

Minnesota Community Education Association



2011 Legislative Platform Practitioner Resources

General Community Education 2011 Platform:

Minnesota Community Education helps school districts and communities reach locally identified goals by:

- Bringing citizens together to address issues.
- Creating partnerships between school, cities, businesses and organizations.
- Promoting an educated workforce which is key to Minnesota's prosperity.
- Serving as a state-wide delivery system for the youngest to the oldest Minnesotans.

Minnesota Community Education Adult Programs provide essential education and skill building that improve the economy by increasing the number of educated and fully-employable people in the community.

Invest in Communities and Adults by maintaining the current level of the Community Education funding to ensure that:

- Community Education programs can continue to meet the needs of families and communities and leverage an additional \$6 for each tax dollar invested by the funding formula.

Statewide Delivery System

Community Education programs are available in all 340 school districts in the state of Minnesota. This statewide model provides access to public facilities, learning opportunities, and services critical to the well-being and success of all Minnesotans. Statewide, Community Education generates nearly \$6.00 in additional revenue for every \$1.00 of state levy and aid support.

Community Education delivers a sense of community spirit by encouraging active participation by citizens to address and resolve issues. By creating an environment that encourages all citizens – young and old- to be learners and active citizens, Community Education turns towns and cities into communities of energized people. There is no greater way to ensure that our communities remain vital and maintain support of public education than to continue to invest in Community Education. Programs may vary by school district because each district is unique, but Community Education has the ability to use local resources to tailor programs to meet local needs.

Number of Participants

Over 900,000 adults participate in adult basic education, early education parent education, adults with disabilities and lifelong learning programs.

Over 1.7 million youth are served through Community Education's Youth Development/Youth Service, School Age Care and general youth programming.

Nearly 285,000 children are served in Community Education's early education programming including Early Childhood Family Education, School Readiness and Early Childhood Screening.

Engaging Communities for Fiscal Efficiency

Community Education maximizes resources by opening public school facilities to the community, and by engaging community groups, businesses and organizations in partnerships and collaborations that support specific community initiatives. The Community Education base aid/levy provides the infrastructure for programs statewide.

Funding History

Funding for Community Education has existed in Minnesota since 1971 when 16 pilot programs were established. A statewide levy of \$1 per capita began in the mid-1970's. In 1987, the Minnesota Legislature supported Community Education through a general levy and aid formula which produced revenue of \$5.95 per capita. In 2003, in a State budget cut, the funding was reduced to \$5.23. It was partially restored in FY 2005 to \$5.42.

Youth Development 2011 Platform:

Minnesota Community Education Youth Programs support positive youth development through a quality, state-wide delivery system, provide access to enrichment, recreation and service learning opportunities and promote academic achievement for children in kindergarten through 12th grade.

Invest in Youth by maintaining the current level of funding to ensure that:

- After-School Enrichment programs can continue to provide services and resources that promote youth achievement.
- Youth Service programs can continue to provide asset development for school age youth through Community Education service opportunities.
- Child-care Assistance support is available that allows families to access quality child care programs through school based programs. This support provides safe nurturing care while maximizing the use of public school facilities.

Statewide Delivery System

Community Education, a statewide network delivering community programs, offers youth programming to children ages kindergarten through 12th grade based on positive youth development principles such as academic achievement, service learning and leadership development.

Number of Participants

The most recent report shows that over 1,019,290 elementary and secondary youth were engaged in positive after school and summer programs which included tutoring, academic support, the arts, recreation, languages, work skills prep, and field trips. Community Education also provided over 443,000 students with the opportunity for leadership development, enrichment, parental involvement, and community service through their Youth Development/Youth Service programs. An additional 112,000 children received high quality school age child care through local Community Education programs.

Changing Lives

National research studies show that youth programs change lives.

- **Increased academic achievement and greater engagement in learning**
-U.S. Department of Education, Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning
- **Increased school attendance**
-National Institute on Out of School Time, U.S. Department of Education
- **Better emotional adjustment and connection to school and community**
-Search Institute, National Research Council and Institute of Medicine
- **Reduced risk-taking behaviors**
-Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, National Institute on Out-of-School Time

Collaborations Are Key

Collaborations are a vital link in delivering youth programming. Partnerships with parents, nonprofits, community organizations, E-12/higher education, businesses, and cities are essential in cost-effective solutions that produce results. In addition, Community Education academic and tutoring programs support student growth and help close the achievement gap. Community Education also leverages funds to increase services, programs and student contact time.

