



Glossary of Educational Terms

Academic Progress - In a general sense, academic progress is an increase in students' learning. More specifically, for the purposes of ESSA accountability, academic progress refers to students increasing their learning relative to grade-level standards. This is measured using statewide tests in math and reading, and those subjects are used as a sample of students' progress overall. Accounts - In school budgeting and finance, the category of revenue or expenditure within a fund for various functions or activities.

Achievement Gap - Persistent disparities in standardized measures of educational performance among subgroups of students, especially groups defined by socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, and gender. Gaps may be impacted by the unequal or inequitable allocation of resources and opportunities.

Achievement Test - An achievement test is an instrument designed to efficiently measure the amount of academic knowledge and/or skill a student has acquired from instruction. Such tests provide information that can be compared to either a norm group or a measure of performance.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) - ACEs are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years). ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance misuse in adulthood. ACEs can also negatively impact education and job opportunities. An ACE score is a tally of traumatic events that a person has survived. The rougher the childhood, the higher the score is likely to be, and the higher the risk for problems in adulthood.

Average Daily Attendance (ADA) - Attendance Days (or hours) divided by Instructional Days (or hours).

Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADA or ADAAA) - Federal legislation protecting disabled employees from employer discrimination.

Ad hoc - Established for a particular purpose such as "ad hoc" committees or "ad hoc" policy.

Average Daily Membership (ADM) - The sum for all pupils of the number of days of the school year each pupil is enrolled divided by the number of days the schools are in session.

Adult Diploma -The Standard Adult Diploma Program is designed for the diverse adults in Minnesota who need a secondary credential.

Alternative Learning Center (ALC) - Must operate year-round (school year starts in June) and serve at-risk students from two or more districts (except for Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth). Students must have a CLP (Continual Learning Plan) and can generate more than 1.0 ADM when membership exceeds statute minimums (refer to "LYPS"); can apply to provide an independent study component. Students should be able to complete their graduation requirements entirely through the ALC.

Alternative Learning Program (ALP) - These programs serve at-risk students (as defined by Minn. Stat. 124D.68) year-round or during a traditional school year. Programing is typically tied closely to one school district and serves a defined grade-level population. Students must have a CLP and can

generate more than 1.0 ADM, up to 1.2, when instruction time exceeds statute minimums (refer to "LYPS"). They can apply to provide an independent study program. An ALP is not eligible to apply for Target Services programs.

Alternative Assessment - Measures a student's knowledge and mastery by having him/her exhibit through projects, essays, tasks, etc., rather than relying solely on the more traditional assessment which encourages students to memorize facts.

Alternative Calendar - Any calendar that varies from the traditional calendar. Year-round education is an alternative calendar.

Alternative Compensation - A method of pay for teachers which either supplements or replaces the traditional "steps and lanes."

Adjusted Marginal Cost Pupil Unit (AMCPU) - The greater of the total of weighted average daily membership for the current school year multiplied times .77 plus the total of the weighted average daily membership for the prior school year multiplied times .23, or the actual current weighted average daily membership count.

Adjusted Net Tax Capacity (ANTC) - The property value used for calculating most school taxes. ANTC is determined by equalizing differences in tax capacities by property type in different counties. This equalization process compares market values to actual sales and is intended to neutralize the effect of differing assessment practices. Also, the ANTC reflects the application of the classification rates to the net value of property.

Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) - Opportunity offered to earn college credits for high school students.

Adjusted Pupil Units (APU) - A weighted count of pupils used to determine revenue in many funding formulas. Kindergarten through sixth grade students are weighted 1.0 pupil units. Students in grades 7-12 are weighted 1.2 pupil units.

Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs) - A secure large-scale English language proficiency assessment given to Kindergarten through 12th graders who have been identified as English learners (ELs). It assesses the four language domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Assessment - The process of collecting information about individuals, groups, or systems that relies upon a number of instruments, one of which may be a test. Assessment is not limited to the administration of tests but may also include observation and reviews of education records.

At-Risk - Students who meet the statute-defined criteria (M.S. 124D.68).

Audit - Formal examination and verification of financial accounts. May also refer to a program examination and verification of results.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) - A measure of academic progress that school districts are required to make under NCLB.

Barrier-free - Elimination of architectural barriers in educational facilities to allow disabled persons to easily enter, move about, and use those facilities.

Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) - State agency which provides districts with criminal background checks.

Bid - An offer, usually written, to furnish materials or services for a specified sum of money in accordance with the terms of a contract proposal.

Bill - Form or draft of a proposed law presented to a legislature.



Bureau of Mediation Services (BMS) - State agency which provides mediation and arbitration services.

Bond - Written promise, generally under seal, to pay a specified sum of money (face value) at a fixed time in the future (date of maturity) and carrying interest at a fixed rate, usually payable periodically; often used by school districts to raise construction money.

Career and College Readiness (CCR) - All Minnesota students need to be prepared to move successfully from middle school to high school and into an increasingly wide array of postsecondary options. MDE's Career and College Readiness division provides and supports the development of quality tools and strategies, centralize, and disseminate resources, and develop and promote models that successfully implement multiple pathways to postsecondary training or college.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) -A sequence of courses that integrates core academic knowledge with technical and occupational knowledge and skills to provide students a pathway to postsecondary education and careers. CTE teaches transferable workplace skills in applied learning contexts to provide opportunities to explore career options and gives students the technology and skills needed for success. MDE approves Career and Technical Education Programs that meet teacher licensing and other criteria.

Career Education - Organization of the curriculum (K-12) so that a student will receive appropriate information and opportunity for training about or in the world of work; does not necessarily imply attendance at an occupational or skill center.

Case Load - Various meanings that generally refer to the number of students for whom the teacher is the IEP manager.

Categorical Aid - Educational support funds provided from a higher governmental level and specifically limited to (earmarked for) a given purpose; e.g., special education, transportation, or vocational education.

Child Count - The name applied to the federal reports that generate federal special education dollars; a count of all students who have IEPs or IFSPs on December 1 of any given year (also referred to as the "Unduplicated Child Count").

Class Load (size) - Total number of classes or pupils taught by a teacher.

Continual Learning Plan (CLP) - All students enrolled in an ALC, ALP, or other LYPS need to have a CLP that addresses their educational goals for the year. It must be updated annually. Specific statute requirements can be found in Minnesota Statute 124D.128.

Collective Bargaining - The process used by an organized group of union employees and their employers to make offers and counter-offers for the purposes of reaching a mutually acceptable written Agreement.

Committee - Group chosen to provide the school board with a recommendation on an education-related program or issue.

Community Expert - A nonlicensed individual from the "community" who teaches in a public or charter school on a limited basis – the Minnesota Board of Teaching must approve the application of each nonlicensed community expert.

Comparable Worth - State law (M.S. 471.911) requiring every political subdivision to establish equitable compensation relations among its employee groups (a.k.a. "Minnesota Pay Equity Act").

Competency-Based Education - An organized system of teaching and learning to ensure mastery of prescribed skills and behaviors.



Cooperative School Districts (Co-Op) - The term Co-Op encompasses all intermediate school district, education districts, and service cooperatives.

Concurrent Enrollment - There are generally three uses for this term:

- Middle and high school students who are enrolled in an ALC or ALP and who attend the middle or high school part-time. These students are reported by both the ALC/ALP and the middle or high school for the time of instruction each provides.
- It can also refer to high school students who take college classes.
- It could also be used to describe a student who was taking classes in two traditional schools within a single district.

Continual Learning Plan (CLP) - All students enrolled in a State-Approved Alternative Program must have an annually updated CLP that addresses their learning objectives and experiences, assessment measurements and requirements for grade level progression. Specific statute requirements can be found in Minnesota Statute 124D.128 or in the CLP section of this resource guide.

Core Year - The number of Instructional Days and Length of Day required by a school or program for students to make regular grade progression. This is used as the ADM divisor for Learning Year programs. Statute requires minimums based on grade level, but individual schools and programs can require more.

Course Credits - A course credit is a unit used to demonstrate a student successfully completed an academic year of study or mastered the subject matter, as determined by the local school district. In order to graduate, a high school student's coursework must include at least the minimum number of state course credits as required by Minn. Stat. 120b.024.

