

Glossary of Educational Terms

Accounts - In school budgeting and finance, the category of revenue or expenditure within a fund for various functions or activities.

Achievement Gap - Persistent differences in achievement among different groups of students as indicated by scores on standardized tests.

ADA - Average Daily Attendance - Attendance Days (or hours) divided by Instructional Days (or hours).

ADAAA - Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 – Federal legislation protecting disabled employees from employer discrimination.

Ad hoc - Established for a particular purpose without reference to wider or permanent applications, such as “ad hoc” committees or “ad hoc” policy.

ADM - Average Daily Membership - The sum for all pupils of the number of days of the school year each pupil is enrolled divided by the number of days the schools are in session.

ALC - Alternative Learning Center (state approved) - Must operate year round (school year starts in June) and serve at-risk students from two or more districts (except for Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth). Students must have a CLP (Continual Learning Plan) and can generate more than 1.0 ADM when membership exceeds statute minimums (refer to “LYPS”); can apply to provide an independent study component.

ALP - Alternative Learning Program (state approved) - These schools serve at-risk students year round or during a traditional school year. Students must have a CLP and can generate more than 1.0 ADM, up to 1.2, when instruction time exceeds statute minimums (refer to “LYPS”). They can apply to provide an independent study program. An ALP is not eligible to apply for Target Services programs.

Alternative Assessment - Measures a student’s knowledge and mastery by having him/her exhibit through projects, essays, tasks, etc., rather than relying solely on the more traditional assessment which encourages students to memorize facts.

Alternative Calendar - Any calendar that varies from the traditional calendar. Year-round education is an alternative calendar.

Alternative Compensation - A method of pay for teachers which either supplements or replaces the traditional “steps and lanes.”

AMCPU - Adjusted Marginal Cost Pupil Unit - The greater of the total of weighted average daily membership for the current school year multiplied times .77 plus the total of the weighted average daily membership for the prior school year multiplied times .23, or the actual current weighted average daily membership count.

ANTC - Adjusted Net Tax Capacity - The property value used for calculating most school taxes. ANTC is determined by equalizing differences in tax capacities by property type in different counties. This equalization process compares market values to actual sales and is intended to neutralize the effect of differing assessment practices. Also, the ANTC reflects the application of the classification rates to the market value of property.

AP - Advanced Placement or IB - International Baccalaureate - Opportunity offered to earn college credits for high school students.

APU - Adjusted Pupil Units - A weighted count of pupils used to determine revenue in many funding formulas. Kindergarten through sixth grade students are weighted 1.0 pupil units. Students in grades 7-12 are weighted 1.2 pupil units.

At-Risk - Students who meet the statute-defined criteria (M.S. 124D.68).

Audit - Formal examination and verification of financial accounts. May also refer to a program examination and verification of results.

AYP - Adequate Yearly Progress - A measure of academic progress that school districts are required to make under NCLB.

Barrier-free - Elimination of architectural barriers in educational facilities to allow disabled persons to easily enter, move about, and use those facilities.

BCA - Bureau of Criminal Apprehension - State agency which provides districts with criminal background checks.

Bid - An offer, usually written, to furnish materials or services for a specified sum of money in accordance with the terms of a contract proposal.

Bill - Form or draft of a proposed law presented to a legislature.

BMS - Bureau of Mediation Services - State agency which provides mediation and arbitration services.

Bond - Written promise, generally under seal, to pay a specified sum of money (face value) at a fixed time in the future (date of maturity) and carrying interest at a fixed rate, usually payable periodically; often used by school districts to raise construction money.

Career Education - Organization of the curriculum (K-12) so that a student will receive appropriate information and opportunity for training about or in the world of work; does not necessarily imply attendance at an occupational or skill center.

Case Load - Various meanings that generally refer to the number of students for whom the teacher is the IEP manager.

Categorical Aid - Educational support funds provided from a higher governmental level and specifically limited to (earmarked for) a given purpose; e.g., special education, transportation, or vocational education.

