

EXCELLENCE IS OUR STANDARD

The mission of Robbinsdale Area Schools is to inspire and educate all learners to develop their unique potential and positively contribute to their community. We are committed to ensuring an equitable and respectful educational experience for every student, family and staff member. To support academic achievement and create a world-class workforce, we urge the Governor and Legislators to address the following critical funding and policy issues:

Fund Emergency Needs in Response to COVID-19

- **Authorize the prior year’s pupil count** to hold schools harmless for COVID-19 related drops in enrollment.
- **Continue to Provide financial flexibility** by allowing fund balance transfers between restricted funding streams based upon school board approval.
- **Continue Special Education maintenance of effort changes** to allow for staffing transitions between job duties without incurring future financial loss.

Stabilize Funding Formulas

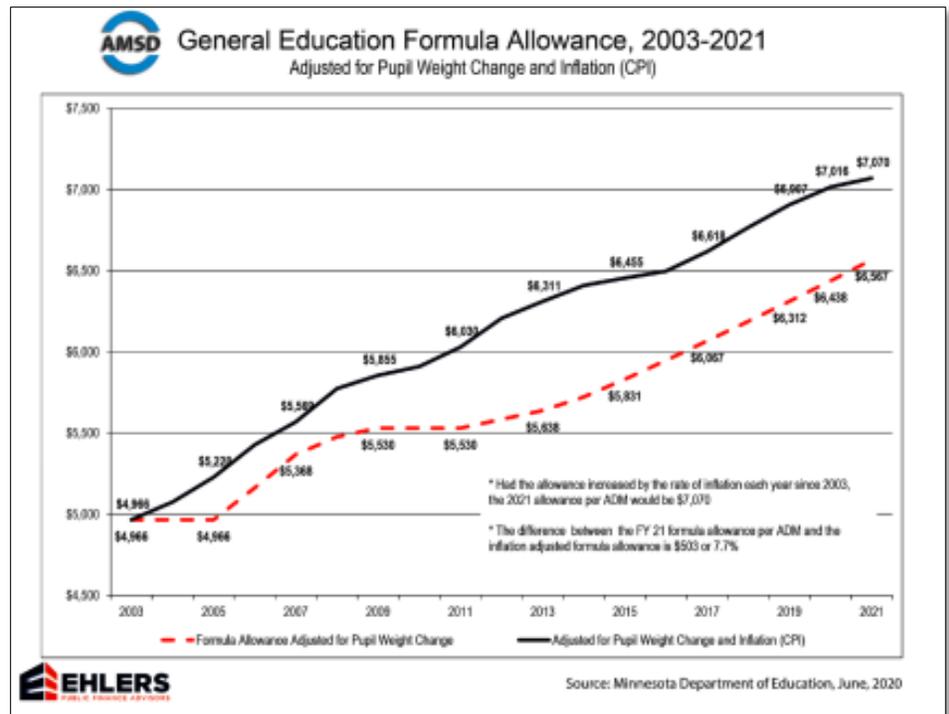
- **Increase the basic funding formula by two percent for each year of the biennium** to cover increasing costs.

- **Add inflation factor to basic funding formulas** to provide adequate, reliable and predictable funding. The basic education formula is the district’s primary source of operating funds and accounts for 47.8% of Robbinsdale Area Schools’ general fund revenue. Increases in the basic education formula have not kept up with inflation. In fact, the basic education formula would be \$7,070 per pupil or 7.7% higher if it had kept up with inflation since 2003. Adequate, reliable and predictable funding is essential to provide programs that ensure every student graduates career, articulated skilled trades and college ready.

(Please reference Chart A)

- **Expand uses for Long Term Facility Maintenance (LTFM)** to equip buildings to meet the necessary requirements of COVID-19 restrictions and enhance safety through security modifications to buildings, including remodeling and additions to existing space.

CHART A



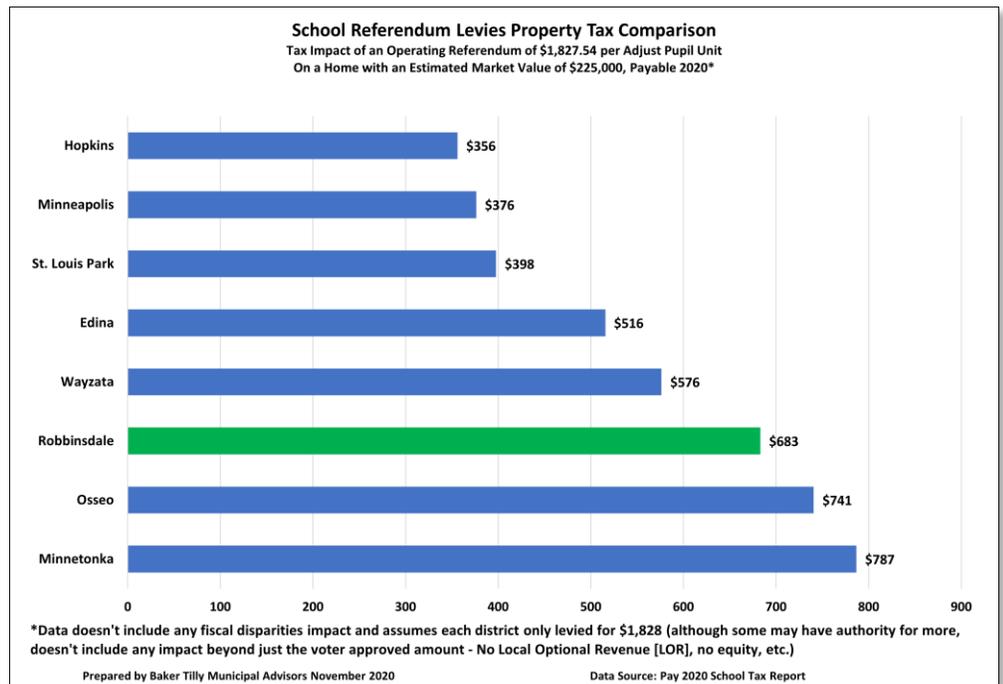
Stabilize Funding Formulas continued

- **Tax equalization for operating referendums and debt service to provide greater equity in education funding.** Property tax levies play a crucial role in funding education programs and facilities. Depending on the property tax wealth in your school district, taxpayers may pay more to raise the same amount of referendum and debt service levies. For example, taxes on a home valued at \$200,000 cost homeowners in Robbinsdale Area Schools more than twice what homeowners in the Hopkins School District pay. (Please reference Chart B)

- **Reduce cross subsidies for Special Education and English Learning**

by fully funding each area to ensure expenses are covered. Cross subsidies for the 2020-2021 school year are budgeted at \$16.1 million for Special Education and \$2.0 million for English Learning.

CHART B



Conserve Needed Dollars by Extending Municipality Privileges to School Boards to Establish Governmental Parity

- **Allow locally elected school boards to renew an existing operating referendum at the same funding level to save funds spent on expensive elections.** Data show that over the past six years 100% of referendum renewals were approved by voters.
- **Allow school boards to publish school board meeting minutes online, saving funds otherwise spent on newspaper publishing.** Last year the cost to publish school board information was about \$3,000.
- **Allow school boards to replace vacant board spots through appointment rather than expensive special elections.** Holding a special election costs the school district about \$70,000.

Enhance Policy for Educator Workforce

- **Support policies that increase diversity in the educator workforce** to reflect diverse student populations.
- **Maintain the tiered licensing system** to ensure multiple pathways for licensure.

For questions or additional information contact:

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