Culturally Relevant (Responsive) Teaching - A method of teaching that incorporates students' cultural in all aspects of instruction. Characteristics of culturally relevant teaching using a communication style familiar to the students and crafting curriculum that encourages multicultural viewpoints and allows for inclusion of knowledge relevant to students. This pedagogy affirms students' differences and diversity and empowers students intellectually, social, emotionally, and politically by using cultural references to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Distance Learning - A learning model in which classes are conducted via correspondence or over the Internet, without the students attending school. Students engaging in distance learning should have access to appropriate education materials and receive daily interaction with their licensed teacher.

Dual Enrolled - Students who are full-time at the traditional school and receive extended day/year instructional services outside the core school day/year. Depending on State-Approved Alternative Program status and specific approval, this can occur from kindergarten through 12th grade. Each school/program reports the instructional time it provides to the student. A senior high school student may be enrolled in a post-secondary class or program.

Due Process (Procedural) - An orderly, established process for arriving at an impartial and just settlement of a conflict between parties which entails the elements of notice and fair hearing (most often used in relationship to discipline).

Due Process (Substantive) - Basic legality of legislative enactments such as rules and regulations for students and staff. Must follow basic guidelines of legality, sufficient specificity, reason and sensibleness, adequate dissemination, and appropriate penalties.

E-Rate - The universal service Schools and Libraries Program, commonly known as "E-rate," provides discounts of up to 90% to help eligible schools and libraries in the United States obtain affordable telecommunications and internet access. The program is intended to ensure that schools and libraries have access to affordable telecommunications and information services.

Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) - Programming provided through Minnesota public school districts for families with children between the ages of birth to kindergarten entrance. ECFE is based on the idea that the family provides a child's first and most significant learning environment and parents are a child's first and most important teachers.



Early Childhood Special Education (ESCE) - A term used both as a grade classification of an individual student, i.e., a pre-kindergarten student (from birth to kindergarten) who has either an IEP/IFSP or who has received an assessment for special education.

Education District - Formed by school districts to increase educational opportunities for pupils by increasing cooperation and coordination between school districts and post-secondary institutions; education boards must be comprised of board members who are currently serving on the local school boards of the participating districts.

Elective - Any of a number of non-required studies from which a student is allowed to select.

English Learner (EL) - (previously referred to as Limited English Proficiency (LEP); English Language Learner (ELL); English as a Second Language (ESL)). Commonly refers to students for which English is not their primary language. Students who are identified as English Learners (ELs) should be served in an instructional program designed for ELs, defined as either an English as a Second Language (ESL) or Bilingual Education (BE) program by Minnesota statute.

Employee Benefits - Compensation in addition to regular salary provided to an employee which may include such benefits as health insurance, life insurance, leaves of absence, and retirement contributions.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) - The nation's latest pre-kindergarten through grade 12 education law, was signed into law in December 2015. ESSA is the newest version of the 50-year-old federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act and replaces the 2001 reauthorization known as No Child Left Behind. ESSA emphasizes equity and gives states and schools more latitude to innovate, while maintaining a focus on accountability and an emphasis on state and local systems of improvement (MDE, 2016).

Extended Learning - out of school time programs that occur outside of the core school day or school year. These can occur before school, after school, during school breaks, on the weekend and during the summer.

Extended Time Revenue - This revenue may be used for extended day programs, extended week programs, summer school, and other programming authorized under the learning year program.

Equitable Education - A collective set of conditions where all students are given access to the opportunities, resources, and supports they need to learn and develop to their fullest potential. An equitable education is just, impartial, and fair and ensures all students have an equal opportunity for success.

Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) - Special education and related services that are: provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge; meet the standards of the SEA; include an appropriate preschool, elementary school, or secondary school or nonpublic school education in the state involved; and are provided in conformity with an IEP that meets the requirements of IDEA regulations.

Flexible School Year - Schools who extend the school year over a 10- to 12-month period, but the number of Instructional Days is no greater than those in a traditional school year.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) - Federal law which allows eligible employees of covered employers to take unpaid, job-protected leave for specified reasons.

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) - The amount of employed time required in a part-time position expressed in proportion to that required in a full-time position with "1.0" representing one full-time position. FTE may be expressed as a percentage or as a fraction and is derived by dividing the amount of employed time required in the part-time position by the amount of employed time required in a corresponding full-time position.



Fiscal Year (FY) - A 12-month period between settlements of financial accounts. The school district fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30. For example, fiscal year 2007 is equivalent to the 2006-2007 school year (July 1, 2006 - June 30, 2007).