Child Count - The name applied to the federal reports that generate federal special education dollars; a count of all students who have IEPs or IFSPs on December 1 of any given year (also referred to as the “Unduplicated Child Count”).

Class Load (size) - Total number of classes or pupils taught by a teacher.

CLP - Continual Learning Plan - All students enrolled in an ALC, ALP, or other LYPS need to have a CLP that addresses their educational goals for the year. It must be updated annually.

Collective Bargaining - The process used by an organized group of union employees and their employers to make offers and counter-offers for the purposes of reaching a mutually acceptable written Agreement.

Committee - Group chosen to provide the school board with a recommendation on an education-related program or issue.

Community Expert - A nonlicensed individual from the “community” who teaches in a public or charter school on a limited basis – the Minnesota Board of Teaching must approve the application of each nonlicensed community expert.

Comparable Worth - State law (M.S. 471.911) requiring every political subdivision to establish equitable compensation relations among its employee groups (a.k.a. “Minnesota Pay Equity Act”).

Competency-Based Education - An organized system of teaching and learning to ensure mastery of prescribed skills and behaviors.

Developmental Delay - A “Primary Disability Classification” effective FY00, which can be reported for students through age six as of September 1.

Dual Enrolled - Senior high level students who are full-time at the high school and receive ALC instructional services outside the normal high school day and year, i.e., summer and after school. Both report the instructional time it provides to the student. A senior high school student may be enrolled in a post-secondary class or program.

Due Process (Procedural) - An orderly, established process for arriving at an impartial and just settlement of a conflict between parties which entails the elements of notice and fair hearing (most often used in relationship to discipline).

Due Process (Substantive) - Basic legality of legislative enactments such as rules and regulations for students and staff. Must follow basic guidelines of legality, sufficient specificity, reason and sensibleness, adequate dissemination, and appropriate penalties.

E-Rate - The universal service Schools and Libraries Program, commonly known as “E-rate,” provides discounts of up to 90% to help eligible schools and libraries in the United States obtain affordable telecommunications and internet access. The program is intended to ensure that schools and libraries have access to affordable telecommunications and information services.

ECFE - Early Childhood Family Education - Programming provided through Minnesota public school districts for families with children between the ages of birth to kindergarten entrance. ECFE is based on the idea that the family provides a child's first and most significant learning environment and parents are a child's first and most important teachers.

ECSE - Early Childhood Special Education - A term used both as a grade classification of an individual student, i.e., a pre-kindergarten student (from birth to kindergarten) who has either an IEP/IFSP or who has received assessment for special education.

Education District - Formed by school districts to increase educational opportunities for pupils by increasing cooperation and coordination between school districts and post-secondary institutions; education boards must be comprised of board members who are currently serving on the local school boards of the participating districts.

Elective - Any of a number of non-required studies from which a student is allowed to select.

EL - English Learner - Commonly refers to students for which English is not their primary language.

Employee Benefits - Compensation in addition to regular salary provided to an employee which may include such benefits as health insurance, life insurance, leaves of absence, and retirement contributions.

Equity - A commitment to ensure that every student receives what he or she needs to succeed. (*Excellence Through Equity*: Blankstein/Noguera 2015)

ESL - English as a Second Language - Bilingual education or limited English proficiency.

ESSA - Every Student Succeeds Act - The nation's latest pre-kindergarten through grade 12 education law, was signed into law in December 2015. ESSA is the newest version of the 50-year-old federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act and replaces the 2001 reauthorization known as No Child Left Behind. ESSA emphasizes equity and gives states and schools more latitude to innovate, while maintaining a focus on accountability and an emphasis on state and local systems of improvement (MDE, 2016).

Extended Time Revenue - This revenue may be used for extended day programs, extended week programs, summer school, and other programming authorized under the learning year program.

FMLA - Family and Medical Leave Act - Federal law which allows eligible employees of covered employers to take unpaid, job-protected leave for specified reasons.

FTE - Full-Time Equivalent - The amount of employed time required in a part-time position expressed in proportion to that required in a full-time position with "1.0" representing one full-time position. FTE may be expressed as a percentage or as a fraction and is derived by dividing the amount of employed time required in the part-time position by the amount of employed time required in a corresponding full-time position.

