

## LEGISLATURE FOCUSED ON GIVING OUR CHILDREN A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Written by Rena Moran State Representative, District 65A  
Monday, 06 May 2013 14:12

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To the editor of Insight News:

As a parent, I always strive to weigh how legislation under discussion at our state capitol will impact our children.

We need to make sure every student, regardless of background or age, has access to a great education so they can reach their full potential. We also need to make sure those students can get a good job after they graduate from high school, college, or any form of post-secondary education.

I'm proud to report that DFL lawmakers in the Minnesota House of Representatives are taking serious steps to achieve both of those goals.

The recently approved House K-12 education omnibus bill is designed to fully close our achievement gap, reach a 100 percent high school graduation rate, 100 percent literacy rate by third grade, and 100 percent career and college readiness by graduation. This bill truly means brighter futures for all children in Minnesota.

In order to meet those ambitious goals, our bill takes the following steps:

- Fully funds all-day, every day kindergarten.
- Invests \$50 million in early learning childhood scholarships.
- Increases the basic funding formula for K-12 schools by over \$315 million, or \$209 per pupil.
- Replaces the GRAD exam with career and college readiness entrance exams. Students would begin taking these tests in middle school to provide parents and kids with important diagnostics to empower them with early planning for their career goals and success in learning. This is a more effective, fairer way to use tests and it will create more opportunities for children of color to graduate.

In addition to taking these steps, House DFLers have a plan to fully pay back the remaining school shift balance of over \$800 million, which is included in our taxes omnibus bill.

We also have a jobs and economic development omnibus bill that creates good jobs throughout Minnesota.

Our plan includes \$46 million in additional investments over the next biennium for programs like the Minnesota Investment Fund (MIF), which provides low interest loans for businesses thinking of setting up shop in Minnesota and for in-state businesses thinking about expanding their operations. It also includes a substantial tax cut for employers by reducing the rate they pay on unemployment insurance taxes, saving the average employer about \$150 per employee.

We understand that we can't erase achievement gaps or reduce unemployment rates overnight, but the legislation we're passing will make a big difference in the lives of all Minnesotans, especially our children.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about the Minnesota legislature, please

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Together we are stronger!