General Education Development (GED) Diploma - In Minnesota, individuals who do not have a high school diploma may be able to earn a state of Minnesota GED® Diploma by passing the GED test. The four tests in the GED battery measure academic competencies similar to many of those required of a Minnesota high school graduate. If you are 19 years old and are not currently enrolled in high school, you are eligible to take the GED® in Minnesota. If you are 17 or 18 years old and are not currently enrolled in high school, you must apply for an age waiver before testing.

General Education Revenue - General education revenue is the primary formula for providing general operating funds to school districts and charter schools and is composed of basic general education revenue; extended time revenue; declining pupil revenue; local optional revenue; gifted and talented revenue; basic skills revenue, including EL and compensatory revenue; sparsity revenue; operating capital; equity revenue; small schools revenue; and transition revenue.

General Fund Revenue - General Fund is used to account for educational activities, charter school instructional and student support programs, expenditures for charter school administration, normal operations and maintenance, pupil transportation, capital expenditures, and legal expenditures not specifically designated to be accounted for in any other fund.

Gifted and Talented (GT) - Gifted and talented children and youth are those students with outstanding abilities, identified at preschool, elementary, and secondary levels. The potential of gifted students requires differentiated and challenging educational programs or services beyond those provided in the general school program. Students capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement or potential ability in one or more of these areas: general intellectual, specific academic subjects, creativity, leadership, and visual/performing arts.

Graduation Requirements - The Minnesota Legislature has established standards for curriculum and assessments the public school districts must provide and students must attain in order to graduate from a MN secondary school. These requirements may be updated annually. For a complete and current definition of the requirements, refer to M.S. 120B.

Grievance - A written complaint by an employee that a provision of the collective bargaining agreement under which he/she is working has been violated.

Grievance Arbitration - Final step in a grievance procedure which is binding on both the public employer and the grievant(s) and which is used to determine if a violation, misapplication, or misinterpretation of an existing Agreement or established past practice has occurred.

Head Start - A program that supports the comprehensive development of children from birth to age five to promote school readiness for young children from low-income families.

Heterogeneous Grouping - Grouping of students without regard for ability so that wide ranges of academic ability will be present.

Homebound Instruction - Individual teaching in a child's home by an itinerant teacher; for education of the disabled and for students unable to attend school due to illness or other reasons.

Homeschool - Minnesota provides for parents to educate their children at home. Parents and the resident school district must perform an extensive list of tasks in order to satisfy the requirements of a homeschool. Homeschools may be eligible for a limited amount of state aid.

Homogeneous Grouping - Grouping students based on one or more common characteristics - most often, academic ability - and a "tracking system" is usually developed.



Hybrid Learning - A learning model which combines distance and in-person learning. Students switch between classes that are conducted via correspondence or over the Internet and traditional in-person classroom instruction at a school.

Implicit Bias - Attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. These biases encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments.

Individualized Education Program/Plan (IEP) - A program that defines the individualized objectives and goals of a child identified as having a disability and who is receiving special education services.

Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) - An IEP for very young children involving other agencies in addition to education.

Inclusion – There are two ways this term is used:

- Under special education, inclusion is an approach that stresses educating students with disabilities, regardless of the type or severity of that disability, in the regular classrooms of their neighborhood schools and delivering special education and related services within the classroom to the extent possible.
- Generally, inclusion is actively inviting the contribution and participate of all people.

In-Person Learning - A learning model in which students receive traditional in-person classroom instruction at a school.

In-service Education - General term used to describe the efforts to promote the professional growth and development of employees while on the job.

Interdisciplinary - Instructional process which combines information from two or more subjects or creates a team situation that allows teachers with different academic disciplines to plan a teacher-learning program.

Interest Arbitration - Process, binding on both the public employer and the particular union, by which an arbitrator resolves unsettled points of contention in the collective bargaining process.

Intermediate District (ID) - In Minnesota, "Intermediate District" means a district with a cooperative program which has been established under Laws 1967, chapter 822, as amended; Laws 1969, chapter 775, as amended; and Laws 1969, chapter 1060, as amended, offering integrated services for secondary, postsecondary, and adult students in the areas of vocational education, special education, and other authorized services.