FY - Fiscal Year - A 12-month period between settlements of financial accounts. The school district fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30. For example, fiscal year 2007 is equivalent to the 2006-2007 school year (July 1, 2006 - June 30, 2007).

General Education Revenue - General education revenue is the primary formula for providing general operating funds to school districts and charter schools and is composed of basic general education revenue; extended time revenue; declining pupil revenue; local optional revenue; gifted and talented revenue; basic skills revenue, including EL and compensatory revenue; sparsity revenue; operating capital; equity revenue; small schools revenue; and transition revenue.

Graduation Requirements - The Minnesota Legislature has established standards for curriculum and assessments the public school districts must provide and students must attain in order to graduate from a MN secondary school. These requirements may be updated annually. For a complete and current definition of the requirements, refer to M.S. 120B.

Grievance - A written complaint by an employee that a provision of the collective bargaining agreement under which he/she is working has been violated.

Grievance Arbitration - Final step in a grievance procedure which is binding on both the public employer and the grievant(s) and which is used to determine if a violation, misapplication, or misinterpretation of an existing Agreement or established past practice has occurred.

Heterogeneous Grouping - Grouping of students without regard for ability so that wide ranges of academic ability will be present.

Homebound Instruction - Individual teaching in a child's home by an itinerant teacher; for education of the disabled and for students unable to attend school due to illness or other reasons.

Homeschool - Minnesota provides for parents to educate their children at home. Parents and the resident school district must perform an extensive list of tasks in order to satisfy the requirements of a homeschool. Homeschools may be eligible for a limited amount of state aid.

Homogeneous Grouping - Grouping students based on one or more common characteristics – most often, academic ability – and a “tracking system” is usually developed.

IEP - Individualized Education Program - A program that defines the individualized objectives of a child identified as having a disability and who is receiving special education services.

IFSP - Individual Family Service Plan - An IEP for very young children involving other agencies in addition to education.

In-service Education - General term used to describe the efforts to promote the professional growth and development of employees while on the job.

Interdisciplinary - Instructional process which combines information from two or more subjects or creates a team situation that allows teachers with different academic disciplines to plan a teacher-learning program.

Interest Arbitration - Process, binding on both the public employer and the particular union, by which an arbitrator resolves unsettled points of contention in the collective bargaining process.

Job Description - A written statement of the various duties, equipment, working conditions, responsibilities, and other essential factors concerned with a job and usually based on the requirements and training the employee must possess in order to qualify for employment.

LD - Learning Disabilities - One or more deficiencies exhibited by a child in the essential learning processes of perception, conceptualization, language, memory, attention, impulse control, or motor function.

LEA - Local Education Agency - An educational agency at the local level which exists primarily to operate schools or to contract for education services. LEAs may/may not be coterminous with county, city, or town boundaries, and the term is used synonymously with the terms, "school district," "school system," and "local basic administrative unit."

Lesson Plan - A teaching outline of the important points of a lesson arranged in the order in which they are to be presented; may include objectives, points to be made, questions to ask, references to materials, assignments, and evaluation methods or tools.

Levy - (Verb) to impose property taxes or special assessments on property. (Noun) the total of property taxes or special assessments on property imposed by a governmental unit.

License - Authority granted by the state to individuals to practice an occupation or profession after successfully meeting specific requirements.

LLA - Last Location of Attendance - A MARSS code indicating where a student was last enrolled and included in every student record.

LYPS - Learning Year Program Site - State-approved programs that agree to operate on a year-round basis; students must have a CLP and generate more than 1.0 ADM when they generate membership hours which are the greater of (a) the locally defined core school year, or (b) the minimum number of instructional hours required by statute.

Mainstreaming - Moving disabled children from their segregated status in special education classes and integrating them into the regular classroom.

MARSS - Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System.

Master Teacher/Mentor - One who possesses considerable skill in teaching; selected to serve as supervising teacher or leader of a team when team teaching occurs.

MDE - Minnesota Department of Education.

