English learners (ELs) and immigrant students attain English proficiency and meet the same challenging state standards required of all other students. To achieve this goal, districts that receive Title III funds must provide high-quality professional development activities to staff involved in the instruction of ELs, including elementary education, content, English as a Second Language (ESL), and Bilingual Education (BE) teachers and paraprofessionals. In addition, Title III funds may be used to enhance the language instruction education program (LIEP) already offered by the LEA. Supplementary activities funded by Title III must be grounded in scientifically based research on teaching EL and immigrant children and youth. In FY 2018 ISD 742 is slated to receive \$298,881.

The following was copied from the Uniform Financial Accounting and Reporting System filed by ISD 742 for the 2016-17 school year:

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
FINANCE CODE EXPENDITURES, UFARS DATABASE AT MDE
FISCAL YEAR 2017
ST. CLOUD PUBLIC SCHOOL
Limited English Proficiency
Total Expenditures **\$3,672,538**

With \$1,687,200 in categorical offsetting \$3,672,580 the district must come up with \$1,985,338 if the amount of EL aid for the 2016-17 school year was equal to this year's estimated EL aid revenue. With less than half the cost of the Limited English Proficiency program covered by a categorical aid the district has to spend general school revenue to cover the shortfall. This situation is not unlike the one reported in a recent St. Cloud Times article.

'It's a crisis situation: Underfunded special education mandates cost district \$11.7M Jenny Berg, jberg@stcloudtimes.com Published 8:00 a.m. CT April 10, 2018 <https://www.sctimes.com/story/news/local/2018/04/10/special-education-mandates-cost-district-millions/480185002/>

Here are some selective quotes from that article that apply to the underfunded English proficiency program:

Underfunded special education mandates cost district \$11.7M

Last year, the state implemented a new education funding formula with a growth cap, which has resulted in even more funding headaches, especially when the district is trying to keep up with regular salary schedule increases and insurance costs.

"It hardly leaves any room to expand and add staff as students come in — even though we have to add the staff because we're mandated to provide the service — so we're increasing the cost but we're not necessarily getting the revenue back to offset it," Skaalerud said.

According to the school board, if the district had back in its general fund budget the \$11.66 million cross-subsidy — or even a portion of that money — it could:

- Expand programs such as summer school acceleration programs for underprivileged students.
- Expand programs to better meet the needs of gifted and talented students.
- Lower class sizes, expand early learning opportunities.
- Increase the number of counselors and social workers.
- And increase the district's career technical education programs.

"Those are all things that will make public education better in District 742 if we get the funds," Hentges said. "We've got tremendous programs. The problem is you just can't roll out everything you want to be doing."

"This is a problem. It has to be addressed and it needs to be addressed soon," said Bruce Hentges, a member of the school board and the board's legislative committee. "It has reached crisis level when you're looking at over \$11 million that could be going to regular education."

The federal government requires public schools to provide children with disabilities the same educational opportunities as students without disabilities. The federal government funds a portion of district costs and the state is supposed to cover the rest.

"Last year, we cut \$4 million. Well guess what?" Hentges asked. "If we didn't have a special education cross-subsidy, we would not have had to cut \$4 million."

Fully funding special education would remove the cross-subsidy that impacts the district's general fund, but it would also improve special education programming by allowing more staff and better staff development, according to Carol Potter, executive director of student services and special education.

Everything said in the preceding excerpts from the article can be applied to the mandated EL programs only with a smaller financial footprint (\$11 million v. \$2 million). These partially funded mandates mean the district needs to use general education revenue to support the mandates which leave other programs or new programming short of funding.

Every time enrollment grows it requires EL program to grow and the district has less funds for general use. It is also true that EL students can also require special education. In the 2016-2017 school year, 855,867 K-12 students were enrolled in Minnesota public schools with 71,919 students, or 8.4 percent identified as English learners.

Using data from the Minnesota Department of Education the following table is created with the estimate of the number of ISD 742 EL students who have both language and disability challenges to overcome.

