



Medford Public School  
ISD #763

*Providing quality education while preparing our children and community for the future*

## **School Board Agenda Item**

**Meeting Date:** December 21, 2015

**Place on Agenda:** Reports, Superintendent

**Topic:** Legislative Update

**Presenter:** Rich Dahman

### **Background:**

The 2016 MN Legislative session will be starting up in the new year, with a shorter session than in 2015. Typically, even-year sessions are not budgeting sessions, but there will be some budget discussions this spring.

The state budget forecast released in November shows a \$1.871B surplus. A large part of this surplus is from much lower than expected costs for Medicare. Of the surplus amount, \$594M is required to go to the budget reserve and \$71M to the Environmental Fund, which leaves an available balance of \$1.206B.

The discussion at the 2016 Legislature will be around what do with the surplus, with pushes in for adding to the reserve, refunding to taxpayers, and spending. The most commonly heard areas for increased spending include transportation, infrastructure (including rural broadband), LGA, and education.

Although MN schools were given a 2% increase in the Basic Formula both this year and next, the Basic Formula has lost ground to inflation over the past 25 years (chart).

On school funding issues, the areas that would have the most positive impact on Medford Schools are issues that would increase the equity in school funding between districts.

- Increased funding on the Basic Formula, which gives all school districts a consistent funding stream with local control.
- Narrowing the gap between high and low-funded school districts (chart).
- Funding for Teacher Development and Evaluation (TDE), to enable districts that don't receive Q Comp funding the ability to fund the new TDE requirements.

Other educational topics that will likely be discussed in the upcoming session include: Early Learning, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Testing, Teacher Shortages/Licensure, and TRA. As we move through the legislative session, I will keep you updated on these and other potential bills which impact education.