

2024 SEE LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

The quality of a student’s education should not depend on their zip code.

The equalization programs that have promoted tax fairness among school districts have greatly eroded and must be updated to protect property taxpayers in low property wealth districts. These programs were established in the early 1990s and provided low property wealth districts the opportunity to access revenue through voter-approved referendum and debt levies without unduly burdening their taxpayers. The equalization programs promoted tax fairness and helped narrow the funding gap between high property wealth and low property wealth school districts. **Failure to update these programs is penalizing the property taxpayers in low property wealth school districts and must be addressed to prevent increasing funding gaps between districts. Reversing that trend is SEE’s top priority during the 2024 legislative session.**

Legislative Plank #1: Make Education-Related Levies More Fair

Every student in Minnesota deserves access to high quality educational opportunities regardless of where they live. Throughout its history, SEE has worked to make certain that differences in property wealth do not translate into differences in programs for students in low property wealth districts. SEE believes that the Legislature must:

- **Increase state equalization funding to make all school levies—particularly the Local Option Revenue, Operating Referendum, and Debt Service Programs—more affordable in low-property wealth districts.**
- Preserve the property tax relief by ensuring that the calculations used to determine equalization aid keep pace with growth in statewide property wealth.

Legislative Plank #2: Improve the Stability of School Funding to Promote Greater Fairness

SEE is extremely appreciative of the considerable investment in school funding proposed by the Governor and passed by the Legislature in 2023. There are new requirements for school districts to implement as a result of the legislation and funding needs to be there to successfully help school districts accomplish these legislative goals.

- Make certain that the new programs enacted in 2023—particularly the expansion of unemployment insurance and the investments in curriculum acquisition and professional development in the Read Act—are fully funded and that new cross-subsidies are not created for school districts to navigate.
- **Increase the amount of Local Option Revenue a district can generate to the statewide average operating referendum revenue amount per pupil unit to provide support for districts without operating referenda.**
- Improve the Equity Formula to help districts that don’t receive resources either through the current array of categorical formulas or the operating referendum.
- Increase the amount of revenue districts can access through the Long-Term Facilities Maintenance Revenue formula.