2016-2017 ELs with Disabilities Specific learning disabilities

Disability	Number EL	Percent of Total EL	Estimated ISD Enrolled
Specific learning disabilities	4216	5.9%	142
Speech/Language Impaired	1732	2.4%	58
Autism Spectrum Disorder	1001	1.4%	34
Developmental Delay	926	1.3%	31
Other Health Disabilities	626	0.9%	22
Mild/Moderate	474	0.7%	17
Emotional/Behavioral Disord.	372	0.5%	12
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	286	0.4%	10
Low Incident Combined	531	0.7%	17

Each of the EL students who have specific learning disabilities create an additional burden on the general education budget of ISD 742.

What if any impact does the rise in the number of EL students in ISD 742's effect performance on the state tests?

The Minnesota Department of Education provides a five year look at district performance on state tests. The following shows the proficiency results statewide and for ISD 742.

Statewide			
Year	Percent Proficient	Number Proficient	Number Tested
2013	60.2%	261,002	433,493
2014	60.5%	263,981	436,244
2015	60.2%	264,251	438,856
2016	59.5%	262,922	441,633
2017	58.7%	262,424	447,306

ST. CLOUD PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT			
Year	Percent Proficient	Number Proficient	Number Tested
2013	50.3%	2,409	4,794
2014	48.8%	2,401	4,917
2015	46.7%	2,355	5,043
2016	42.5%	2,131	5,017
2017	40.0%	1,910	4,779

Two things are apparent when the data on proficiency test is examine:

St. Cloud Public Schools have a substantial lower percent of students testing at the proficient level than students statewide.

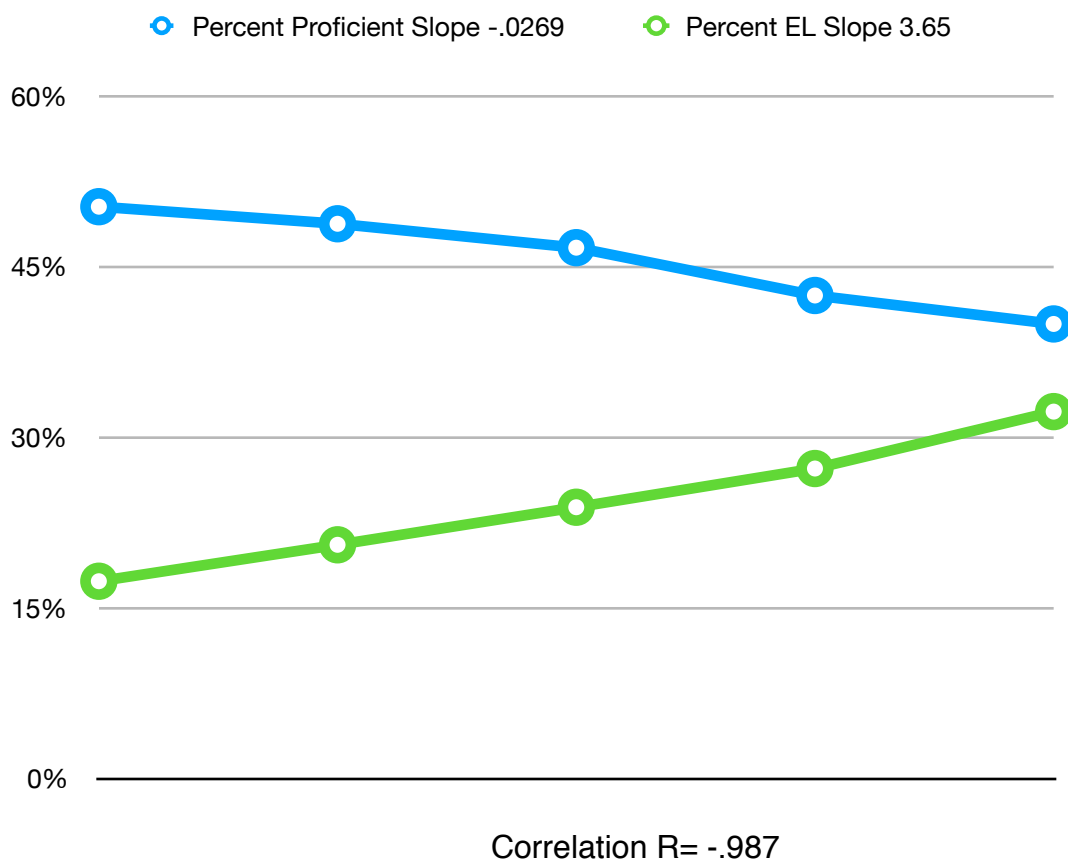
St. Cloud Public Schools have experiences a more rapid decline in the percent of it's students who test at the proficient level when compared to the statewide proficiency results.

