



PLSAS Legislative Platform

Board Approved February 11, 2019

Funding Priorities

1. Increase school funding formula by 3% in each year of the biennium and index the per pupil formula to inflation.
2. Special Education Funding:
 - a. Provide an equitable funding solution for school districts by eliminating the census funding formula and creating one (1) funding formula applied to all school districts.
 - b. Eliminate school districts cap and growth limits on funding for special education
 - c. Fully fund special education to the federally determined level of 40%.
 - d. Create a plan to fully fund the special education cross-subsidy by 2026 by the reducing the cross-subsidy by 25% in each biennium.
3. Provide school districts the ability to utilize long-term facilities maintenance funding for School Safety and Security Enhancements.
4. School Property Tax Equity and Equalization:
 - a. Increase state aid in low property wealth school districts for local school operating and building bond levies by increasing the equalizing factors for the referendum, debt service, and lease levy equalization programs.
 - b. Index all tiers of the operating referendum equalization to inflation, like the indexing of debt service and long-term facilities maintenance levies, so the effectiveness of this state aid will not erode over time.

Policy Priorities

1. Align the state requirements for state accountability testing to the federal law outlined in ESSA:
 - a. ESSA requires 95% of students to participate in statewide testing and “dings” a school district if requirement is not met; however, the school district proficiency scores are not impacted.
 - b. The MDE went beyond this requirement and penalizes all school districts for any student who “opts out of taking the state accountability tests by counting those students as not proficient, thus negatively impacting the overall school proficiency scores.
 - c. Provide flexibility with state required assessments so local districts can offer assessments other than MCA’s to measure college and career readiness for school accountability.
2. Restore the flexibility of school districts to hire and retain staff members with community expert licenses and license variances should licensed candidate pools be exhausted.
 - a. The current new teacher licensure system and requirements have increased school district flexibility in licensing teachers with out of state licenses. However, the new system and requirements have had a negative impact on school district flexibility to seek and retain staff members through community expert licenses and utilizing license variances.
3. Align state statutes so that transportation requirements are the same for all students including those who open enroll.