

## 2009 Education Policy Agenda

**MBP Mission:**  
Maintain a high quality of life for all Minnesotans by ensuring that the state's economy remains strong, globally competitive, and its prospects for growth bright.

Demographic changes, the globalization of our economy and extraordinary advances in technology are reshaping our world.

To maintain and improve our economy and the quality of life it supports, Minnesota must provide leadership in adapting how we fund and deliver public-sector services and benefits to these evolving economic realities.

This means finding new ways to meet growing public demands, while improving our global competitiveness for 21st century careers and opportunities.

### Overview

With nearly 2 million employees worldwide, including 400,000 Minnesotans, Partnership members bring a global perspective — and an increasing sense of urgency — to Minnesota's education policy debate. Because K-12 education accounts for roughly 40 percent of the general fund, school financing will dominate the session. However, two reports provide timely opportunities to put Minnesota's K-12 education debate into a larger context.

**Road map to world-class education:** There is a growing consensus that providing world-class education is essential to Minnesota's future. Yet no one has studied world-class schools and offered specific recommendations for bringing Minnesota up to those performance levels.

The Partnership has teamed with McKinsey and Company and the Itasca Project to define world-class education; benchmark Minnesota against the best in the world; assess our strengths and weaknesses; and offer specific, actionable recommendations for closing the gaps.

"Creating a Road Map to World-Class Education in Minnesota" will be released in late January 2009 and will include both legislative and non-legislative recommendations in four areas:

- Teacher preparation
- Teacher recruitment for high-need areas
- Principal leadership
- Better use of data to improve outcomes

The road map will guide the Partnership's legislative agenda in 2009 and beyond as we work with Itasca, McKinsey and others to build support for the recommendations and pursue both legislative and non-legislative action items.

**2007 Trends in International Math and Science Study (TIMSS):** Results from the 2007 TIMSS confirm that Minnesota is headed in the right direction. Released in December, the 2007 TIMSS results put Minnesota's fourth- and eighth-graders near the top of the world in math and science. These results compare very favorably to the 1995 TIMSS results when Minnesota students performed well in science, but were mediocre at best in math.

Preliminary analysis of the TIMSS results cites Minnesota's statewide standards and assessments for our remarkable improvement since 1995.

**2009 Activities:** The Partnership's 2009 education policy agenda will be shaped by these two reports, while continuing to be consistent with our long-held Principles for Education Reform. (See below.) In the coming months the Partnership will:

- Pursue legislative and non-legislative steps to implement recommendations in the "Road Map to World-Class Education."
- Support the work of SciMathMN to further analyze and share the TIMSS results.
- Oppose attempts to reduce or repeal high academic standards and assessments for all students.
- Support proposals that help our education system control costs while improving the quality of education.
- Support efforts to strengthen charter school governance while expanding charter school opportunities for families.

---

*"The conjecture as to why the state improved so dramatically in 4th-grade mathematics is that, unlike 1995, the state has had statewide mathematics standards in place since 1997, which were revised in 2003. Therefore, all four years of the mathematics learning of Minnesota's TIMSS 2007 4th-graders were most likely informed by the 2003 standards. It should also be noted that the 2007 TIMSS 4thgrade test reflected similar emphases as those in the 2003 standards for 4th-grade mathematics."*

*SciMathMN Minnesota TIMSS Report  
December 2008*

---

### Principles for Education Reform

For 30 years, the Partnership has played an active role in education policy, guided by four principles that create a framework for success.

- Set rigorous academic standards for all students.
- Measure and report student progress toward those standards on a uniform and comparable basis.
- Give educators flexibility to offer the programs they believe will be most effective for their students.
- Provide families with the ability to choose the programs that best meet their children's academic needs.