Over the five years of data the percent of students testing proficient statewide declined from 60.5% to 58.7% (1.5 percentage points). During the same five year time period the St. Cloud Public Schools experiences a decline from 50.3% to 40.0%

(10.3 percentage points). Could the rapid rise in the percent of EL students in ISD 742 account for the rapid decline in the percent of students testing proficient in ISD 742?

The following graph plots both the percent of EL students in ISD 742 and the percent testing proficient on statewide test.

Percent Proficient v. Percent EL Student



For Every 3.73 percentage point increase in EL students there is a corresponding 2.58 percentage point decrease in percent proficient. Correlation is not a test of cause and effect and five data points does not offer a large enough sample to do a rigorous statistic test to determine cause and effect. However with such a pronounce slope of the line connecting the data points for both distributions it certainly appears their is a strong relationship between the percent of EL students and percent proficient on the

statewide test results. It does look as if more EL students means a lower percent of proficiency among the students in ISD 742.

Summary and Conclusions

This paper's purpose is to investigate the questions related to the demographic changes that have occurred in ISD 72 as a result of refugee resettlement. The outcome of the investigation yield these findings:

1. Over the past 11 years district 742 has experienced an accelerating rate of change in the composition of students based on language spoken in their homes.
2. In the 2006-7 school year nearly 90% of the enrolled students came from homes where English is the first language and by the 2016-17 school year the percent of students enrolled coming from homes where English is the first dropped by over 30 percentage points.
3. Their was an absolute drop (from 8269 to 6483) in English as a first language students and increase (1106 to 3074) in the number of non English speaking students.
4. Primary and secondary resettled Somalian refugees make up 2265 of 3074 (75%) of the Non English as a first language students in ISD 742 during the 2016-17 school year.
5. The number of Non English as a first language speakers from countries other than Somalis over the previous 11 years increased 83 students while the number of students from Somali increased 1882 students.
6. It is not until the 2009-10 school year that students from Somali exceed Non English as a first language students coming from other countries.
7. If the rate of increase continues ISD 742 could have 3000 Non English as a first language students from Somali during the 2018-19 school year and approaching 4000 Non English as a first language students in total.
8. According to the Minnesota Department of Education and the Federal Government, the primary responsibility in meeting the needs of Eds lies with the local school district.
9. The state of Minnesota recognizes that non-native speakers of English present unique challenges for school districts. English learners generate supplementary state aid(\$53,530,088 or \$703 per qualifying student last year).

