



DISTRICT196
One District. Infinite Possibilities.

District 196 Legislative Forum

February 24, 2021



Living and Learning During a Pandemic and Social Injustice

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Focus for 2021

Making SEA Change

- ★ Safety
- ★ Equity
- ★ Achievement



***Sea change:** (noun) a profound or notable transformation; a substantial change in perspective, especially one which affects a group or society at large on a particular issue.*

SAFETY: Responding to the Pandemic



Minnesota Safe Learning Plan

- Guidance for school districts
 - Prepare for 3 learning scenarios
 - Be able to shift between models
 - Must offer full-time distance option
- Differing opinions + changing guidance = difficult local decisions
- Required adaptability, flexibility, collaboration and perseverance



SAFETY: Responding to the Pandemic



A Year of Challenges and Changing Learning Models

- **March 15, 2020** - Governor Walz announces statewide shift to distance learning
- **June 1** - District team starts planning for 2020-21 (before hybrid graduations)
- **July 27** - Minnesota Safe Learning Plan released
- **September 14** - School year starts with students in hybrid and full-time distance
- **November 12** - Secondary students shift to distance learning due to rising cases
- **November 23** - Elementary students shift to distance learning due to rising cases
- **December 17** - State updates guidance on elementary
- **January 21** - Students in preK to grade 2 shift to all in-person learning
- **February 4** - Students in grades 3-5 shift to all in-person learning
- **February 22** - Students in grades 6-12 shift to hybrid model

SAFETY: Responding to the Pandemic



New Health Protocols and Mitigation Strategies

- Daily self health assessments required for staff and students; stay home if sick
- Face masks required for students, masks and shields for staff
- Social distancing in classrooms and whenever possible
- No school visitors, volunteers or group events
- Hand sanitizer stations to promote frequent hand washing
- Daily cleaning and sanitizing of classrooms and commonly used areas
- Improved ventilation (HEPA filter in every classroom)
- COVID-19 testing for staff every other week
- Vaccinations for staff, by priority order, as they become available

SAFETY: Responding to the Pandemic



Supporting Students and Families

- Child care for essential workers
- Daily meals and weekly meal kits
- Technology devices for all students, hotspots for internet access if needed
- Special education and mental health services
- Outreach to students and families not engaging in school



SAFETY: Responding to the Pandemic



Challenges

- Disengaged students and families
- Workload and expectations for staff
- Distance learning and mental fatigue
- Staffing/sub shortages
- Lack of space for distancing
- Changing guidance from state
- Divisiveness and competing expectations

Silver Linings

- Adaptability, flexibility, collaboration
- Student-teacher relationships
- Creativity in teaching and learning
- Technology and systems in place to quickly switch to distance learning
- Some thrived in distance learning
- Full-time distance option (196**Online**)

EQUITY: Responding to Social Injustice



Increased Focus and Urgency

- School Board resolution following death of George Floyd
- Listening circles to support students and staff
- District and building-based initiatives focused on improving the student experience, adding teachers of color, providing a more inclusive curriculum and culturally responsive teaching
- New Equity Advisory Council created to review and recommend
- New Director of Equity and Inclusion cabinet position and department

ACHIEVEMENT: Responding to Unacceptable Gaps



Supporting Students and Learning

- Opportunity gaps existed and may have worsened during the pandemic
- Assess students to get data on their learning this year (word study, BAS, MCAs)
- Review achievement data and other measures to guide decisions
 - Attendance, course completion, grades, credit recovery, graduation
- Expand summer programming and make available to all students
 - Continue in future years to offer full-year learning
- More teachers of color and culturally responsive teaching in every classroom



District 196 Legislative Priorities for 2021 Session

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2021 Legislative Priorities



District 196 School Board and Legislative Advisory Council members urge the Legislature and Governor to address education funding, flexibility and fairness in the 2021 budget session:

- **FUNDING**
Stable and predictable funding for E-12 education
- **FLEXIBILITY**
Greater flexibility for local decision-making
- **FAIRNESS**
Equitable education for all students and equalized funding for taxpayer fairness

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2021 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public Schools

DISTRICT 196
OUR BELIEFS. OUR FUTURE.

Educating our students to reach their full potential

School Board
Jackie Magnuson, chairperson
Jed Attridge, vice chairperson
Sachin Teasak, clerk
Art Colleen, treasurer
Craig Angstrom, director
Cory Johnson, director
Mike Rosen, director

Superintendent
Mary H. Kreger - 651-423-7749



OUR BELIEFS

- Students come first
- All students can learn
- High expectations inspire students and lead to excellence
- Learning is maximized in a safe, respectful and inclusive environment
- A well-rounded education includes opportunities in academics, the arts and athletics
- Learning is a lifelong pursuit
- Effective management of resources is critical
- Partnerships and collaboration enhance educational programming
- A culture of innovation and continuous improvement prepares students to be college and career ready
- An informed and engaged community guides effective decision making

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Much has changed since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic early last year and the death of George Floyd while in police custody in Minneapolis on May 25, 2020. These tragic events have resulted in great loss and pain, but can ultimately provide the impetus needed to bring about sea change in equity and education policy at the local, state and national levels.

The pandemic presents great challenges and frequent changes for students, families and educators. It has also reminded everyone of the critical role public schools play. Our schools have assumed a critical role in facilitating the difficult community conversations needed to advance anti-racist practices and eliminate the unacceptable achievement and opportunity gaps that exist for students of color, students in low-income families, and students receiving special education and language services.

