

In the intensified conversations regarding school safety following the Parkland shootings among MREA's 224 member school districts, four themes and related recommendations are emerging.

- 1. The physical school buildings must be secure**, and rural schools have limited financial tools with which to remodel, secure entrances and otherwise increase the physical security of students and staff.

Legislative actions to address this include:

- Allowing LTFM funding to be used for school security,
- Increasing LTFM funding to meet this need,
- Allowing the lease levy to be used for school security and remodeling which was Recommendation #4 of the School Facilities Financing Working Group Report, 2014.

- 2. The number and severity of students with special needs is increasing** and rural schools need an array of appropriate services, staff and facilities to meet these children's needs.

Legislative actions to address this include:

- Providing rural cooperatives and Ed Districts the tools metropolitan Intermediate districts have to build and staff well designed, appropriate learning spaces, (See reverse side for details)
- Increasing funding for mental health services, and
- Allowing and supporting tiered level mental health services including tribal elders, adult mentors, and youth, with support, mentoring their peers.

- 3. Schools need to proactively and systemically form relationships with all students to create community.** Not only is this a good thing to do, but in the era of social media, this is how adults get tipped off on what is really going on to intercept threats. There are many programs to support schools in this including those listed below. These all take training and staff to lead and support these efforts.

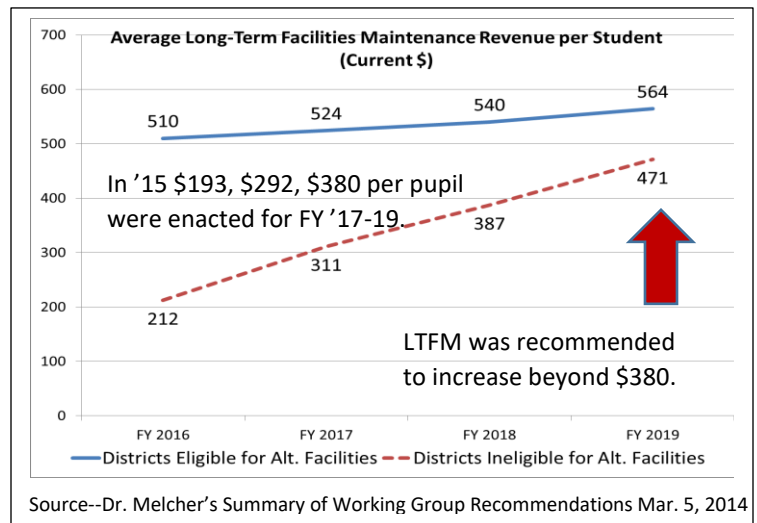
- Responsive Classroom
- Capturing Kids Hearts,
- Restorative Justice
- Love and Logic
- PBIS
- Conscious Discipline

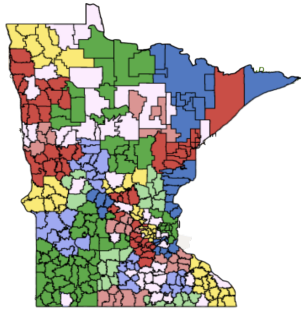
Legislative actions to address this include:

- Increasing the Safe Schools levy,
- Allowing school district members of cooperatives and Educational Districts to levy \$15 per pupil similar to that which metro intermediate districts' school district members already have for student safety, and
- Establishing a minimum safe school levy equal to 480 APU.

- 4. Coordinate threat analysis and response with local law enforcement.** This includes mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. While schools are required to have emergency plans, some communities have highly integrated plans between law enforcement and the school district to address threats, others not so much.

Legislative action to address this would be to increase the Safe Schools levy for this purpose and to provide a similar funding stream of matching funds for counties and cities for planning, mitigation and preparedness.





Schools lack space for high-need students.

Greater Minnesota school districts rely on cooperatives to help provide specialized instructional programs and facilities for high-need students. Together they face an unprecedented growth in these students and lack both appropriate spaces and the financing tools to give Greater Minnesota access to similar well-designed, appropriate learning spaces available for metro students.

[Learn more and view interactive map at MREAVOICE.org/CoopFacilities](http://MREAVOICE.org/CoopFacilities)

METRO-RURAL DISTRICT GAP IN TOOLS

	7-County Metro Area	Greater Minnesota
Median Regular Lease Levy	\$71.69	\$7.35
Median Intermediate Lease Levy	\$11.36	\$0 (not able)
Median Total Lease Levy	\$88.60	\$7.35
Districts with Zero Lease Levy	0	119

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Within 4 years, our Level IV Special Education program needs tripled. Not only did the student numbers increase rapidly, but the severity of student needs also dramatically increased. Considerable renovation is needed at considerable cost to make any currently available building appropriate and equitable when comparing our students to their non-disabled peers.

*Stephanie Schmitz
Southern Plains
Alternative Programs Administrator*

1 in 68 eight-year-olds were on the Autism Spectrum in 2010, **compared to 1 in 150** in 2002, the CDC reports.

NEW FINANCING TOOLS NEEDED >> Provide rural school districts with financing tools that are available to members of the metro Intermediate Districts and increased flexibility with existing revenue streams.

- ⇒ Allow districts to use lease levy for cooperative facilities even if they once owned the facility.
- ⇒ Allow Long-Term Facility Maintenance (LTFM) to be used to enhance leased facilities from public and private owners.
- ⇒ Provide Greater Minnesota school district members of cooperatives the authority to levy up to \$65 per pupil for cooperative facilities, the same as district members of Metro Intermediates.
- ⇒ Establish a minimum allowable district lease levy authorization equal to that for 480 adjusted pupil units (for total of \$31,200).

Next step is to support SF 1608 and HF 1905.

