



LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM FOR 2023

The Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) is a statewide organization and a leading advocate for public education, serving 331 public school districts with 2,450 locally elected school board members. School boards lead and govern school districts small and large – from 76 students to 37,626 students – 866,438 statewide, which represents 16 percent of Minnesota’s total population. Our student demographic profile is 36 percent students of color, 32 percent qualify for free or reduced-priced meals, and 17 percent receiving special education services. Minnesota’s student population is growing in diversity, special education needs, and poverty. Our districts’ and students’ needs are growing.

MSBA’s mission is to support, promote, and advocate for local school boards so all students are valued and achieve their potential.





LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM FOR 2023

Minnesota's Legislature has a constitutional duty to provide a general and uniform system of public schools. Legislators play a critical role in appropriating funds and oversight to ensure every student benefits from an excellent public education.

The MSBA platform recognizes the 2023 Legislature will determine the operating budgets for the next two years for every school district in the state. For this budget year, critical choices must be made to stabilize and increase public education funding, especially as federal ESSER revenue ends. Education funding has many pieces. One critical piece is the per pupil formula, which currently is underfunded by \$1,263 per student due to inflation. The perpetual underfunding of special education is the second critical piece, which causes an additional underfunding of approximately \$765 million or \$833 per pupil to be subtracted from the general fund. The third, equalization, ensures the quality of a child's education will not vary according to property wealth of their community. These critical pieces impact all public school districts and are the cornerstone of MSBA's legislative platform:

- Increase the **basic education formula** by 5% each year; indexed to inflation to address:
 - Critical staffing shortages including teachers, paraprofessionals, counselors, social workers, nurses, and bus drivers
 - Mental health support and violence prevention
 - Interrupted learning and recovery efforts due to COVID
 - The disparity in academic achievement among student populations
- Fully fund the **special education cross-subsidy**:
 - Underfunding of special education reduces learning opportunities for all students
 - Solve the shortage of special education staff and training
- Increase equity of eroded **equalization** formulas:
 - Operating referendum
 - Local optional revenue (LOR)
 - Debt service formulas
 - Equalize and increase safe schools levy
- Tools to **transform and innovate** our schools:
 - Flexibility in how schools define "instructional hours"
 - Provide more flexibility in allowing schools to become online learning providers
 - Increase career and technical opportunities and funding
 - Explore new funding eligibility mechanisms for free and reduced lunch
 - Build a statewide plan for computer science education and funding
- **Flexibility in funding** new and renovated facilities:
 - Transfer of revenue from Long-term Facilities Maintenance (LTFM) to Operating Capital
 - Flexibility in health and safety funding for renovation of buildings
 - Revise cannabinoid edible law to ban possession or use on school property and school events as well as restrict the sale of THC products within a certain distance from schools.
- **Empower** local decision making:
 - Allow local school boards to renew an existing operating referendum
 - Resist new, statewide unfunded mandates
 - Increase legal life limits on Type III vehicles
 - Allow a board to leave a school board vacancy open under certain conditions
- School **personnel licensure**:
 - Allow districts to train and hire short-call substitute teachers
 - Expedite teacher licensure process