10. Additionally, a variety of state and federal resources are available to supplement (but not supplant) local resources.
11. According to the Minnesota Department of Education district 742 has 2400 EL learners enrolled in the 2017-18 school year. At \$703 per enrolled student the district should be receiving \$1,687,200 in EL revenue for the 2017-18 school year.
12. From the MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FINANCE CODE EXPENDITURES, UFARS DATABASE AT MDE FISCAL YEAR 2017, ST. CLOUD PUBLIC SCHOOL Limited English Proficiency Total Expenditures **\$3,672,538.**
13. With \$1,687,200 in categorical offsetting \$3,672,580 the district must come up with \$1,985,338 if the amount of EL aid for the 2016-17 school year was equal to this year's estimated EL aid revenue.
14. With less than half the cost of the Limited English Proficiency program covered by a categorical aid the district has to spend general school revenue to cover the shortfall.
15. Partially funded mandates like Special Education and English Learners mean the district needs to use general education revenue to support the mandates which leave other programs or new programming short of funding.
16. St. Cloud Public Schools have a substantial lower percent of students testing at the proficient level than students statewide.
17. Over the five years of data the percent of students testing proficient statewide declined from 60.5% to 58.7% (1.5 percentage points). During the same five year time period the St. Cloud Public Schools experiences a decline from 50.3% to 40.0% (10.3 percentage points).
18. For Every 3.73 percentage point increase in EL students there is a corresponding 2.58 percentage point decrease in percent proficient.

Based on my investigation it is clear ISD 742 is forced by partially funded mandates regarding the provision of English Learner and the district must take from general education funds to support the English Learner programs. Each time a new EL enters the district the district has greater demands placed on its general education funds. Without a change in how EL programs are funded or a change in the pattern of immigration of EL, ISD 742 will have ever increasing demands for shifting of funds to EL programs at the expense of discretionary programs. This quote from the St. Cloud Times article concerning partially funded special education applies to the partially funded EL programs, only to the tune of \$1.9 million:

"This is a problem. It has to be addressed and it needs to be addressed soon," said Bruce Hentges, a member of the school board and the board's legislative committee. "It has reached crisis level when you're looking at over \$11 million that could be going to regular education."

However, the rapid influx of Non English speakers into ISD 742 not only has a negative financial impact on general education programs it appears it has a strong relationship to declining statewide testing results. In a district that was already 10 percentage point under the statewide average and has fallen further (18.7 percentage points) behind the statewide average and to paraphrase Bruce Hentges, it certainly has reached "a crisis level" in both funding shifts and student achievement. Hopefully, with the decline in the number of refugees being resettled the rate of increase in Non English speakers in ISD 742 will slow. But without reform of the Refugee Act of 1980, to include fully funding of the costs generated by resettled refugees, the prudent thing to do is to immediately suspend the program and have Congress and the President work to secure the necessary funding and fully cover state and local cost of both primary and secondary refugees.

Appendix A 2017 Minnesota Statutes

124D.65 ENGLISH LEARNER (EL) PROGRAMS AID.

Subd. 5. **School district EL revenue.** (a) A district's English learner programs revenue equals the product of (1) \$704 times (2) the greater of 20 or the adjusted average daily membership of eligible English learners enrolled in the district during the current fiscal year. (b) A pupil ceases to generate state English learner aid in the school year following the school year in which the pupil attains the state cutoff score on a commissioner-provided assessment that measures the pupil's emerging academic English.

From the Minnesota Department of Education Website

The primary responsibility in meeting the needs of ELs lies with the local school district. The state of Minnesota recognizes that non-native speakers of English present unique challenges for school districts. Hence, in addition to the revenue that every Minnesota child in public education generates, English learners also generate supplementary state aid. Additionally, a variety of state and federal resources are available to supplement (but not supplant) local resources. Funding sources that can be used for quality EL programming include: general education revenue, state EL funding, compensatory funding, transition revenue, Title I funding and others.

State EL funding is allocated to students who:

- have been identified as English learners by state definition;
- have generated fewer than 7 years of average daily membership (ADM) in Minnesota public schools; and,
- are served in a language instruction educational program for English learners during the current fiscal year.
- State EL funding status is not to be used in determining service for ELs. The funding formula exists simply to distribute the state funds available for ELs in an equitable manner across all the districts in the state.

Districts meeting the Title III guidelines and applying Title III funds accept those funds with the understanding that there are requirements for use of the federal funds:

- Title III funds must be utilized to benefit English Learners;
- Title III funds are not to be used to provide services that are required to be made available under state or local laws or other federal laws; and
- Title III funds are not to be used to provide services that were provided in the previous year with state, local or other federal funds.