



## Talking Points

*For use by school leaders in presentations  
about important issues related to public education*

### **Framework for the Future** *Those Things That Matter Most*

**Key Message:** Schools of the future require a vision and framework that focus on academic success, create adequate and sustainable funding, provide flexibility, and attract and maximize the potential of high quality educators.

Ninety percent of school-age children in Minnesota attend public schools. Unfortunately, the system that exists to educate those children and prepare them for the future is in trouble. The demands on schools have grown and diversified, while the support to meet those demands has not.

Minnesota is facing a \$6.2 billion deficit. Twenty-seven percent of the state funding designated for schools this biennium has been shifted into the next biennium and is not guaranteed to be repaid. Even if the state increases the shift to 50 percent of funding, adds racino money, cuts local government aid completely, puts a sales tax on clothing, taxes the rich more, cuts \$1 billion from human services and cuts \$500 from the funding of each pupil in K-12 education, Minnesota would still have a \$600 million problem that will require a large adjustment by almost all state systems.

Some of Minnesota's future will be guided by the limitations we face. More of Minnesota's future will be the result of the people's ability to have a vision, see the potential, and make a commitment.

Minnesotans know that the foundation of a successful system of public education requires a **focus on academic success, rigor and standards; adequate and stable funding** (including local levy authority), **flexibility to optimize staff resources, highest quality educators; and creativity and innovation.**

*“The course of the world will be changed by those with the courage to do the patient work of listening, the hard work of thinking, and the risky work of speaking.... the only uncertainty is whether it will be changed for better or worse, and therein lies the opportunity for greatness.”*  
--Anonymous

- Minnesotans will determine if our kids and the futures they create *really* matter most.
  - Is society willing to accept and support change?
  - Are educators, parents, and students willing to give up the way things are—including some programs, conveniences and amenities—to focus limited resources on academic achievement?
  - How will Minnesotans demonstrate their commitment?
- Schools may become significantly different to meet the challenges they face.
  - Discussion, exploration, planning, and implementation of innovation in education is currently going on around the state.
  - New partnerships are being formed; calendars, contracts, teachers, administrations, transportation, and sports are being shared between districts.
  - Technology is being used to increase personalized learning, expand curriculum, and improve both achievement and efficiency.
  - Greater recognition is being given to the importance of the learning continuum from birth and early childhood through higher education.
- Educators, parents, students and communities will need to step up and collaborate in ways not previously experienced.
  - Schools have had responsibility for the complete child: getting them to and from school; providing meals; and providing after-school and co-curricular programming, all in addition to meeting expectations of academic excellence. That responsibility has been diligently carried forth but the capacity of schools is increasingly limited.
  - The continued success of schools will depend more heavily than ever on Minnesotans’ willingness to vision, plan, and implement collaboratively—sharing risks, costs, and successes.

*“Things which matter most must never be at the mercy of things which matter least.”*  
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Educational leaders across the state of Minnesota are working collaboratively in their school districts, schools, communities, regions and the state to ensure that what is best

about Minnesota gets even better. Success will be the result of all Minnesota stakeholders' commitment to kids, quality, and the future they will share.