

2024 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public Schools



DISTRICT196
One District. Infinite Possibilities.

MISSION

Educating, developing, and inspiring our students for lifelong success.

VISION

District 196 provides the experiences that our students, families and employees desire by:

- Developing the whole student and honoring diverse needs and cultures;
- Engaging students with opportunities in academics, arts and athletics, and
- Living our mission and core values to prepare students, families and employees for lifelong success.

CORE VALUES

Student-Centered
Empathy
Wellness
Integrity
Achievement
Collaboration
Community
Lifelong Learning

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Wellbeing
Achievement
Equity
Resources

CONTACT

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Support implementation of 'historic' changes for education

The 2023 session of the Minnesota Legislature was called "historic" by many for the education funding being provided, for the number of law changes in the Omnibus Education Bill, and for the potential of these changes to positively impact the health, wellness and achievement of all students in our state for years to come.

To realize these possibilities for our children, District 196 urges the Legislature and Governor to limit consideration of any new education laws or mandates during the 2024 session. Instead, we ask for focus on supporting successful implementation of laws approved in 2023; additional funding for high inflation, and fewer state mandates and more local decision-making authority.



1. Review, adjust and support implementation of new laws

Implementing change requires ongoing review, adjustments and support to be successful. Some of the most significant laws approved in 2023 require additional review, discussion and action during this session, including:

- **READ Act** – Provide additional funding for curriculum and related costs, and additional time and flexibility for teachers to complete the minimum training requirements (45+ hours per teacher).
- **Unemployment Insurance** – Change the law to broaden the definition of "like" positions in determining eligibility for unemployment, and identify an ongoing funding source. An unintended consequence of the new law is that school districts are planning summer programming based on unemployment eligibility and availability of workers instead of what is best for students.
- **Student Safety** – Change language in the law on physical restraint to ensure law enforcement agencies and officers are comfortable having school resource officers (SROs) in our schools.



One District.
INFINITE
POSSIBILITIES.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- 29,000 students
- 4,000 employees (A Forbes Best-in-State Employer)
- 164,000 residents
- 40% students of color (37% statewide)
- 32% of students qualify for free or reduced-price school meals (43% statewide)
- 17% of students receive special education services (18% statewide)
- 9% of students qualify for English Learner services (9% statewide)
- More than 80% of school-age students who live in District 196 attend District 196 schools

2. Provide funding for inflation, equalization and compensatory needs

The total funding for education approved last session is more than any year before, and is appreciated, but it cannot undo decades of underfunding the general education formula or even the impact of inflation the past two years. We ask for approval of these requests for stable funding and tax relief:

- **General Education Formula** – Provide an additional 2% increase in FY25 (4% total) to help compensate for high inflationary costs that will exceed the 4%/2% increases in the current biennial budget.
- **Equalization Aid** – Increase equalization of levies. This reduces education funding disparities and provides property tax relief to taxpayers in school districts with smaller commercial/industrial tax bases, like District 196.
- **Compensatory Funding** – Continue to provide school districts their previous level of compensatory funding (“hold harmless”) and identify a better measure of poverty for determining future compensatory funding, as families no longer need to apply to receive free school meals.

3. Increase local control and reduce mandates

Local school board members and district officials know their school districts best. Unfunded and unnecessary mandates take money from the general fund for all students and time from staff working with students. We ask for approval of these requests for more local decision-making and fewer mandates:

- **Local Authority** – Give local school boards authority to renew a voter-approved capital projects levy one time, for up to 10 years, same as allowed for operating levies.
- **Special Education Paperwork** – Eliminate unnecessary requirements that take time away from teachers and other staff working with students.
- **Bonding Bill** – Support the District 196/City of Apple Valley partnership with \$6 million in the 2024 bonding bill to help make needed renovations to the Apple Valley Sports Arena, which serves the south metro region.

2/12/24

