

Education Minnesota

Education Minnesota opposes proposed constitutional amendment on education

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ST. PAUL, Minn. Jan. 8, 2020 _ Education Minnesota announced on Wednesday its opposition to a proposed amendment to the Minnesota Constitution that would remove the explicit obligation on the state to fund a uniform system of public education for every child.

- [Constitutional amendment handout](#)

“Every Minnesota student deserves to learn in a building with a nurse, a counselor and class sizes small enough for teachers to give individual attention,” said Denise Specht, president of Education Minnesota. “Many students are missing those things now. Imagine how much worse it would get if the funding requirement was removed from the state constitution.”

The proposed amendment would remove the requirement for a “uniform” system of public education from the state constitution. This strategy paves the way for taxpayer-funded vouchers for private schools, which may discriminate against certain students. Conservative think tanks and advocacy groups, including the American Legislative Exchange Council, have advocated for similar changes to state constitutions around the country.

“The public schools paid for by the taxpayers should be available to every Minnesota family no matter where they are from, how they pray, whether their children have special needs, or who they love,” Specht said. “Educators will resist this move to bring our state closer to vouchers, just as we’ve resisted the parts of the ALEC agenda that supports polluters, union-busters and corporate welfare.”

The amendment proposed by Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis President Neel Kashkari, the 2014 Republican nominee for governor of California, and former Minnesota Supreme Court Justice Alan Page creates a situation in which any parent could bring a lawsuit against the state and their school.

“This amendment favors parents who can afford to hire attorneys to advocate for their own children, probably at the expense of families with fewer resources. That is the opposite of education equity,” Specht said. “Minnesota schools are failing too many students of color and students in poverty. We shouldn’t expect their families to wait on the courts, which will take years. Educators have solutions ready and waiting for funding. The Legislature needs to fully fund public education. It needs to do it right now.”

About Education Minnesota

Education Minnesota is the voice for professional educators and students. Education Minnesota's members include teachers and education support professionals in Minnesota's public school districts, faculty members at Minnesota's community and technical colleges and University of Minnesota campuses in Duluth and Crookston, retired educators and student teachers. Education Minnesota is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers, National Education Association and AFL-CIO.

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