Media Center - The information hub for the school (previously referred to as "the library").

Mediation - A non-binding, informal attempt by a third party to help settle an employment dispute through advice or suggestions but without specific public recommendations.

Mentor - An adult who serves in an advising, helping, listening, or tutoring capacity to another individual.

Minnesota Academic Standards - Five core academic content standards areas: language arts, math, science, social studies, and arts.

Multi-Age Grouping - Grouping students into classes across grade levels; for example, having students from kindergarten and first grade in a class together, not as a traditional combination class, but focusing instead on teaching to their ability and skill level rather than their age.

Multi-Cultural Sensitivity - Sensitivity to different cultures and ways of thinking and acting.

NCES - National Center for Education Statistics - A federal agency to which the MDE supplies data to be used for comparing states.

Non-Operating Funds - Building construction fund, debt redemption fund, trust and agency fund.

OCR - Office for Civil Rights - A federal agency to which the state provides gender and race/ethnic student and staff data on behalf of districts using MARSS data, STARS data, and supplemental data.

On-Line Learning - An interactive course or program that delivers instruction to a student by computer, is combined with traditional delivery methods that include frequent student assessment and may include actual teacher contact time, and meets or exceeds state academic standards.

Open Enrollment - Enrollment Options - Various legislative-enacted programs that allow students to attend a district other than the district of residence or a post-secondary institution without paying tuition charges.

Open Meeting Law - State statute governing an elected board's ability to conduct meetings in public or in private. M.S. 13D

Operating Funds - General fund, food service fund, pupil transportation fund, community services fund.

Outcome-Based Education - Aligning the curriculum, instruction, and student assessment to objectives or goals for student knowledge, skill, or effect which have been clearly defined; students progress as they master these outcomes rather than by time or age factors.

P-20 - Reference to all education of students from preschool, elementary, secondary and post-secondary.

Paraprofessional - A non-certified individual who assists teachers with non-teaching tasks (also called a "para," a "teacher aide," or a "classroom aide").

Part C - A reference to a federal law previously referred to as "Part H" and refers to children ages birth through age two who have IFSPs.

Part-Time - A reference to any student enrolled for less than full-time ("full-time" is defined by the school's calendar) and any student who is released from attending the entire day at the high school level and is not considered to be absent or, for purposes of dual enrollment, has more than 60 minutes in study hall (part-time students who are also enrolled in an ALC or ALP are reported only by the ALC/ALP).

Performance-Based Education - A type of alternative assessment by which students demonstrate what they know and are able to do using non-traditional tests.

Policy - Statement adopted by a school board or an administrative agency outlining principles to be followed with respect to specific matters; usually requires rules or regulations to be formulated for its implementation, and is broad enough to provide for administrative decisions regarding the manner in which it shall be implemented, although its implementation in some manner is mandatory.

Pre-K - Classroom-based preschool for children.

Private Contract Alternative - Non-public schools with which a public school district has contracted to provide instructional services to at-risk students.

Procedure – A series of steps followed in a regular order. Sometimes found in policy.

Public Employment Labor Relations Act (PELRA) - Minnesota Statute (Chapter 179A) governing public sector collective bargaining.

Public Law 94-142 - A federal law that ensures access to public educational opportunities to disabled persons, ages 3-21.

Pull-Out Program - A state-approved ALC program in which elementary and middle/junior high students are “pulled out” of the regular classrooms and instructional services are provided by the ALC.

Pupil-Teacher Ratio - Average number of pupils per teacher in a system or school.

PU - Pupil Units - See APU (Adjusted Pupil Units)

Q Comp - Additional revenue to be used for teacher compensation provided to districts which have an MDE-approved agreement between the school board and teachers’ union (also known as the “Alternative Teacher Professional Pay System” or “ATPPS”).

Quorum - Minimum number of board members required to hold a meeting.

Referendum - A vote by the whole of an electorate on a specific question(s) put to it by the school board.

Regulations - Detailed directions developed by the administration to put policy into practice by telling how, by whom, where, and when things are to be done.

