

Talking with your Legislator

Make Your “Two Minutes” Count!

Some people are unsure what to say when contacting their legislators. Legislators have told us that they want to hear what’s important to you along with specifics that answer the question: “Why has public education been important to you and your family?”

In addition to our letter writing tips, CASE has assembled some talking points that may help you when contacting your legislators.

Talking Points for ECFE/Preschool Parents

- ECFE teachers have taught me how to be a more effective parent. (You can elaborate with one or two reasons: I better understand my child’s behavior, I understand how my child learns, etc.)
- I have met other parents in ECFE that provide support and practical ideas for problem solving.
- Research by Art Rolnick at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis has shown that investment in high quality early childhood programs helps to produce contributing members of society, with a lower crime rate and an overall high public benefit. Research by other local economists has shown that for every \$1 spent on good early childhood programming, there’s \$7-\$16 savings in the long term.
- ECFE provides a place where small children are seen weekly by trained professionals that can monitor for any problems, such as developmental delays and learning disabilities that may otherwise be missed, especially in children that do not have other early childhood experiences. Catching these issues early results in taking action early, saving money on services in school and beyond.
- ECFE is a program that we can’t afford to cut. It has been a successful statewide model that has supported the healthy growth and development of families for the past thirty-six years. We should be building on this already existing strong foundation.

Talking Points for Elementary Parents

- My child will be in Minnetonka Public Schools for the next XX years. We need a strong education system to provide him/her the tools to be successful.
- Reading is critical to a child’s future success in school and beyond. The literacy skills built at the elementary level serve our children for life.
- Our changing world requires today’s children to be lifelong learners. We need to promote that in the early years of their education by having high quality, engaging programs.
- Technology has been shown to be an accelerator of learning. Without strong technology programs our children’s abilities will be eclipsed by those of children in other parts of the world.
- Creativity and the ability to innovate have been touted as critical for 21st Century learners. We need to ensure funding for programs such as art and music to encourage these skills in young learners

Talking Points for Middle School Parents

- Middle School is an important time of development and transition for students. We need to have sufficient funding in our schools to allow them to provide programs for adolescent students to be able to explore their interests in a variety of subjects such as foreign language, music, art, consumer science and STEM.
- We need strong programs to prepare our students for the rigors of high school. This requires sufficient and stable funding for education.
- Middle school students have many diverse needs. Minnetonka Public Schools and other Districts need to be able to continue to innovate and provide our students with the differentiation they require from remediation programs to challenging high potential learners.
- My child will only experience Middle School once. We need to maximize his/her time there by continuing to provide a world-class education that includes co-curriculars and rigorous and relevant offerings.
- It is important to have a strong continuum from elementary to high school. If we are not allowed to properly resource education, how can we ensure this?

Talking Points for High School Parents

- High School is an important time for life preparation for students. Regardless of their post-secondary plans, all students need the skills to thrive in a diverse and changing world. We need a strong public school system in place to provide these skills.
- With the dramatic increase in college tuition, it is even more beneficial for students to receive some college credit for their efforts in high school. Programs that offer rigor and relevance such as Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and Post Secondary Education Option (PSEO) can save families thousands of dollars in college tuition costs.
- Honing skills in innovation and collaboration offers students keys to future success in the 21st century world. We need to support programs that foster these skills in all of our high schools by supporting programs such as Art, Music, STEM, etc.
- It has been shown to be critical in skill development to provide students with many opportunities for non-fiction writing. We need to have stable and secure education funding to support innovation approaches in writing such as the Writing Center at Minnetonka High School that promote student development in non-fiction writing.
- A key to developing future leaders is providing them opportunities to perform in public. We need to be able to continue to provide these to our students through affordable co-curriculars and innovative class offerings.

Talking Points for Recent HS Graduates and Their Parents

- I (or my child) was well prepared for college because of the quality and rigor of education I received in Minnetonka Public Schools. Without stable and sufficient funding, my siblings/friends/neighbors may not have that same advantage.
- Without the access to technology I experienced in Minnetonka Public Schools, I (or my child) would have been challenged in today's technology laden world. Schools need to be able to provide their students with this access.