



MREA Supports HF 1406 & SF 576
Education advancement revenue created,
operating referendum reduced, property taxes
reduced, and money appropriated

Background and Overview

The current inequities in \$ per pupil and in home owner property tax burdens are not fair to children and taxpayers:

- The inequity of resources per student in Minnesota, as measured by the gap between the 5th and 95th percentile in district funding, has grown to 31%. A level not seen in 15 years.
- 54 school districts currently have less than \$300 referendum revenue per pupil and 37 of those 54 districts have zero referendum dollars when in 2013 the average district referendum is \$936/AMPCU.
- The inequity in school tax burden for homeowners across the state in K-12 school districts ranges from \$15 to \$927 per-year on a \$150,000 home depending on which school district your home is in whether or not you have children.
- HF 1406/SF 576 (EAR) reduces 5th-95th gap to 24%, which is 22% less than 31% by providing \$300 per pupil in an aid and levy mix to all districts, provides property tax relief, and a corresponding lowering the cap of existing levies.
- School boards can choose to levy less than the maximum amount. EAR aid and levy would be reduced proportionately for districts electing to levy less than the \$300.

The Potential Positive Impact on Developing a World Class Workforce

58,350 students, 7% of Minnesota's students, are directly affected should their school boards use any or all of EAR to advance their education. That is the number of residents in Blaine or Lakeville, more than live in Mankato and less than live in St. Cloud. This is not an insignificant number. See the MREA map on referendums in 2013 for their locations.

MREA briefly surveyed member superintendents in districts with zero referendum revenue. In districts ranging in size from 1400 students to less than 500 students, these superintendents perceive that the education of their children would be advanced with EAR to prepare a world class work force in the following ways:

- Adding courses, maintaining courses, or reducing the class size of secondary core classes to meet learning needs of all students. This is where many cuts have been or are planned. Multiple superintendents listed the following:
 - Adding HS vocational classes and equipment;
 - Maintaining or adding advanced placement or college in the schools classes;
 - Lowering the class sizes of core secondary subjects from mid-to-high thirties to numbers where teachers can provide more individual support and attention to the learning needs of students.
- Curriculum and technology support for academic learning. This is also an area that has been cut. One superintendent said they have not bought textbooks in four years. Multiple superintendents listed:
 - Textbooks or the technological equivalent to provide course content;
 - All superintendents listed improving technology or trying to get to 1:1 tech support;
 - Professional development on curriculum, instructional strategies and uses of technology.
- Instructional support, counseling and school safety was a high priority for multiple superintendents including:
 - Restoring a counselor to full time;
 - Adding Interventionist/Home Liaison/Social Worker/Mental Health type positions were listed by superintendents in the poorest and most diverse of these districts. There is some overlap between districts with significant American Indian or Hispanic populations and which don't have any referendum revenue.
 - Maintaining and not cutting a school resource officer;
 - Expanding after school programming for struggling students and to provide after school transportation so students can take advantage of extended learning opportunities,
- Capital maintenance and improvement needs were listed by multiple superintendents including.
 - Replacing aging, deteriorating roofs and school busses.

In 2013, with the high expectations placed on Minnesota's schools, these are pretty basic needs. All students should have them and all districts should be able to provide them. HF 1406 and SF 576 allow school boards to fill in this gap.