Job Description - A written statement of the various duties, equipment, working conditions, responsibilities, and other essential factors concerned with a job and usually based on the requirements and training the employee must possess in order to qualify for employment.

Learning Disabilities (LD) - One or more deficiencies exhibited by a child in the essential learning processes of perception, conceptualization, language, memory, attention, impulse control, or motor function.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) - An IDEA requirement that, to the maximum extent appropriate, school districts must educate students with disabilities in their least restrictive environment. For example, students with disabilities must be educated in the regular classroom with appropriate aids and supports along with their non-disabled peers in the school they would attend if not disabled, unless the student's IEP requires some other arrangement.

Local Education Agency (LEA) - An educational agency at the local level which exists primarily to operate schools or to contract for education services. LEAs may/may not be coterminous with county, city, or town boundaries, and the term is used synonymously with the terms, "school district," "school system," and "local basic administrative unit."



Lesson Plan - A teaching outline of the important points of a lesson arranged in the order in which they are to be presented; may include objectives, points to be made, questions to ask, references to materials, assignments, and evaluation methods or tools.

Levy - (Verb) to impose property taxes or special assessments on property. (Noun) the total of property taxes or special assessments on property imposed by a governmental unit.

License - Authority granted by the state to individuals to practice an occupation or profession after successfully meeting specific requirements.

Learning Year Program Site (LYPS) - State-approved programs that agree to operate on a year-round basis; students must have a CLP and generate more than 1.0 ADM when they generate membership hours which are the greater of (a) the locally defined core school year, or (b) the minimum number of instructional hours required by statute.

Mainstreaming - Moving disabled children from their segregated status in special education classes and integrating them into the regular classroom.

Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS) - Minnesota's individual student record system that collects enrollment and demographic data on each public school student. Data collected via MARSS is used for a variety of purposes including state and federal funding, accountability, and meeting federal reporting requirements.

Master Teacher/Mentor - One who possesses considerable skill in teaching; selected to serve as supervising teacher or leader of a team when team teaching occurs.

Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) - Provides an excellent education for Minnesota students by striving for excellence, equity, and opportunity. They focus on closing the achievement gap, supporting high-quality teaching, using innovative strategies to improve educational outcomes, and ensuring all students graduate from high school well-prepared for college, career, and life. MDE develops, builds, and maintains collaborative relationships with schools, districts, and other stakeholders through a wide variety of advisory boards, councils, and committees.

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) - State tests that help districts measure student progress toward Minnesota's academic standards and also meet federal and state legislative requirements. Students take one test in each subject. Most students take the MCA, but students who receive special education services and meet eligibility requirements may take the alternate assessment - Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) - instead.

Media Center (Library) - The area of the school that contains and encourages the use of audiovisual media and associated equipment as well as books, periodicals, and the like.

Mediation - A non-binding, informal attempt by a third party to help settle an employment dispute through advice or suggestions but without specific public recommendations.

Mentor - A person who serves in an advising, helping, listening, or tutoring capacity to another individual. MSBA recommends a mentor be identified for each new school board members.

Minnesota Academic Standards - Five core academic content standards areas: language arts, math, science, social studies, and arts.

Multi-Age Grouping - Grouping students into classes across grade levels; for example, having students from kindergarten and first grade in a class together, not as a traditional combination class, but focusing instead on teaching to their ability and skill level rather than their age.

Multi-Cultural Sensitivity - The knowledge, awareness, and acceptance of other cultures.

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) - A federal agency to which the MDE supplies data to be used for comparing states.



Non-Operating Funds - Building construction fund, debt redemption fund, trust, and agency fund.

Office for Civil Rights (OCR) - A federal agency to which the state provides gender and race/ethnic student and staff data on behalf of districts using MARSS data, STARS data, and supplemental data.

Online Learning - An interactive course or program that delivers instruction to a student by computer, is combined with traditional delivery methods that include frequent student assessment and may include actual teacher contact time and meets or exceeds state academic standards.

Open Enrollment - Enrollment Options - Various legislative-enacted programs that allow students to attend a district other than the district of residence or a post-secondary institution without paying tuition charges.

Open Meeting Law - State statute governing an elected board's ability to conduct meetings in public or in private. M.S. 13D

Operating Funds - General fund, food service fund, pupil transportation fund, community services fund.