School Readiness Early Education 2011 Platform:

Minnesota Community Education Early Education Programs provide access for children and families during the critical learning period to better prepare them for school.

Invest in Early Education to ensure that:

- School Readiness programs can continue to provide quality learning opportunities to successfully close the achievement gap.
- School Based Early Education programs will be able to provide targeted education for at risk four-year-olds.

Statewide Delivery System

School Readiness is a public school program for 3 and 4 year old children and their families in Minnesota. The program is targeted for low income families, 50% of the families receiving this service pay no fee. This program is offered in all 340 school districts, providing children with local opportunities to participate in early childhood programs. Children are involved in a variety of learning experiences which accelerate their preparation and school readiness and allow the child to enter kindergarten with the skills, behaviors and knowledge needed to progress and flourish. Family and parent involvement is a key component of the program that supports the child's success in school. Participation is voluntary and services are offered on a sliding fee scale basis. Fees are waived for families who are unable to pay.

School Readiness is a unique program that matches a wide variety of services with the needs of participating children. Local programs strengthen and build upon existing services and resources to meet the health, nutrition, educational, and social service needs of children in order to enhance their learning, development, and future success in school.

School Readiness served over 32,693 children and 26,357 parents in FY 2009. Almost one-third of all families earned less than \$30,000 annually, while 25% were minority families and 13% spoke a language other than English.

Research supports investing in early childhood programs.

The potential for early childhood programs such as School Readiness to prevent or reduce later learning problems of children is borne out by extensive research:

Kindergarten teachers rated 95% of children who had attended School Readiness Programs as doing well or making adequate adjustment to Kindergarten.

-M. Mueller and the MN Department of Ed, Fall 2000

“Results consistently show that high quality early childhood programs help kids enter kindergarten with the skills they need to learn and that those children continue to be successful in school and ultimately become contributing members of society.”

-Art Rolnick, Director of Research and Public Affairs, Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank

Funding has not increased since 1991 and has been subject to reductions and inflationary factors, limiting the ability of programs to respond to the numbers of children needing preschool services.

Early Childhood Family Education 2011 Platform:

Minnesota Community Education Early Education Programs provide access for children and families during the critical learning period to better prepare them for school.

Invest In Early Education to ensure that:

- Early Childhood Family Education programs can continue to provide quality educational opportunities for families with young children.

Universal Access

Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) is a program for all Minnesota families with children between the ages of birth to kindergarten entrance. ECFE was offered in all independent and special school districts in FY 2010. Over 162,580 parents and 127,832 children, birth to kindergarten, have participated in early childhood family education programs in 2009.

ECFE is based on the idea that the family provides a child's first and most significant learning environment where parents are their child's first and most important teachers. The goal of ECFE is to strengthen and enhance the ability of all parents to provide the best possible environment for their child's learning and growth. Parents and children participate together. Participation is voluntary. ECFE is committed to accessibility for everyone, so all programs offer sliding fees and fees are waived for families unable to pay. In 2008, 21% of all families served statewide earned less than \$30,000.

ECFE serves a representative cross-section of families with young children in each community. Because all families have different needs, each district's program reflects their unique community. Programs usually offer several sessions with specific topics to meet special concerns of families, such as single parenting, teen parents, children with special needs, etc. In 2008, 9% of those in ECFE programs spoke a primary language other than English.

Participants

In 2009, over 19,138 families were referred to ECFE by human service agencies, medical professionals and the judicial system.

In 2009, over 19,488 families were referred from ECFE to human service agencies, medical professionals, head start, early childhood intervention services, adult basic education or adult literacy programs.

Over 16,633 home visits were made in the state of Minnesota last year through school based Early Education programs in addition to the 10,372 newborn visits.

Early Childhood Developmental Screening

The benefits of early identification and follow-up of special needs can result in a child being more successful in a school environment. It also has long-term cost saving benefits. Though early identification is optimal, screening three-year olds is very time intensive and the cost exceeds funding.

Adults with Disabilities 2011 Platform:

Minnesota Community Education Adult Programs provide essential education and skill building that improve the economy by increasing the number of educated and fully-employable people in the community.

Invest in Communities and Adults by maintaining the current level of the Community Education funding to ensure that:

- Adults With Disabilities programs can continue to serve disabled adults striving to participate and contribute to their community.

