

**St. Cloud Area School District 742
Board of Education
2008 Legislative Position Summary
Approved: January 24, 2008**

Policy

NCLB testing

The State of Minnesota should use growth measures, as allowed by the federal government for all states, to determine adequate yearly progress of schools. The current testing of grade level cohorts, comparing them from one year to another, should be abolished. Tests should be valid and reliable. All mandates in NCLB, including testing, should be funded.

Levy elections and authority

1. Ballot questions regarding levies should be worded so the voters can readily understand the meaning of the questions.
2. When the State does not provide at least an inflationary increase in funding, districts should have the authority to levy the difference.

Special education

1. Suspend the Department of Education's rule-making process. The Legislature appointed a task force to evaluate the discrepancies in Minnesota's rules and those of the federal government. There should be no new rules until the task force has reported.
2. Align Minnesota's requirements with the federal government's. The State of Minnesota should fully fund all mandates that exceed those of the federal government.

Bargaining reform

Labor and health insurance negotiations should take place on a state-wide or regional level. To maintain educational excellence, the State should provide adequate funding to assure that teachers and other staff receive fair compensation without requiring districts to make harmful cuts in educational programs and employees. The State, who responsible for determining the level of funding should be responsible for settling contracts and provide all necessary funds.

Education funding

Funding reform

1. The State of Minnesota should fund the student, in order to provide an equitable education system across the state. The basic cost of educating an “average” student to the level of the state standards should be determined and funded. Specific needs of students that increase the basic cost should also be funded. These needs should include special education, English Language Learners, and risks from living in poverty.
2. The differences between districts should be recognized in funding. These differences include numbers of special needs students, transportation costs, training and experience of teachers and staff, and the tax effort required by residents to support levies.
3. If the State of Minnesota cannot or does not fund students to the level required for students to achieve the state standards, districts should be given discretionary levy authority to reach that level. This should include a level of funding that provides inflationary increases.
4. The Legislature should assure adequate funding for non-personnel items (e.g. transportation, textbooks, technology, and supplies) by providing categorical assistance.

Special Education

1. Districts should receive special education funding based on the number of students who reside in the district, not on the number of students enrolled in the public schools, because districts must pay for all resident students with special education needs, no matter where they attend school.
2. The State of Minnesota must fulfill its original commitment to special education and finish funding the “cap gap”. In addition, the State of Minnesota ought to increase its commitment to special education funding.

English Language Learners

District 742 supports adequate funding for students learning the English language, to enable them to participate in our schools and our society fully. This funding should be at a level that supports best practices programs.

Early Childhood Education

The State of Minnesota should provide school readiness funding for at risk children and optional all-day kindergarten for all. This funding should be targeted to research-based programs. Expanding new services should not come at the expense of adequate funding for existing elementary, secondary, and special education programs.

Equalization

All levies should be fully equalized, so the same tax effort is required from all tax payers for equal levies. Currently, in different districts, homes of equal value are assessed varying amounts to generate the same amount of revenue.