RMIC - Regional Management Information Center - A center that assists districts in processing student, staff, and finance data for local and state reporting purposes (formerly referred to as “ESV Regions”).

Rubber-Stamp Board - A board that does not appear to study or make its own decisions and instead agrees to whatever administration recommends.

Sabbatical Leave - A leave of absence with full or partial compensation to be used for self-improvement.

School Vouchers - Educational monies distributed directly to parents for their use in selecting schools, either public or private.

School Within a School - A state-approved ALC program through which at-risk elementary and middle/junior high students receive ALC services during at least 25% of their school day.

Service Cooperative - A regional organization governed by currently seated members of the political subdivisions belonging to it and established to more efficiently provide services for its members on a cooperative basis.

Shared Time - Non-public students receiving eligible public school instructional services and generating shared-time foundation aid based on the portion of the school day during which they are enrolled in the public school.

Site-Based Management - The practice of allowing individual schools the freedom to make decisions in certain areas with the idea that those decisions are best made nearest the point at which they must be implemented.

Software - All non-hardware elements of a computer-based system, including written computer programs, flow charts, and other items related to information systems.

Standardized Test - Evaluation instrument given under similar, controlled circumstances to many individuals.

STARS - Staff Automated Reporting System - The means by which public school districts report staff employment and assignment data to the MDE.

State Standards - Core academic standards in language arts, math, science, social studies, and the arts.

Statutory Operating Debt - A school district's net negative unreserved general fund balance as of June 30 of each year.

Strategic Planning - A process used by the school district to concentrate all efforts, activities, resources, and energies toward achieving a common purpose (mission, objectives, strategies, and action plans are parts of a strategic plan); plans are developed by consensus of school and community participants and have as a basis their commonly held beliefs and values.

Targeted Services (ALC) - A state-approved program for at-risk elementary and middle/junior high students during the summer or outside of the normal student day, but which is only available if the ALC has a school-within-a-school program for such students and if those students have CLPs and receive ALC services year round.

Targeted Services (Title I) - Federal program to provide additional instructional services to targeted students. No additional general education revenue is provided.

Tax Capacity - Amount of tax base of taxing jurisdiction obtained by multiplying the market values of all property in the taxing jurisdiction by the tax capacity percentages.

Tax Capacity Percentages - Statutory classification percentages that are applied to market values.

Tax Capacity Rate - The rate arrived at by dividing the district's tax levy amount by the district's total tax capacity. Tax capacity rate replaced the term, "mill rate."

Team Teaching - Two or more teachers cooperatively planning, teaching, and evaluating the progress of their students.

Tenure - Guaranteed job security granted to teachers and principals after a specified number of years of satisfactory service (see M.S. 122A.40 or – for “cities of the first class” – M.S. 122A.41).

Tort - Any negligent or willful act of school officers or employees by which pupils or other innocent persons are wrongfully injured or damaged.

UFARS - Uniform Financial Accounting and Reporting Standards - Rules and instructions adopted by the MDE under legislative mandate to govern the methods by which school districts record financial transactions and inform the MDE about their finances.

ULA - Unrequested Leave of Absence - A leave of absence for principals and teachers due to the reduction or elimination of their positions.

Unduplicated Child Count - Refer to “Child Count.”

Unfunded Mandates - Federal legislative and regulatory provisions that require school district compliance but do not provide funding to cover the costs of carrying them out.

WADM - Weighted Average Daily Membership (refer to “Pupil Units”).

Workers’ Compensation Insurance Payments - Insurance payments made to an employee by his/her employer due to an employment-related injury or illness.

Year Round - Can refer to a variety of programs: schools extending the school year over a 10- to 12-month period with the number of instructional days being no greater than the number in a traditional school year; the requirement that state-approved “learning year programs” must provide instruction year round during each of the 12 months; students on IEPs who require extended year- or year-round services.

Youth-Services Program - Offered as part of a district’s community education program with a youth-development program, a youth-service program for pupils promotes active citizenship and addresses community needs through youth service; under MDE rules, youth-service opportunities must be made available to all students in public schools, but student participation is optional.