Outcome-Based Education - Aligning the curriculum, instruction, and student assessment to objectives or goals for student knowledge, skill, or effect which have been clearly defined; students' progress as they master these outcomes rather than by time or age factors.

Out-of-Field Permission (OFP) - Allow Tier 2, Tier 3, or Tier 4 licensed teachers to teach in a field that is not aligned with their primary licensure area. An OFP is similar to a permission formerly known as a personnel variance. Visit the PELSB Permissions webpage for information on how to apply for an OFP.

P-20 - Reference to all education of students from preschool, elementary, secondary, and post-secondary.

Paraprofessional - A non-certified individual who assists teachers with non-teaching tasks (also called a "para," a "teacher aide," or a "classroom aide").

Part C - A reference to a federal law previously referred to as "Part H" and refers to children ages birth through age two who have IFSPs.

Part-Time - A reference to any student enrolled for less than full-time ("full-time" is defined by the school's calendar) and any student who is released from attending the entire day at the high school level and is not considered to be absent or, for purposes of dual enrollment, has more than 60 minutes in study hall (part-time students who are also enrolled in an ALC or ALP are reported only by the ALC/ALP).

Performance-Based Education - A type of alternative assessment by which students demonstrate what they know and are able to do using non-traditional tests.

Policy - Statement adopted by a school board or an administrative agency outlining principles to be followed with respect to specific matters; usually requires rules or regulations to be formulated for its implementation, and is broad enough to provide for administrative decisions regarding the manner in which it shall be implemented, although its implementation in some manner is mandatory.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) - A state-initiated project that provides districts and individual schools throughout Minnesota with the necessary training and technical support and evaluation to promote improvement in student behavior across the entire school, especially for students with challenging social behaviors. PBIS school teams establish clearly defined outcomes that relate to students' academic and social behavior, systems that support staff efforts, practices that support student success, and data to guide decision-making.



Postsecondary Enrollment Option (PSEO) - allows 10th-, 11th- and 12th-grade students to earn college credit while still in high school, through enrollment in and successful completion of college-level courses. With traditional PSEO, these courses are generally offered on the campus of the postsecondary institution; some courses are offered online. Postsecondary institutions are not allowed to charge PSEO students for tuition, textbooks, or support services. Students may be charged for equipment that becomes their property when the course or program is completed.

PSEO Early/Middle College - The Early/Middle College program was added to Minnesota Statute 124D.09 and allows SAAP students to take developmental classes on the college campus. The program is characterized by the strong partnership between the SAAP, the District and the college. Students earn a high school diploma while also earning postsecondary credits towards a degree or credential including a certificate, diploma or an associate's degree.

Pre-K - Classroom-based preschool for children.

Private Contract Alternative - Non-public schools with which a public school district has contracted to provide instructional services to at-risk students.

Procedure - A series of steps followed in a regular order. Sometimes found in policy.

Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) - Created to oversee and implement teacher licensing for the state of Minnesota. The legislation that created PELSB on January 1, 2018, after 2017 legislation combined the non-defunct Board of Teaching and the Minnesota Department of Education's Educator Licensing division. The agency oversees licensing in Minnesota, including ensuring teachers adhere to the Code of Ethics for Minnesota teachers, reviewing and approving teacher preparation programs, and managing the Staff Automated Report (STAR).

Public Employment Labor Relations Act (PELRA) - Minnesota Statute (Chapter 179A) governing public sector collective bargaining.

Public Law 94-142 - A federal law that ensures access to public educational opportunities to disabled persons, ages 3-21.

Pull-Out Program - A state-approved ALC program in which elementary and middle/junior high students are "pulled out" of the regular classrooms and instructional services are provided by the ALC.
Pupil-Teacher Ratio - Average number of pupils per teacher in a system or school.

Pupil Units (PU) - See APU (Adjusted Pupil Units)

Q-Comp - Additional revenue to be used for teacher compensation provided to districts which have an MDE-approved agreement between the school board and teachers' union (also known as the "Alternative Teacher Professional Pay System" or "ATPPS").

Quorum - Minimum number of board members required to hold a meeting.

Regulations - Detailed directions developed by the administration to put policy into practice by telling how, by whom, where, and when things are to be done.

