

# 2021 Legislative Priorities

## Relief and Support Through Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused significant disruption for schools throughout the state. The state should expend every effort to make sure that school funding is stable and policies are flexible as school districts adjust to the pandemic's challenges.

- **Hold school districts harmless on funding fluctuations during the pandemic.** Use student enrollment data from FY20 or FY21, whichever is larger, when calculating the following revenue streams.
  - General education
  - Special education
  - Free or reduced-priced lunch
- **Provide more flexibility for a qualified candidate to receive a teaching license** so school districts can maintain a quality teaching staff.
- **Delay the World's Best Work Force (WBWF) assessment requirements for the 2020-21 school year.** The federal government has not indicated its intent with the ESSA requirements for testing.



## Funding

- **Provide a 2% increase to the basic formula.** Schools must have the resources to support student academic, social, and emotional learning.
- **Increase state equalization aid for all education-related levies, particularly those related to operating referenda, debt service, and local option revenue.** Local levies must be affordable so all voters across the state can support their local schools if needed.
- **Extend the funding to freeze the growth of the special education cross subsidy and other formula calculations** that were included in the 2019-20 state budget. The funding expires at the end of the 2020-21 school year.
- **Extend the Safe School Aid** as students' mental health needs are at an all-time high. The funding will expire at the end of the 2020-21 school year.

## Policy

- **Stop any new unfunded mandates** that will further strain school budgets.

## Long-Term Solution for Eliminating the Special Education Cross Subsidy

The unfunded cost of providing mandated special education, known as the cross subsidy, is growing and unsustainable. **Bold action is needed now to implement a funding source for reducing the cross subsidy** so all schools can provide an education that meets the academic, social, and emotional needs of Minnesota students. **Funding sources could include the following.**

- Creation of a revenue stream from existing tax collections (online sales as an example) to be used exclusively for funding special education costs.
- Implementation of a new dedicated revenue stream, like a one-cent sales tax increase or sports betting, either statutorily or through the Minnesota Constitution to pay for special education costs.
- Provide school districts with the ability to levy at least half of their cross-subsidy amount through a highly equalized levy.
- Creation of an entirely new revenue stream (sports betting) with the resulting revenue dedicated to special education funding.

### SEE Member School Districts

Albany	Fridley	Northfield
Albert Lea	Hastings	Owatonna
Annandale	Hinckley-Finlayson	Paynesville
Anoka-Hennepin	Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted	Pine Island
Austin	Hutchinson	Princeton
Belle Plaine	Jordan	Prior Lake-Savage
Big Lake	Kasson-Mantorville	Rockford
Braham	Kimball	Rocori
Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose	Lake City	Roseau
Byron	Litchfield	Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan
Cambridge-Isanti	Maple Lake	Royalton
Cannon Falls	Medford	Rush City
Centennial	Melrose	Sartell-St. Stephen
Chisago Lakes	Milaca	St. Francis
Dassel-Cokato	Monticello	St. Michael-Albertville
Delano	Mora	Stewartville
East Central	New London-Spicer	Stillwater
Faribault	New Prague	Waconia
Forest Lake	North Branch	

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## Schools for Equity in Education



All public school children must have equal access to a high quality education regardless of where they live in Minnesota



# 2021 Legislative Platform