

2020 Legislative Priorities

March 12, 2020 Update

Supporting Rural School Facilities

Support HF 1980 (Marquart) SF 1999 (Dahms) - Cooperative Facilities

MREA strongly supports legislation giving rural schools more financial tools to address the needs of their cooperative facilities. These cooperatives often serve students with the highest mental and behavioral health needs. Cooperatives are also used to provide vocational and technical education programs. Parity with the metro area Intermediate School Districts will help rural education serve students in the most appropriate manners. SF 1999 would do the following if enacted:

Support HF 3475 (Sundin) SF 3270 (Rarick) - Enhanced Debt Service Equalization for Consolidating Districts

As recommended by the School Facilities Task Force (2014), MREA supports enhanced debt service equalization for school districts consolidating now and into the future. Consolidation is a difficult process for communities to go through, but it can be necessary to preserve quality educational opportunities for students. Many rural communities lack the tax base to support a major building bond needed to reorganize the future consolidated district's facility footprint. That is where Carlton and Wrenshall are today.

Safe Schools Revenue

Support HF 3574 (Pryor) and SF 3857 (P. Anderson)

MREA strongly supports legislation extending the one-time funding increase in safe schools revenue from the final 2019 E-12 budget bill into the future. MREA requests Safe Schools funding be made available equally to Cooperative and Intermediate school entities, who often serve our most vulnerable students.

Setting IV Special Needs Facilities

Support HF 3817 (Swedzinski) and SF 3738 (Lang) – Bonding for SWWC setting IV facilities

The Southwest/West Central Service Cooperative is seeking bonding dollars to support the creation of and rehabilitation of facilities in Willmar, Marshall and Windom to serve high needs special education students in setting IV programs. Like the Cosmos project that was previously funded, these unique and important facilities will serve our most vulnerable children in physical settings appropriate for their needs.

Concurrent Enrollment Teacher Credentialing and Teacher Shortages

Support HF 3849 (Sandstede) and SF 4257 (Nelson) – “18 On-Line” Concurrent Enrollment Partnership

MREA supports continued funding for this highly effective program. To date, teachers have attained almost 6,000 graduate credits in their content areas, allowing them to continue as partners in teaching college courses in their high schools. If funded, the program can deliver 2,500 graduate credits each year, putting Minnesota teachers well on track to address the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) requirement for their college partners to continue offering college course in high schools.

Concurrent Enrollment is fast becoming the popular option for students to attain college credits as they begin earning credit on a college transcript through CE courses.



MAIL

PO Box 187
St. Cloud, MN 56302-0187

VISIT

2233 Roosevelt Rd, Suite 7
St. Cloud, MN 56301

CALL

(320) 762-6574
Toll-Free (833)-MNVOICE

LEARN

MREAvoice.org

Support Student Teachers in Rural Minnesota

Student teachers in rural areas are not benefiting from Teacher Candidates Grants

- 2018/19: 1% of rural student teacher candidates received the grants and 92% of grants went to metro student teachers,
- 2019/20: 5% of rural student teacher candidates received the grants and 81% of grants went to metro student teachers

Rep. Ben Lien will introduce legislation to create a grant program to provide student teacher stipends to low-income students in teacher preparation programs outside of the metropolitan area. This proposal was developed with the technical assistance of Office of Higher Education personnel who administer these programs and with the full knowledge and presence of Commissioner Olson.

Support Regional 'Grow Your Own' teacher development grants:

- North Central Program: [HF 3965](#) / [SF 4189](#) (Poston/Eichorn)
- Northeast Program [HF 4054](#) / [SF 4188](#) (Sandstede/Eichorn)
- Northwest Program [HF 4142](#) / [SF 4190](#) (Persell/Johnson)

The Northeast and Northwest regions have two of the three highest percentages of teachers with special permissions, and the North Central region is the one region in the state without a four-year teacher preparation institution.

These three greater Minnesota regions have come together with their area Service Cooperative, a higher education partner and the local school districts to design 'grow-your-own' (GYO) teacher development initiatives. Each region is requesting a \$500,000 grant to be spent over a three-year period to work collaboratively on developing new teacher candidates to fill the many teacher shortages in their schools.

Preserve Funding for Rural CTE Consortia

Rebuilding career and technical education programs is an absolute must for our current and future workforce. Many students want to choose a career path instead of a 4-year college path and having high quality CTE programming available is a key interest for them. Several rural regions have benefited from the funding made available through the Rural CTE Consortia grants. However, several regions through central Minnesota (Lakes County Service Cooperative in Fergus Falls, Sourcewell in Staple, and Resource Training & Solutions in St. Cloud) have not had an opportunity to apply for this funding.

The funding is on-going in the E-12 base budget and MREA asks the legislation to leave this in place as we rebuild our CTE programs around the state. There was an attempt in the 2019 E-12 conference committee process to terminate these funds, which we successfully opposed.



MAIL

PO Box 187
St. Cloud, MN 56302-0187

VISIT

2233 Roosevelt Rd, Suite 7
St. Cloud, MN 56301

CALL

(320) 762-6574
Toll-Free (833)-MNVOICE

LEARN

MREAvoice.org