Response to Intervention (RTI) - A practice of providing high-quality instruction and intervention matched to student needs using data on the child's learning rate and level of performance to make important educational decisions about the necessity for more intense interventions or as part of evaluating eligibility for special education.

Regional Management Information Center (RMIC) - A center that assists districts in processing student, staff, and finance data for local and state reporting purposes (formerly referred to as "ESV Regions").



Rubber-Stamp Board - A board that does not appear to study or make its own decisions and instead agrees to whatever administration recommends.

Sabbatical Leave - A leave of absence with full or partial compensation to be used for self-improvement.

School Vouchers - Educational monies distributed directly to parents for their use in selecting schools, either public or private.

School Within a School - A state-approved ALC program through which at-risk elementary and middle/junior high students receive ALC services during at least 25% of their school day.

Service Cooperative - A regional organization governed by currently seated members of the political subdivisions belonging to it and established to provide services more efficiently for its members on a cooperative basis.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 - a federal civil rights statute that assures individuals will not be discriminated against based on their disability. All school districts that receive federal funding are responsible for the implementation of this law

Section 504 Plan (504 Plan) - A plan developed to ensure that a child who has a disability identified under the law and is attending an elementary or secondary educational institution receives accommodations that will ensure their academic success and access to the learning environment.

Shared Time - Non-public students receiving eligible public school instructional services and generating shared-time foundation aid based on the portion of the school day during which they are enrolled in the public school.

Site-Based Management - The practice of allowing individual schools the freedom to make decisions in certain areas with the idea that those decisions are best made nearest the point at which they must be implemented.

Software - All non-hardware elements of a computer-based system, including written computer programs, flow charts, and other items related to information systems.
Standardized Test - Evaluation instrument given under similar, controlled circumstances to many individuals.

Special Education - A program that serves student that have a disability and are in need of specialized instruction because of that disability. A comprehensive evaluation, conducted by a team from the public school, evaluates and identifies these students. For every student who needs special education services, the team develops a special document called an Individualized Education Program/Plan (IEP).

Staff Automated Reporting System (STARS) - The means by which public school districts report staff employment and assignment data to the MDE.

State-Approved Alternative Program (SAAP) - includes state-approved Area learning Centers, Alternative Learning Programs, Middle level/Junior High, Targeted Services, including after school and summer school programming, and Contracted Alternative Programs. Each requires separate approval.

State Fiscal Year (SFY) - runs from July 1 - June 30 of each year, numbered with the ending calendar year. For example, SFY 2015 or SFY 15 refers to July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015.

State Standards - Core academic standards in language arts, math, science, social studies, and the arts.

Statutory Operating Debt - A school district's net negative unreserved general fund balance as of June 30 of each year.



Statutory Operating Debt (SOD) - According to Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.81, subdivision 2, SOD exists if the amount of the operating debt is more than 2 ½ percent of the most recent fiscal year's expenditure amount for the funds considered under subdivision 1, the net negative undesignated fund balance is defined as "statutory operating debt" for the purposes of this section and section 124B.83. By January 31 of the following year of SOD, the school board is required to create and implement a Special Operating Plan which is formally approved through a board resolution and submitted to the MDE commissioner for approval.

Strategic Planning - A process used by the school district to concentrate all efforts, activities, resources, and energies toward achieving a common purpose (mission, objectives, strategies, and action plans are parts of a strategic plan); plans are developed by consensus of school and community participants and have as a basis their commonly held beliefs and values.

Student Enrollment Options (Open Enrollment) - Minnesota's public school choice option that allows students and parents to have access to schools that are not within their resident district. This program allows student enrollment from one school district into another.

Targeted Services (TS) - Out of School time elementary and middle/junior high-level program for at-risk students. Programming occurs on an extended day/year basis. Only ALCs can apply to provide Targeted Services. Students must have a CLP and services must be provided year round. Students can generate more than 1.0 ADM (but less than 1.2) when they receive more than the statute-defined minimum number of instructional hours.

Targeted Services (Title I) - Federal program to provide additional instructional services to at-risk students at the elementary and middle/junior high-level. No additional general education revenue is provided. Only ALCs can apply to provide Targeted Services. Students must have a CLP and services must be provided year-round. Students can generate more than 1.0 ADM (but less than 1.2) when they receive more than the statute-defined minimum number of instructional hours.