To emerge from these life-changing events better than before, Minnesota public schools need stable funding from the state, greater flexibility for local decision-making, and fairness for all students and taxpayers, regardless of race, socioeconomic status or where they live in our state. On behalf of the more than 29,000 students and 160,000 residents of the Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public Schools, the School Board and Legislative Advisory Council members urge the Legislature and Governor to lead sea change in equity and public education by taking the following actions during the 2021 budget-setting session.

Leading 'SEA Change' for Equity in Education

The 2020-21 school year is focused on safety, equity and achievement. As a district, we are committed to transformational 'SEA Change':

Sea change: (noun) a profound or notable transformation; a substantial change in perspective, especially one which affects a group or society at large on a particular issue.

✓ **FUNDING: Provide stable, predictable and equitable education funding for Minnesota schools**

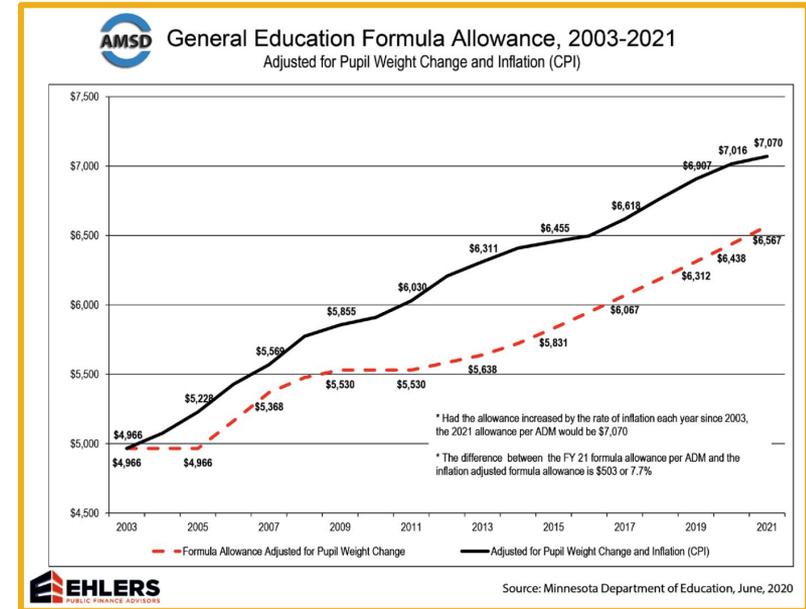
Basic funding for Minnesota schools has continued to lag inflation and the gap in special education costs over funding will top \$496 million statewide in 2021. To provide stable funding for schools:

- Increase general education funding by at least 2 percent per year in the 2021-23 state budget;
- Mitigate the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic by allowing school districts to use the greater of their 2019 or 2020 pupil counts for calculating general education and compensatory funding; and
- Begin phasing in recommendations of a School Finance Working Group convened by the Minnesota Department of Education last year that would stabilize education funding and ensure taxpayer equity.

Priority 1: Stable and Predictable FUNDING



- **Increase** general education funding by at least 2 percent per year for inflation.
- **Allow** school districts to use the greater of their 2019 or 2020 pupil counts in calculating general education and compensatory funding for fiscal year 2021.
- **Phase in** recommendations of a School Finance Working Group to provide stable education funding and taxpayer equity.



Dashed-line = actual funding; Solid line = adjusted for inflation

Priority 2: FLEXIBILITY for Local Decision-Making



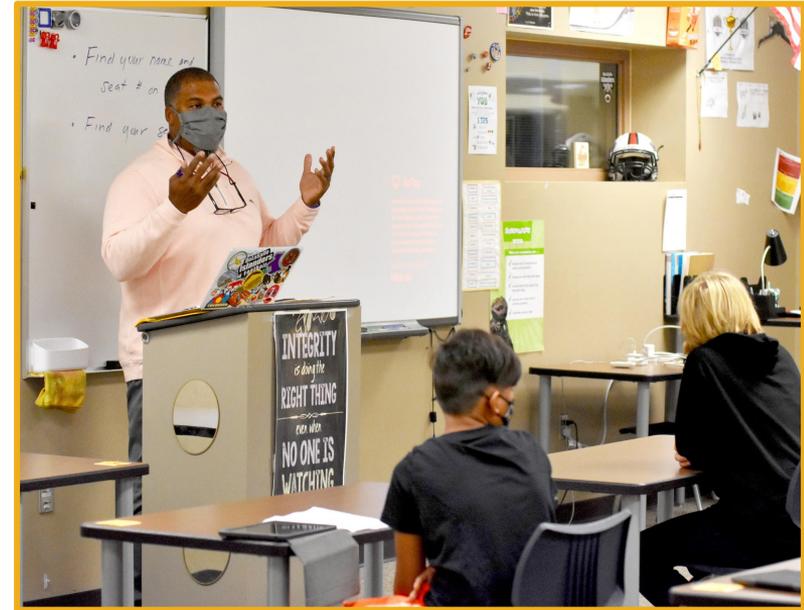
- **Eliminate** requirement for districts to partner on ALC programs, and oppose other unnecessary and unfunded mandates.
- **Allow** locally elected school boards to renew/extend a previously approved operating levy for the same amount.
- **Expand** the innovation zone law to allow school districts to try new instructional models and increase collaboration.



Priority 3: FAIRNESS for Students and Taxpayers



- **Provide** resources to support educational equity for all students:
 - Increase access to school-based pre-kindergarten programs for underserved student populations, and
 - Maintain multiple pathways to teacher licensure and create incentives to attract and retain teachers of color.
- **Increase** equalization of the operating referendum, local optional and debt service levies to provide tax fairness for property owners in all school districts.



CONTACT YOUR STATE LEADERS

Let them know what you think about funding education as a priority



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[Rep. Ruth Richardson](#)

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THANK YOU

