

MREA, comprised of 169 school districts across Greater Minnesota, supports expanding educational opportunities and closing the opportunities gap in Minnesota in these ways:

Closing the Opportunities Gap

- **Expand Funding for Early Learning** - Transform Early Learning Scholarship Program into an eligibility based, categorical program like Title I.
- **Improve the Transition from Secondary to Post Secondary and Career** - Encourage high school students to gain vocational skills through school district collaboration with employers with additional funding for this purpose. Re-examine state high school course requirements to better align with workforce needs.
- **Meet the Mental Health Needs of Children** - Expand the School Linked Mental Health Grant Program so MDE proactively works with DHS, counties and private providers in partnership with school districts.

Increase Teacher Quality & Availability

Minnesota needs to guarantee the state's 845,000 students have highly qualified licensed teachers by increasing the supply of teachers across the state and offering competitive compensation packages.

- Establish a college tuition rebate or scholarship program for newly licensed teachers who graduate from a Minnesota program and teach in rural areas and/or on subjects without adequate teacher supply.
- Ensure each economic development region is represented on the Board of Teaching (BOT).
- Create alternative licensing options with Minnesota's teacher-training programs.
- Increase licensure flexibility to allow teachers to teach across disciplines and specialties.
- Use varying strategies to measure reading, writing, mathematical skills and content knowledge of prospective teachers through means other than a standardized test with cut scores and time limits.
- Use state standards for probationary teachers as judged by administrators and/or trained and qualified evaluators, along with their student teaching assessment (edTPA), to determine who can teach effectively in Minnesota classrooms, rather than using paper and pencil exams.

Clarify Property Tax Terms

Provide clarity school district taxes to increase understanding of the purpose and fairness:

- Rename tax bases and levies based the purposes of the revenue (not who authorized it).
- Rename Referendum Market Value (RMV) as "Local Education Revenue (LER)" and "Local Education Revenue Value (LERV)." This conveys that the revenue is for the general education and operating functions of the school district, and both voters and school boards may authorize revenue from this tax base.

Balance Local Control and State Accountability

- Vet new mandates with evidence they achieve their stated goal; determine the cost on various sized school districts through state and local impact notes; and provide state funding to pay for significant new mandates.
- Consolidate school district reporting requirements under the World's Best Workforce statute and allow districts to use alternative models of student achievement strategic plans.
- Repeal the school calendar start date requirement so local communities can set the learning year for their students.
- Provide flexibility to districts as they implement the newly mandated to work with students and families in collaborative planning for students' career and college so that our students will be the world's best work force.
- Clarify Type III vehicle driver requirements (up to 14 students) for district flexibility on bus routes and activities.

Improve Minnesota's Investment in Public Education

Close two significant revenue disparities for Greater Minnesota Schools:

1. The "Donut Hole"

132 school districts do not qualify for Location Equity Revenue (LER) and are left in the "Donut Hole" between Small Schools Revenue (SSR) and LER.

2. Facility Maintenance

The 25 largest school districts spend \$2.79 per square foot on facility maintenance because they qualify for Alternative Bonding while the other 305 Minnesota school districts spend \$0.58 on facility maintenance, one-fifth the amount.



View interactive maps showing districts impacted by the Donut Hole and Facility Maintenance disparities at MnREA.org/category/maps-on-issues

Ensure students have equal educational opportunity regardless of their zip code through:

1. Local Education Revenue (LER)

Eliminate the new inequity based district size by extending Local School Board authority levy up to \$512 per pupil to all school boards regardless of district enrollment with an additional annual \$8.8 million in state aid and levy equalization.

2. School Facility Revenue

- Consolidate facility revenues into a "Facilities and Equipment Revenue" program.
- Reform Debt Service Equalization from a formula that varies within a district on a year-to-year basis into a fixed percentage of the original bond based on district eligibility at the time of referendum.
- Reform the Cooperative Facility Grant into a Facility Grant Program with a cap on the local tax effort of a project that receives positive review and comment and state grants funding the difference.

3. Use Categorical Funding

Fund proven educational practices such as Early Learning and Success for the Future with categorical funding (not competitive grants) like Integration Aid and Federal Title I based upon: The program purposes and targeted students, proposed expenditures matching the program criteria and state accountability giving the Commissioner the authority to withhold and redirect a percentage of funds.