

## **2009 MASA Legislative Position Paper** **Stable and Predictable School Funding**

### **Why**

Schools cannot educate the next generation of students successfully without a stable and predictable investment in Minnesota's schools.

### **How**

- 1) **3 ½ % EACH YEAR**: The mandates, rules and regulations assigned to public education indicate that the increased cost of operating our schools will be at least 3½% greater in each of the next two years. While it is the schools responsibility to continue to show improved results, it is the States responsibility to enhance school revenues to keep pace with the changing expenses that schools must incur.
- 2) **FUNDING PREDICTABILITY**: Increases in revenues must be provided through a predictable methodology.
  - a. The level of funding from the state to school districts should be set in Statute through an automatic adjustment in funding based on an accepted price setting mechanism such as the government implicit price indicator.
  - b. To the extent that local levies are required as part of the States funding responsibility, School Boards should have the authority to make these levies directly. Locally required levies should be equalized by the State to create a fair tax impact in all areas of the State.
  - c. The citizen petition process for referendum recall elections should be changed, so the required number of qualified petition signers is set at 40% of registered voters and the petitioning person/group is held financially responsible for the costs associated with a referendum recall election.
- 3) **FUNDING FLEXIBILITY**: To help with a funding solution, the State should allow the maximum flexibility in the use of all funds and remove mandates and restrictions to provide this greater flexibility.
- 4) **CREATE A NEW FUNDING METHODOLOGY**: MASA supports the long-term solution outlined in the "New Minnesota Miracle" bill, which provides a significantly enhanced funding process. The introduction of this legislation is a first step to providing a fair and responsive set of formulas to fund education and learning success. However, just a new set of formulas, by themselves, is not enough. Minnesota's schools need a significant infusion of revenues, which could be phased in over several years, to provide the revenues needed to create a world class system of schools.
- 5) **PAY FOR EDUCATION**: The funding solutions outlined above demand a significant commitment to invest in Minnesota's children. To pay for these changes will require a combination of tax revisions. MASA members will actively support a revision of the tax codes to produce the revenues necessary to educate our children.