

Resolution to Fully Fund Special Education Services (Minnesota)

WHEREAS, local boards of education place a very high priority on ensuring that ALL students receive high quality special education programs and instruction; and

WHEREAS, in 1975 Congress enacted the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) now known as The Individuals with Disabilities Act IDEA to: improve access to education for children with disabilities by guaranteeing a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment; assure that the rights of children with disabilities and their parents are protected; assist States and school systems to provide for the education of all children with disabilities; and to assess and assure the effectiveness of efforts to educate all children with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, when IDEA became law in 1975, the federal government promised to fund 40 percent of the additional cost of educating children with disabilities; and yet the federal government has failed to adequately fund the mandated programs and services arising under IDEA, never providing more than 15 percent of the additional cost; and

WHEREAS, sufficient federal funding for IDEA would significantly enhance the ability of local school systems to provide an excellent education for all students; and

WHEREAS, the special education cross-subsidy continues to be a major obstacle for Minnesota School Districts to grapple with, due to the growing number of students receiving special education, more specialized services and rising costs associated with those services and inadequate funding; and

WHEREAS, the state special education funding system has not kept pace with the rising cost of mandated services and supports for students with special needs; and,

WHEREAS, the cross-subsidy for school districts for FY2016 is \$679 million; a 5.6 percent increase from FY2015; and

WHEREAS, between rising need and insufficient state and federal aid, the amount of funding school districts as a whole in Minnesota will be forced to pay for special education costs will reach an average of \$815 per student in FY17;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge the Governor and Legislature to strenuously advocate for significant increases in federal special education funding and meaningful special education reforms at the federal and state levels; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that there is an urgency the Minnesota Legislature to convene a task force to work on special education funding, specifically with a focus on the impacts of the new special education funding formulas, the projected cross-subsidy and recommendations with a timeline to eliminate the cross-subsidy.

On Behalf of the FOREST LAKE AREA SCHOOL BOARD:

Rob Rapheal, Board Chair

Passed on a vote of ____ ayes; ____ nays

Dated: _____