



## Talking Points

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

## Working Together

*To work it out*

**Key Message:** Although these are tough times for schools, our commitment to providing the best possible education to all learners is unwavering.

### Starting Points

*As a result of the 2011 education legislation*

#### Funding Shifts

- Instead of repaying the money borrowed from school funding during the last biennium, the state will be borrowing more from schools for the next biennium.
- School districts will continue to have to borrow or use their reserve funds to make up for billions of dollars in school funding they anticipated but will not receive in this biennium.

#### Per Pupil Funding Increase

- The basic formula allowance is increased by \$50 per pupil in fiscal year (FY) 2012 and 2013.

#### Increased Flexibility

- Certain fund transfers within school districts will be allowed.
- The January 15 deadline for contract settlement with employees is eliminated.
- The requirement for districts to set aside 2% of their funding for staff development is suspended for two years.

#### Instructional Provisions

- School districts are required to adopt a local literacy plan to have every child reading at or above grade level by the end of third grade.
- Communication requirements have been added for sharing information regarding students' academic progress and objectives.
- The teacher and principal evaluation framework has been strengthened to include one to three evaluations per year.
- A new early graduation scholarship program has been established, ranging from \$2500 for graduation one semester early to \$7500 for graduation three semesters early.

## Building Blocks for the future

There are some things we *know* work to increase student achievement and development.

- Effective early childhood programs to ensure kids come to school ready to learn.
- A supportive and secure out-of-school environment.
- Regular and positive parent involvement and regular school/parent communications.
- Formal and informal summer growth opportunities for *all* kids.
- Access to and use of dynamic technology that supports instructional goals.
- Innovative school/district leadership and teaching staff.

As communities and educators, we need to build upon our knowledge about what works and we need to support improved learning opportunities even more than we have in the past. One certainty is that the current dynamics mean we will *all* be required to do things differently.

***[School leaders, use this space to share what changes are and will be occurring in your schools and the impact they will have on students, schools, taxpayers, and outcomes.]***

Many changes are already taking place in our schools to make the most efficient use of current resources, including sharing staff positions, sports teams, facilities, transportation, and services. Several Minnesota school districts are exploring ways to use technology to differentiate instruction, make more curricular options available to students, and allow teachers to spend their time most effectively. For example, one school district has used local levy dollars to make iPads and current technology available to all teachers and high school students as instructional resources. These are important initiatives, but more and bigger changes will be required to meet the growing disparities between the funding, structure and needs of our schools.

Our combined commitment, collaboration, and creativity are the reasons Minnesota is great and what we need more of for Minnesota to be even greater. While financial and policy constraints make providing top-notch educations for our kids more challenging—some would even say impossible—we will never give up in our pursuit of excellence for the next generation of workers, leaders, parents, and citizens.

*“The future of a better Minnesota should not be determined by who blinks first—or last—but rather by a compelling vision for how we become the best we can be.” - Anonymous*