

The quality of a student's education should not depend on their zip code.

Minnesota's current budget surplus provides the Governor and the Legislature to address a wide range of education funding needs and make massive strides toward creating greater tax fairness for property taxpayers as they support their schools. **The budget surplus is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to correct funding adequacy and property tax equity issues and it must be seized.**

Equalize Education – Related Levies & Eliminate the Opportunity Gap in School Funding

Every student in Minnesota deserves access to high quality educational opportunities regardless of where they live. Throughout its history, SEE has worked to make certain that differences in property wealth do not translate into differences in programs for students in low property wealth districts. In order to accomplish this, we believe that the Legislature must:

- **Increase state equalization funding to make all school levies—particularly the Local Option Revenue, Operating Referendum, and Debt Service Programs—more affordable in low-property wealth districts.**
- **Preserve the property tax relief by ensuring that the calculations used to determine equalization aid keep pace with growth in statewide property wealth.**

Improve the Stability of Classroom Funding

School districts are faced with increased challenges when it comes to funding programs. The basic formula that treats all districts equally has not kept pace with inflation over the past 30 years. Special Education costs continue to rise well beyond the state formulas that fund these programs. Inflation is higher than it has been in four decades. Finding teachers, bus drivers, and educational support professionals has become extremely difficult and school districts need adequate and stable funding to successfully address these barriers to maintaining necessary educational opportunities and sufficient student support. Education must be fully funded and to do that, a working definition of “full funding” needs to be developed so that students throughout the state will have access to the programs needed to make their next life step, whether that is a two- or four-year college or university, technical school, military service, or going straight into the job market.

- **Increase the basic formula and index it to the rate of inflation to keep pace with rising costs.**
- **Increase the amount of Local Option Revenue a district can generate to the statewide average operating referendum revenue amount per pupil unit to provide support for districts without operating referenda.**
- **Give school boards the authority to renew existing referendums at their current amount.**
- **Aggressively address the special education cross-subsidy and make a long-term commitment by providing on-going revenue to help districts protect their general funds.**
- **Increase the amount of revenue districts can access through the Long-Term Facilities Maintenance Revenue categorical.**