

Aug. 29, 2025

Dr. Noel Schmidt, Superintendent
Rock Ridge School District
1405 Progress Parkway
Virginia, MN 55792

Dear Dr. Schmidt and School Board Members:

On behalf of Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation (IRRR), I'm pleased to share that your school district will receive important financial support made possible by Minnesota's mining industry. Revenue generated through iron mining continues to play a vital role in strengthening our regional schools and expanding educational opportunities for the students and families we serve.

This school year, Rock Ridge School District will receive \$4.9 million to support annual school bond payments, as a part of the total \$102.7 million projected over a 20-year period. These funds are allocated by IRRR through the Iron Range School and Community Development Account.

The Rock Ridge School District also received \$3 million to support the construction of new school buildings. This funding was possible by the sale of educational facility revenue bonds, issued by IRRR to finance six school construction projects across the Taconite Assistance Area.

In 2025, your district will receive \$1,000,000 for the demolition of the James Madison Elementary School. This funding was allocated by IRRR under the Minerals Article legislation. Passed as part of the 2024 Tax Omnibus Bill, this legislation directs IRRR to issue revenue bonds to finance up to 82 identified projects across the Taconite Assistance Area—including your district's project.

The agency will cover the annual debt service on these bonds using its share of production tax revenue.

In addition to these investments, your district received a direct allocation of \$3,765,170 from the Taconite Production Tax (TPT) in 2024, as well as \$159,830.09 from the Permanent School Fund (PSF) in the 2024-2025 school year. While both funding streams are rooted in Minnesota's mineral wealth, they originate from different sources: the TPT is paid by mining companies in lieu of local property taxes, based on the tonnage of iron ore mined and processed in the region. In contrast, the PSF revenue comes primarily from state-managed mineral royalties on school trust lands and is distributed statewide based on student enrollment. Together, these investments ensure that the economic benefits of mining continue to support our students, schools and communities.

At IRRR, we are committed to reinvesting in the region and advancing the prosperity of northeastern Minnesota. Education remains at the heart of that mission. The investments made possible by mining help ensure our youth are prepared for the future—whether they choose to enter the workforce, pursue higher education or return to contribute to our communities in new ways.

If you have any questions about the information in this letter, please reach out to the IRRR Communications team at information.team@state.mn.us. We appreciate your service to the school district and the vital role you play in guiding the success of our students.

Sincerely,



Ida Rukavina
Commissioner