

Looking Forward

- **Fund the general education basic formula** at a rate that truly meets the needs of school districts and corrects the erosion in the formula that has occurred over the past thirty years.
- **Ensure that the average taxpayer cost for a local levy dollar in low-property wealth districts is not greater than it is in high-property wealth districts on all school-related levies**, particularly voter-approved levies for operations and debt service. Differences in property wealth should not dictate differences in educational opportunities.
- **Provide greater funding for special education** to prevent further growth in the amount of revenue districts must divert from the general fund to pay for shortfalls in special education funding.
- Continue to **support all school districts' ability to fund long-term facility maintenance needs** through the equalized board-approved levy. Over time, **the levy amount allowed for all school districts should increase to the average amount the twenty largest districts in the state can levy** for these purposes.
- **Increase the funding for English learners** as the current funding is woefully inadequate.
- Maintain the commitment to strong early pre-kindergarten programs **by making the funding permanent for the 4,000 pre-kindergarten seats** funded under School Readiness Plus.
- **Create a new funding stream with revenue dedicated to education.** Many approaches have been discussed in respect to his objective, including a one-cent increase in the sales tax approved by Minnesota voters through a referendum, an increase in the capital gains tax, or taxation of proceeds that would result from an expansion of gambling. SEE does not endorse any single approach, but more revenue is needed to make education funding adequate, equitable and stable.

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All public school children must have equal access to a high quality education regardless of where they live in Minnesota



2020 Legislative Priorities

Funding

- **Increase the basic formula allowance by an additional 1%** to help reduce budget cuts for the next school year. The 2% increases for the current and following school year do not cover the predicted inflationary increases.
- **Increase and index equalization to inflation for operating referendum** to make these levies more affordable in low-property wealth districts. **Increase debt service equalization for building bonds.**
- **Make the one-time \$30 million in safe school aid permanent.** For most school districts, the best way to create safe learning environments is addressing students' mental health needs with school support staff. Ongoing funding is required to hire and maintain additional trained professionals.
- **Maintain the buying power of the local option revenue by indexing it to the basic formula allowance.** School districts use LOR to make up for inadequate state funding. However, this revenue, established during the 2014-15 school year, has not been increased to maintain its buying power.



Policy

- **Allow school boards to renew existing referendum.** One hundred percent of the 81 renewals over the past three years were voter-approved, making renewal elections an unnecessary expense, both in time and money.
- **Prevent unfunded mandates and maintain local control by resisting new statewide legislative policy initiatives.** Individual school districts are better positioned to deliver programming that fulfills the state's education standards while still meeting the unique needs of their students and community.
- **Reduce from 80 to 70 percent of the amount a resident school district pays for a special education student enrolled in charter schools or private schools.**
- **Pass the remaining special education paperwork reduction initiatives as proposed by the New Ulm school district.**
- **Avoid making significant changes to PELSB, the new tiered teacher licensing board, until more time has passed to assess its effectiveness. Give PELSB the authority to develop an expedited teacher licensure process,** which was in the previous licensure system and was critical for school districts to appropriately staff their buildings.

