2020 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

MSBA, a leading advocate for public education, has been serving Minnesota school boards for 100 years. Today’s 333 school boards provide local governance to the school districts who educate Minnesota’s 850,000 public school students. The cornerstone principles that provide guidance for our legislative agenda and reflect Minnesota school districts and students are:

- Efficient and effective school management
- Excellence in student achievement for all Minnesota students
- Respect of locally governed public schools
- Adequate and equitable funding levels to provide an exceptional education

SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET

General Education Formula – 1% ($65 million)
While 2% and 2% on the general education formula last session is most appreciated, districts are still making further reductions to their budgets and staff. Continue the work; provide additional revenue on the basic education formula for the second year of the biennium.

School Safety Aid – ($30.25 million)
Minnesota schools have done some good work to keep students safe, but inconsistency in funding has left gaps in security and the ability to proactively address student’s mental health needs. Continue the work; make permanent the 2019 school safety aid in order to hire social workers, counselors and other licensed mental health professionals.

Special Education Cross-Subsidy – ($68.5 million)
Last session’s appropriation holds the cross-subsidy relatively flat in FY20 and FY21, but the cross-subsidy is projected to rise to $724 million in FY21 if the Legislature doesn’t pursue additional legislation over the next two years. Continue the work; decrease the special education cross-subsidy by 5 percent.

ELECTIONS

School Board Vacancy Elections
Prior to 2014, school boards had the authority to appoint a school board member to fill a board vacancy. In subsequent years, changes were made which decreased voter turnout and increased school district expenses. Continue the work; restore the ability for school boards to appoint to fill a vacancy until the next general election.

Combined Polling Places
Beginning in 2016 school boards are required to pass a yearly resolution approving polling places for the following year. If a school board fails to pass a resolution, it could cost the district tens of thousands of dollars for election equipment and election judges for dozens of polling places, instead of just one or two combined polling places. Continue the work; repeal the mandate and require an updated resolution only if the combined polling places have changed since the previous resolution.

FACILITIES

Excellence in education requires school boards to provide quality, well-maintained learning environments for students and staff. 99% of school districts have levied Long-Term Facilities Maintenance Revenue (LTFMR) to the cap. It is the responsibility of school boards to maintain facilities. Continue the work; increase the per pupil cap and expand the allowable uses for the Long-Term Facilities Maintenance Revenue to efficiently and effectively maintain safe school facilities.

TAXES

Local Optional Revenue tied to Formula Increases ($7.4 million)
94% of school districts are dependent on local optional revenue (LOR) for operating costs. This is a critical funding source to ensure school boards can maintain day-to-day operations. Continue the work; tie LOR to the basic education formula to allow districts to retain its buying power.

Link formula to inflation
The average general education formula increase has not kept pace with rising and increased costs of school operations. Continue the work; link the basic formula to inflation to provide stable and predictable funding, which allows school boards to plan long range.
Over 30 bills were introduced in the 2019 session to restrict local control.

- Retain the newly enacted tiered licensure system
- Retain flexibility for school boards to hire and maintain the most effective staff
- Retain local authority in determining curriculum course offerings, graduation requirements and other locally developed standards and programming where applicable
- Retain student choice for electives that the public is demanding, like CTCE courses
- Raise the number of optional e-learning days from five to ten days
- Retain local control for school district discipline policies

REDUCE MANDATES

Each school district faces unique needs which depend on a variety of factors, including demographics, geography, and district size.

- Repeal the resolution requirement for combined polling place
- Repeal the report to PELSB for Probationary Teacher Release
- Repeal requirement to publish minutes and budget information in a local newspaper
- Resist statewide mandates that conflict with local bargaining
- Reinstates the sales tax exemption for school district fundraising
- Reinstates the “pending” status for a new teacher who has completed a district background check
- Reduce special education paperwork in the areas of functional behavioral assessment and short-term objectives
- Reinstates school board authority to determine school calendar
- Repeal requirement that percentage of district compensatory funding be used for extended time
- Replace wage theft notification with a collective bargaining agreement
- Recognize a grace period is sometimes necessary for wage theft notification