

Special Education Funding

MASE supports adequate and predictable funding for Minnesota's public schools that includes a cost-based, fully funded revenue system for special education.

- MASE believes paying for federal and state mandates to provide free and appropriate services for students receiving special education is a complex and expensive undertaking that requires significant state support. MASE supports adoption of the funding framework proposed by P.S. Minnesota, as it reflects a comprehensive formula for adequately funding Minnesota schools.
- MASE believes that access to timely, accurate data is necessary in order to make strategic decisions regarding allocation of resources. MASE supports the development and implementation of a modern, integrated database to replace the fragmented and outdated data systems employed by MDE (i.e., MARSS, UFARS, EDRS, STARS, EMAP) and the various student, financial and other data management systems utilized by districts.
 - MASE believes an integrated database would eliminate duplication of data entry by districts, saving countless hours of district staff time.
 - MASE believes that adopting a single, state-wide integrated database would result in significant long-term financial savings as districts would no longer need to purchase separate student, financial and other data management systems that do not communicate directly to MDE databases.
- MASE believes there has been significant shifting of responsibilities and costs for providing services to children and youth with disabilities and their families from state, county and local agencies onto school districts. These shifts have occurred slowly, over time for a variety of reasons, and have included mental health, medical, family support and other services that historically have been the responsibility of other agencies. MASE requests the Legislative Auditor be authorized to conduct a study of the impact of these shifts.
- MASE believes providing dedicated categorical aid for early identification and intervention programs for at-risk students will help reduce the need for and the cost of long-term special education services.
- MASE believes adequate funding for special education preserves the integrity of general education funding.
- MASE believes changes regarding a resident district's obligation to transport individual students must be enacted to reduce the rising costs of providing special transportation.

- Increasingly, parents are electing to open enroll children who receive special transportation as a special education related service into another district or charter school, and the resident district is billed for individually transporting that child to and from their home to school, regardless of the distances involved.
 - Districts must transport students to and from care and treatment facilities (i.e., mental health, drug and alcohol dependency, eating disorders, etc.), regardless of the distances involved, even when placement is initiated by the parent or a non-education agency.
 - The McKinney-Vento Act requires that districts transport homeless students to and from school who temporarily reside in locations that may be located far beyond the district's boundaries.
- MASE believes requirements that exceed federal mandates increase costs to local districts.