Association of Metropolitan School Districts
Board of Directors Meeting

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CLOSING MINNESOTA’S ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

Presentation to the Association of Metropolitan School Districts
March 6, 2020

Neel Kashkari
President & CEO
Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis

Justice Alan Page
Ret. Minnesota Supreme Court
• Minnesota has some of the largest gaps in the nation by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

• Disparities are not confined to race and ethnicity; low-income white students significantly trail higher-income white students across Minnesota.

• Disparities span all parts of the state and all types of schools, whether district or charter schools.

• Achievement gaps are evident across a variety of measures, including standardized test scores, graduation rates, and college readiness indicators.

Minnesota has reduced inequality in some inputs, such as per pupil spending and class sizes. However, despite years of effort, disparities in education outcomes remain.
WHY A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT?
The teachers haven’t failed. The children haven’t failed. **Minnesota’s political system has failed our children.**

For **decades**, leaders from both parties have focused on the achievement gap – yet we’ve made **zero** progress.

Why have we failed? Politics has gotten in the way. One party has a set of preferred solutions. The other party has different solutions. The result: **status quo**.

Other states are making substantial progress. This problem is **not impossible to solve**.

Creating an individual civil right to a quality public education can break through the political gridlock and drive real change.
• After the Cold War, the U.S. military needed to downsize the number of bases.

• Congress realized it couldn’t make the decisions because each Member would need to look out for his/her own district.

• In 1990, Congress passed the Defense Base Realignment and Closure Act (BRAC), which created a bipartisan commission to make a comprehensive set of recommendations.

• The process is widely viewed to have worked – by putting the needs of the country above politics.
FLORIDA IS PROOF THAT REAL PROGRESS IS POSSIBLE

Example: Grade 4 Reading Scores

**NATIONAL RANKING FOR AVERAGE TEST SCORES**

- **Florida** improved their ranking by 27 places from 33rd to 6th.
- **Minnesota** remained at 12th.

**TEST SCORE GAPS ACROSS SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS**

- **Florida** improved their ranking by 24 places from 30th to 6th.
- **Minnesota** saw no significant change, ranking 34th in 2003 and 35th in 2019.
The U.S. Constitution does not address public education.

Each state constitution includes an education clause.

There is large across-state variation in strength of language.

Minnesota’s constitutional language was written in 1857, when slavery was still legal in the United States and women could not vote.

It was intended to provide education to the children of white land owners.

Our education system today appears to be working exactly as intended in 1857.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provision</th>
<th>States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thorough/Efficient</td>
<td>Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, West Virginia, Wyoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paramount/Primary Duty</td>
<td>Florida, Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-Quality Education</td>
<td>Florida, Illinois, Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requires standards of quality</td>
<td>Oregon, Virginia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Since 1990, there have been 312 education amendments on ballots around the country – but zero in Minnesota.
PROPOSED AMENDMENT

EQUAL RIGHT TO QUALITY PUBLIC EDUCATION. All children have a fundamental right to a quality public education that fully prepares them with the skills necessary for participation in the economy, our democracy, and society, as measured against uniform achievement standards set forth by the state. It is a paramount duty of the state to ensure quality public schools that fulfill this fundamental right.

CURRENT EDUCATION CLAUSE (ARTICLE XIII, SEC 1)

UNIFORM SYSTEM OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS. The stability of a republican form of government depending mainly upon the intelligence of the people, it is the duty of the legislature to establish a general and uniform system of public schools. The legislature shall make such provisions by taxation or otherwise as will secure a thorough and efficient system of public schools throughout the state.
WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT DO?

• Creates an individual civil right to a quality public education for every Minnesota child.
• Shifts the focus from systems and inputs to include children and outcomes.
• Literally puts children first in the eyes of the law.
• Raises the standard from adequate to quality.
• Makes education a paramount duty of the state (not just the legislature).
• Holds the state accountable to outcomes.
• Supports the full range of policy options that can be tailored by community needs.
• Will be a catalyst for the legislature and executive branch to act.
• Creates an enforcement mechanism for families to drive change.
CIVIL RIGHTS HAVE LED TO TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIETY OVER TIME

• Bill of Rights (1791)
• 13th Amendment abolishing slavery (1865)
• 15th Amendment giving men of color the right to vote (1870)
• 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote (1920)
• Brown vs. Board of Education (1954)
• Civil Rights Act of 1964

In each of these cases, opponents raised numerous arguments about courts, separation of powers, individuals’ capacity to handle the new right – these arguments were often cover for racism and sexism.
WHAT DO THE CRITICS SAY ABOUT OUR AMENDMENT?

• Opens the door to vouchers for private schools
  Answer: **False. The amendment says “public” three times.**

• Cuts funding for public education
  Answer: **False. The amendment makes quality public schools a paramount duty of the state (no higher duty). If anything, it will lead to more funding not less.**

• Can only be used by rich families who can afford lawyers
  Answer: **False. The history of civil rights in America is that one family can bring one case and create change for everyone. Landmark civil rights cases have been typically brought by poor families.**
WHAT DO THE CRITICS SAY, CONTINUED?

• Will lead to an onslaught of frivolous lawsuits
  • Answer: False. This has not happened in other states that have amended their constitutions. If substantive lawsuits drive change, that would be positive.

• Gives judges too much power over education; encroaches on legislature’s responsibility
  • Answer: False. The constitution created three co-equal branches of government. Each has a role to play. The legislature and executive branches would have the primary responsibility to decide policy.

• Creates a “positive right”
  • Answer: False. Minnesota’s current constitution already establishes a positive right to an adequate education system. This amendment would require “quality” as opposed to “adequate.”
• There is nothing more democratic than letting the people of Minnesota decide.

• We are asking the Legislature to put this amendment on the ballot to let the voters decide if they want to make quality public education a civil right for all children.

• We trust the people.
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PELSB Updates
Cultural Competency Training and You

- How long?
- Who facilitates?
- Who offers?
- Who decides?
- Piece together?
- FAQ
Tiered Licensure and You

- Then and Now
- Tier 1 District Verification
- Tiered Report
• Teacher Preparation Provider Standards (4576)
• Standards of Effective Practice (4615)
• Everything Else
• PELSB’s Bill: HF3580
• Keep your eye on...
Teacher Shortage and Everyone

- Supply and Demand Report
- Increase Teachers of Color Subcommittee (Results First)
- State grants for:
  - Mentorship
  - Teacher Preparation (CUE)
Updates

Online System
Background Checks
Questions?
Executive Director’s Report

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