Tax Capacity - Amount of tax base of taxing jurisdiction obtained by multiplying the market values of all property in the taxing jurisdiction by the tax capacity percentages.

Tax Capacity Percentages - Statutory classification percentages that are applied to market values.

Tax Capacity Rate - The rate arrived at by dividing the district's tax levy amount by the district's total tax capacity. Tax capacity rate replaced the term, "mill rate."

Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) - A Minnesota statewide public pension fund that provides pension coverage to Minnesota educators for decades, with a mission to help members and their beneficiaries plan for an independent and financially secure retirement.

Team Teaching - Two or more teachers cooperatively planning, teaching, and evaluating the progress of their students.

Tenure - Guaranteed job security granted to teachers and principals after a specified number of years of satisfactory service (see M.S. 122A.40 or - for "cities of the first class" - M.S. 122A.41).

Third-Party Billing - As it is related to special education services, third party billing refers to the federal and state legal requirement that school districts bill a student's public or private health insurer when a student receives IEP health-related services at school. Schools are reimbursed when a child's IEP or IFSP requires health-related services in order to benefit from special education, and is eligible for Minnesota Health Care Programs (MHCP) (which includes Medical Assistance (MA), MinnesotaCare and other public, government health programs). Minnesota Health Care Programs (MHCP) pays the federal share of covered health-related services described on a child's IEP or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). Minnesota Health Care Programs (MHCP) pays the federal share of covered health-related services described on a child's IEP or Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). Reimbursable IEP health-related services include assessments and services for:



- Physical therapy.
- Occupational therapy.
- Speech-language-hearing.
- Children’s Therapeutic Services and Systems (Mental Health).
- Nursing.
- Personal care assistance services.
- Assistive technology devices (medical equipment).
- Special transportation (Department of Human Services (DHS) definition).
- Oral and sign language interpreter services during above service.

Tiered Licensure - New system of licensing teachers in Minnesota using four tiers.

Title I - There are two types of Title I schools:

- School wide- schools can offer a school wide program when the poverty level at their school is at least 40 percent.
- Targeted Assistance (which is sometimes confused with Targeted Services)- is one that receives Part A funds yet is ineligible or has chosen not to operate a Title I school wide program

Tort - An act or omission that gives rise to injury or harm to another and results in civil liability.

Trauma-Informed Teaching (Pedagogy) - Trauma-informed education examines the influence and impact on students of trauma including racism (explicit, implicit, systematic), poverty, peer victimization, community violence, and bullying. Trauma-informed educators understand how trauma can affect student behavior and implements intentional support strategies and promotes students’ abilities to self-monitor and maintain positive engagement in all aspects of learning and interactions.

Uniform Financial Accounting and Reporting Standards (UFARS) - Rules and instructions adopted by the MDE under legislative mandate to govern the methods by which school districts record financial transactions and inform the MDE about their finances.

Unrequested Leave of Absence (ULA) - A leave of absence for principals and teachers due to the reduction or elimination of their positions.

Unduplicated Child Count - See “Child Count.”

Unfunded Mandates - Federal legislative and regulatory provisions that require school district compliance but do not provide funding to cover the costs of carrying them out.

Weighted Average Daily Membership (WADM) - See “Pupil Units”.

Workers’ Compensation Insurance Payments - Insurance payments made to an employee by his/her employer due to an employment-related injury or illness.

World’s Best Workforce (WBW) – The Striving for the World’s Best Workforce (or World’s Best Workforce) bill was passed in 2013 to ensure every school district in Minnesota is making strides to increase student performance. Each district must develop a plan that addresses the following five goals:

1. All children are ready to state kindergarten.
2. All third-graders can read at grade level.
3. All achievement gaps between students are closed.
4. All students are ready to career and/or postsecondary education.
5. All student graduate from high school.



Year Round - Can refer to a variety of programs: schools extending the school year over a 10- to 12-month period with the number of instructional days being no greater than the number in a traditional school year; the requirement that state-approved “learning year programs” must provide instruction year round during each of the 12 months; students on IEPs who require extended year- or year-round services.

Youth-Services Program - Offered as part of a district’s community education program with a youth-development program, a youth-service program for pupils promotes active citizenship and addresses community needs through youth service; under MDE rules, youth-service opportunities must be made available to all students in public schools, but student participation is optional.

