

# 2014 Legislative Session Preview



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*The union of 70,000 educators*

# Education Minnesota 2014 Legislative Priorities

- Education Minnesota supports:
  - Affordable housing projects for low-income families.
  - Raising the minimum wage.
  - Safe schools legislation to prevent bullying.
  - Access to mental health and other community-based services for students and families.
  - Affordable health care coverage to all.



# Education Minnesota

## 2014 Legislative Priorities

- Education Minnesota supports:
  - **Proposals to reduce the burden of standardized testing through the use of fewer, better tests.**
  - **Advocating for improvements to the Teacher Development and Evaluation law.**
  - ***Reinstating the 50-25-25 provision of staff development funding law.***



# Education Minnesota

## 2014 Legislative Priorities

- Education Minnesota supports:
  - Revising definitions of student-teacher ratio.
  - Reducing special education paperwork.
  - *Changing PELRA to clarify that certain classifications of non-Board of Teaching licensed educators are protected by the law.*



# Education Minnesota 2014 Legislative Priorities

- Education Minnesota supports:
  - *Creating a statewide health insurance pool for school employees.*
  - *Advocating for a series of reforms that will bring transparency and efficiency to the way service co-operatives, insurance companies and school districts do business with each other.*



# Education Minnesota 2014 Legislative Priorities

- Education Minnesota supports:
  - Giving students the classrooms and equipment they need to obtain their degrees or certificates through the active support of HEAPRA bonding projects to maintain and remodel campuses in the higher education system.



# Education Minnesota

## Additional Bills

- *Clarifying that the expansion of sick leave due to the illness of or injury to the employee's adult child, spouse, sibling, parent, grandparent or stepparent was intended for full-year school employees.*
- *Requiring proper notification to a teacher who owes back taxes so that the teacher has adequate time to respond and guarantees that the teacher received the notice.*



# September 2013 Economic Forecast

- Revenues exceed expenditures by \$636 million
- 2013 legislature requires closing balance on 9/30/13
  - **\$287 million paid off the school aid payment shift in its entirety—will be at 90/10**
  - **\$349 million went toward buying down the property tax recognition shift**
- Property tax recognition shift remaining: **\$238 million**
- State aid shift remaining: \$0





# December 2013 Economic Forecast

- FY 2014-15 budget surplus:
  - \$1.086 billion
- K-12 Shifts completely repaid
  - Remaining \$246 million of school property tax recognition shift paid.
- \$825 million surplus remains
- Next forecast is end of February**



# 2014 Legislative Session

# Election Year Politics!



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# 2013: Task Forces Established

- **Task forces**
  - **Career Pathways and Technical Education**
  - **Teacher Licensure**
  - **Special Education Caseloads**
  - **School facilities work group**
  - **Review of requirements for an adult's high school diploma**



# Education Reform Groups in MN

- What will these groups initiate at the legislature?
  - Students First
  - MinnCAN
  - Teach For America (TFA)
  - Education Evolving
  - Educators 4 Excellence
  - Chamber of Commerce



# Education Reform in MN

- What are their issues?
  - Licensure
  - Seniority/transfer
  - Charter school issues
  - TFA funding
  - Early Childhood Scholarship funding
  - Testing



# Education Reform in MN

- What are their issues? (cont.)
  - Pensions
  - Allowing “other” courses to fulfill traditional subject standards.
  - Prohibiting the placement of a student teacher in a licensed teacher’s classroom who has the “lowest” evaluation rating.
  - TDE and ATPPS



# Issues from 2013

- Prohibiting the placement of a student in an “ineffective” teacher's classroom two consecutive years
- Charter school language that would undermine unions



# Pension law: Consolidation study

- Study has been conducted by the teacher pension funds of Duluth (DTRFA), St. Paul (SPTRFA) and the Teachers Retirement Association (TRA):
  - Developed a report on the feasibility and requirements necessary for the consolidation of DTRFA, SPTRFA and TRA.
  - Includes an analysis that defines the financial requirements for the consolidation.
  - Assures that the assets of TRA are protected, the merging funds are fully funded and TRA is not subsidizing the merged funds.





# Teacher Pension Consolidation Study

- Status of the teacher pension funds:
  - TRA—77% funded
  - Duluth—58% funded
    - Received \$6 million for two years in 2013
  - St. Paul—64% funded
    - Received \$7 million for two years in 2013
- DTRFA voted in favor of consolidation
- SPTRFA voted to remain separate, but may reconsider
- TRA is supporting consolidation if a fund is not being subsidized by TRA



# Teacher Pension Bill

- TRA and DTRFA will bring forward a bill:
  - Consolidate TRA and DTRFA
  - Would provide \$14.7 million for DTRFA
    - (Cost for SPTRFA is \$46.4 million if it was included)
  - TRA would not subsidize the unfunded liability of DTRFA



# Pension law: PERA study

- Membership eligibility study to be discussed:
  - Current law requires a monthly salary of \$425 to belong to PERA.
- Study includes four possible changes for eligibility:
  - Increase monthly salary threshold to \$737
  - Increase month salary by \$100 increments based on CPI
  - Use annual earning and employment status
  - Use annual hours and employment duration
- Education Minnesota is opposed to any changes in the membership eligibility threshold



# House Pension Commission

- Rep. Mike Benson
- Rep. Phyllis Kahn
- Rep. John Lesch
- Rep. Will Morgan
- Rep. Mary Murphy
- Rep. Mike V. Nelson
- Rep. Tim O'Driscoll



# Senate Pension Commission

- Sen. Barb Goodwin
- Sen. Jeff Hayden
- Sen. Alice Johnson
- Sen. Sandy Pappas
- Sen. Julie Rosen
- Sen. Tom Saxhaug
- Sen. David Thompson

