

# 2017 Legislative Agenda

Education Minnesota's legislative agenda is an overarching vision of what we believe the Legislature should do to ensure Minnesota has the best learning and working conditions in its public schools.

## Improving teaching leads to improving educational outcomes

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Minnesota's schools cannot achieve their goal of training the world's best workforce without effective, professional educators who are supported throughout their careers.

- Attract and retain teachers, particularly educators of color, by increasing salaries and creating loan forgiveness, mentoring and other programs to give teachers the support they need to stay in the classroom.
- Ensure all teachers who work with our youngest students and adult learners have access to the same protections as traditional teachers. Minnesota law needs to be changed so licensed early childhood family education (ECFE) and adult basic education (ABE) teachers are covered under continuing contract and tenure laws.
- Maintain defined benefit pension plans for current and future generations, which does not put an undue financial burden on educators and retirees, as a means to retain and recognize career educators.
- Create an equitable and sustainable funding stream for the 2011 Teacher Development and Evaluation law. Half of Minnesota school districts don't receive Q-Comp funding, so they are left to implement the TDE law without any funding.
- Help educators and their families get quality, affordable health care through innovative, cost-sharing initiatives for employers and employees.
- Signal an ongoing commitment to educational excellence by providing, at a minimum, an inflationary increase to the basic per-pupil funding formula.
- Uphold Minnesota's high teacher licensing standards to ensure our students have quality educators in their classrooms.

## Engaging students is a crucial step toward their career success

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Students who are engaged in learning achieve at higher levels, but too often the fixation on test scores has put memorization above problem-solving and ignores out-of-school factors affecting our student success.

- Advocate for changes to Minnesota's accountability system under the newly-passed Every Student Succeeds Act that promotes education equity and includes the voice of educators. That includes reducing the role of high-stakes testing and giving schools more credit for fulfilling the unmet needs of students.

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- Broaden access to full-service community schools, which are a proven way to help students achieve in school. This concept puts social, medical and before and after school academic services and enrichment activities where they are most accessible—on the school campus.

## Investing in quality learning environments

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The health of Minnesota's future economy depends on legislators making smart investments in today's students, from their preschool years to their postsecondary degrees.

- Expand access to quality, public pre-K programs taught by licensed professionals for all children to address the equity gaps among our students.
- Make post-secondary education affordable and accessible so all students can pursue higher education free from the stress of unmanageable loans and debts.
- Provide additional resources for schools to restore student support staff cut in the past few years, including counselors, social workers, psychologists, nurses and other job classifications.
- Invest in infrastructure, including broadband access, so that all students—no matter where they live—are in quality learning environments and have access to a wide range of resources.

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