



1. Restore the K-12 funding system to a stable and predictable system.

In 2001, the State changed the structure of financing public schools but did not implement a funding mechanism capable of sustaining the change. The result is that districts continue to rely on local levies and increased property taxes for basic programs and services.

- *Adopt a plan for education funding reform designed to meet this goal as funding becomes available.*
- *Formalize in state statute the loan from school districts to the state made through unallotment.*

2. Increase student achievement and teacher effectiveness by more effectively aligning education calendars.

Minnesota schools need support from the Governor, Legislature, and MDE to increase student achievement and professional staff effectiveness. How state assessments are scheduled and how staff development opportunities are supported can make a difference in student learning.

- *Develop a common school calendar that maximizes high impact instruction days in advance of high stakes assessments to provide valuable instructional time that is currently not possible to schedule.*
- *Recognize that staff effectiveness can be improved when schools pool financial, human, and intellectual resources to provide significant high quality, job-embedded professional development to staff members, ultimately resulting in an increase in student achievement.*
- *Develop a calendar that is common to both K-12 and post-secondary schools to better meet the needs of all students and creates a more seamless K-16 education calendar.*
- *Encourage the Minnesota Department of Education, upon receiving appropriately vetted requests from school districts, to approve flexible learning year calendars and other innovative proposals intended to improve student achievement.*

3. Revise statutes and rules that limit staffing and operational efficiency.

Minnesota's schools must have the ability to promote change if they are to provide a world-class education. It is very difficult to make changes in the currently over-regulated environment.

- *Revise statutes specifying rules for rolling tenure and educator quality to allow students to have access to the best educators.*
- *Remove the rules requiring a financial penalty for non-settlement of teacher contracts by January 15. Require districts and employee bargaining units to use binding arbitration as a last resort to settle contractual differences.*
- *Repeal maintenance of effort requirements (Safe Schools levy—M.S. 126C.44) limiting the ability of school boards to reduce the number of guidance counselors, social workers, school psychologists, nurses, and alcohol/chemical dependency counselors.*

4. Support increased access to expanded early childhood education and kindergarten opportunities.

Research indicates that education investments made at an early age will develop students better equipped for success throughout their education careers. Minnesota has trailed other states in investing in this critical area.

- *Develop a plan for all school districts to have funding to provide full-day kindergarten for every student.*
- *Provide adequate funding for early childhood programs so that every pre-school child has access to an early learning program.*