

2016 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

Advocating for Greater Minnesota Schools

MREA, comprised of 212 school districts across Greater Minnesota, 12 education districts and additional associate members, supports expanding educational opportunities and closing achievement gaps in Minnesota through the following strategies and initiatives.

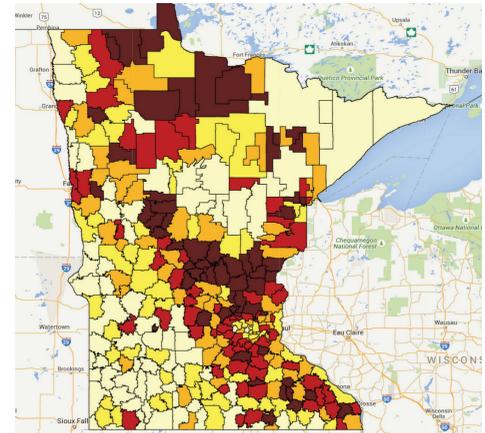
FACILITY FALLOUT

The state share of K-12 building debt is at a historical low of 2.5 percent. Agricultural land values have increased dramatically in 10 years shifting burden for school debt to farmers in rural Minnesota. Rural communities disproportionately struggle to pass bonds to modernize school facilities.

The legislature should:

- Reduce high agricultural taxes for school building bonds while protecting homeowner and business property taxes through a targeted, ongoing, bond credit program called Ag2School. (SF 1995/ HF2122)
- Equalize homeowner tax effort for school facility bonds by linking Debt Service Equalization to a fixed percent of state average ANTC.

ADJUSTED NET TAX CAPACITY BY SCHOOL DISTRICT



TEACHER RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

Minnesota's 845,000 students need highly qualified licensed teachers, across all grade levels and specialties, guiding them every day. The two greatest factors in students' academic success are parental involvement and the quality of the teachers in their classrooms.

The legislature should:

- Secure adequate, ongoing funding for loan forgiveness to ensure teacher candidates are attracted to and retained in rural Minnesota.
- Provide one-time, start-up funding for teacher education programs for paraprofessionals and mid-career professionals.
- Remove unnecessary barriers to entry to the teaching profession including:
 - o Eliminate the use of cut scores on any single teacher standardized test to determine licensure.
 - o Amend the required passage of state board exams for teacher licensure to the required completion of state board exams with disclosure of results to hiring agencies including school districts.
 - o Commission an independent, longitudinal analysis that studies the relationship of the Minnesota Teacher Licensure Exam (MTLE) score with teacher proficiency in the first three years of a teacher's career.
- Ensure Minnesota students access to education services of skilled specialists in speech language, PT, OT, vision, mobility, and deaf and hard of hearing with qualifications appropriate to educational settings.
- Maintain a stable, defined-benefit retirement plan through a shared responsibility of the state, school districts, teachers and retirees.

New Licenses Granted to Completers of Minnesota Institutions, Teacher Supply and Demand Report 2015

