



Forest Lake Area Schools

Legislative Platform

January, 2011

Alternative Facilities

Re-affirm that school buildings and capital expenditures are a vital part of the educational process and allow the funding mechanism of Alternative Facilities Bonding and Levy authority be available to all school districts. Funding methods for all building-related needs must be adequate. We believe that the Governor and Legislature should change the alternative facility bonding and levy authority provision (MS 123B.59) to include all school districts rather than the twenty (20) districts that currently qualify for this critical funding.

Operating Levy Renewal by School Board

Over the past few decades the Federal and State governments have exerted unprecedented control over K-12 education. Decisions should be made by locally-elected officials, officials elected by their communities. We believe that the Governor and Legislature should reverse the trend of centralized control of public education by broadening the decision-making authority of locally-elected school boards. Specifically, locally-elected School Boards should be allowed to extend or renew existing voter-approved operating levies without the requirement of a new election.

LILA & Forest Lake Area School District Collaboration

Mandates are continually imposed on school districts without the corresponding resources to carry out those mandates. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) have had the biggest impact on school districts but the list of mandates is seemingly endless. Ironically, the charter school law recognizes that these requirements are burdensome by freeing charter schools from many of them. In addition, history has shown that large, centralized systems of government are inefficient and unsustainable.

We believe that through collaboration and unique partnerships Charter Schools and Independent School Districts can benefit each other. Lakes International Language Academy (LILA) and the Forest Lake Area School District have been collaborating for more than half a decade. The time has now come for an enhanced level of partnering to take place allowing the economies of scale and efficiencies of a traditional Independent School District and the "best practices" of Charter Schools to be shared on a larger scale. Therefore, We believe the Governor and Legislature should approve legislation that would allow for this enhanced partnering and collaboration.