Access

The Adults with Disabilities revenue allows Community Education to improve access to programs, services and resources to the special needs adults living in our communities. As our society has moved toward helping all adults live more independent lives, these adults still struggle for engagement and community interaction. All of them are on limited incomes and depend on caregivers for some part of their daily care. These programs help provide Adults with Disabilities the community connection that is vital to their health and wellbeing. The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires school districts to provide reasonable access and accommodations to all programs available to the community. This funding for Community Education assists districts to be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities act.

Participants

There are Adults with Disabilities living in every community in every part of our state. Over 35,000 adults with disabilities received services and support through Community Education every year. This reflects just a small portion of the need. These adults participated in enrichment and recreational classes and activities. These vulnerable adults also participated in classes that increased their life skills such as hygiene, money management and personal safety. Maintaining services is becoming more difficult each year as the state aid to Community Education to fund Adults with disabilities has remained stable since its inception. The cost of transportation, staffing, and services has increased. This strain is particularly apparent in more rural areas without access to public transportation.

Adult Basic Education (ABE) 2011 Platform:

Minnesota Community Education Adult Programs provide essential education and skill building that improve the economy by increasing the number of educated and fully-employable people in the community.

Invest in Communities and Adults by maintaining the current level of the Community Education funding to ensure that:

- Adult Basic Education helps learners acquire and improve employability skills, and prepare for higher education, through partnerships with business, MNSCU, and workforce centers.
- Adult Basic Education helps parents learn how to support their children in school, improving K12 outcomes.
- Adult Basic Education strengthens families and communities statewide by providing family literacy, teaching refugees English skills, and responding to community needs.

Adult Basic Education Outcomes:

- One out of every eleven diplomas issued in MN during 2010 was a GED or adult high school diploma.
- ABE enrollment last year was 74,480, an increase of 52% since 1999.
- The average annual cost per adult learner is \$668.

ABE as detailed in the Governor's Workforce Development Council are working to offer stackable credentials and/or an industry-recognized credential to successful participants.

Mission of Adult Basic Education:

The mission of Adult Basic Education in Minnesota is to provide adults with educational opportunities to acquire and improve their literacy skills necessary to become self-sufficient and to participate effectively as productive workers, family members, and citizens.

Learner eligibility:

Learners must be 16 and over, not enrolled in secondary school, and functioning below the 12th grade level in any of the basic academic areas including reading, math, writing and speaking English.

Adult Basic Education (ABE) instructional areas include the following:

GED: General Education Development certificate, a high school equivalency program.

Adult Diploma: Program for adults leading to a high school diploma.

FastTrac: Collaborating with business, workforce centers, MNSCU to help educationally underprepared adults achieve success in high-demand careers that pay family sustaining wages.

ESL: English as a Second Language for learners whose primary language is not English.

Family Literacy: Instruction in literacy and parenting; children receive education services as well.

Basic Skills Education: Instruction on specific basic skills, such as work-related math, functional literacy, reading or writing.

U.S. Citizenship: Classes for legal non-citizens to attain U.S. citizenship.

Transition to Employment and Workforce Education: Programs to provide basic skills necessary for work are provided at local ABE site, MN Workforce Centers, or local employer's site.

Transition to Post-Secondary Education and Training: Programs to prepare students for post-secondary success.

Distance Learning: Minnesotans statewide can access free GED preparation classes online through the GED-I program.

Community Needs:

- 12% of Minnesotans over 25 years old (388,074 adults) lack high school equivalency. However, of the ABE "target population" which is 16 and over and not enrolled in school, a total of 624,250 persons lack their high school equivalency. *U.S. Census*
- 42% of the current MFIP caseload does not have a high school degree or the equivalent. Many participants who have completed a high school education have reading and math abilities far below the 12th grade level. It is difficult for this group to find and retain jobs. *DHS TANF report*
- MN's immigrant and refugee population has expanded to record levels, especially Asian, Hispanic and African population groups; 7% of all Minnesotans are foreign born; an estimated 250,000 are in need of ESL. Approximately 35,000 permanent Minnesota residents lack US citizenship. *DHS Report*
- Major MN employers report large costs to train and retrain employees whose lack of basic skills or ability to speak English are liabilities to the profit line. The average dropout earns \$7,000 less annually than the average high school or GED graduate. *MN Bus. Partnership*