

2014 Policy Platform

SEE's primary legislative platform focuses on the equity and adequacy of school funding and policy so that all public children have equal access to a high quality education regardless of where they live in Minnesota. The platform enumerates three major points – (1) increase the basic formula to restore school funding and provide school districts with the flexibility to meet unfunded mandates, (2) continue the progress made in 2013 to make voter-approved school levies more affordable in low property wealth districts by increasing equalization aid, and (3) create an ongoing bonding program where school districts can access state bonds to upgrade existing facilities, technology, building safety and energy efficiency. In addition, SEE and its 59 member school districts urge the Legislature to:

- **Formulate a strategy to aggressively reduce the special education cross-subsidy.**
 - The most financially challenging unfunded mandate facing school districts is special education. Currently, districts must shift \$633 million dollars from general education to special education to fund the mandated services for special education children.
 - If special education were fully funded, many districts would not need to rely on voter-approved referendum.
- **Carefully construct new anti-bullying legislation.**
 - New legislation must reinforce the breadth and depth of anti-bullying and character development programs currently in place throughout the state.
 - Provide the \$30- \$50 per pupil funding and technical assistance necessary for school districts to successfully implement anti-bullying programs and meet the increased reporting requirements.
 - Care must be taken that the new reporting system increases a safe and supportive school climate without diverting resources from effective evidenced-based anti-bullying efforts.
- **Provide resources necessary to successfully implement the new teacher evaluation system mandated for the 2014-15 school year.**
 - The estimated cost to implement the teacher evaluation system is \$66 - \$289 million. This is a potentially staggering financial burden for school districts to bear.
 - Although the most effective tool to boost teacher quality is through peer evaluations and mentoring, these strategies are also the most expensive to implement. Without adequate funding, the quality of teacher evaluation systems could suffer, particularly for districts that do not participate in the state's alternative compensation program (QComp).
- **Ensure that PEIP continues to be optional for school districts.**
 - In many cases, the Public Employee Insurance Plan (PEIP) costs more while providing fewer benefits than other available health insurance plans.
 - Local control must be maintained so that school districts and bargaining units can find the best and most economical plans for their own employees.

SEE Districts

Albany
Albert Lea
Annandale
Anoka-Hennepin
Austin
Belle Plaine
Big Lake
Braham
Brainerd
Buffalo
Byron
Cambridge-Isanti
Cannon Falls
Centennial
Central
Chisago Lakes
Dassel-Cokato
Delano
East Central
Elk River
Faribault
Forest Lake
Fridley
Hinckley-Finlayson
Howard Lake-Waverly-
Winsted
Hutchinson
Kasson-Mantorville
Kimball
LaCrescent-Hokah
Lake City
Litchfield
Maple Lake
Medford
Melrose
Milaca
Monticello
Mora
New London-Spicer
New Prague
North Branch
Northfield
Owatonna
Paynesville
Pine City
Pine River-Backus
Princeton
Prior Lake-Savage
Rockford
Rocori
Roseau
Rosemount-Apple Valley-
Eagan
Royalton
Rush City
Sartell-St. Stephen
Sauk Rapids-Rice
St. Francis
St. Michael-Albertville
Stewartville
Stillwater
Waconia