

Improving Opportunities *for* Future Generations

THE EMMER EDUCATION REFORM AGENDA



Improving Opportunities for Future Generations
THE EMMER EDUCATION REFORM AGENDA

Introduction 3

Part I **Accountability 4**

Part II **Effectiveness 5**

Part III **Innovation 6**

EmmerForGovernor.com

Prepared and Paid for by Tom Emmer for Governor
P. O. Box 14269 Saint Paul MN 55114

EMMER
for GOVERNOR

INTRODUCTION

As governor, my two top priorities are these: First, creating jobs; and second, improving education. To create jobs, in the short term we must lift the tax burden from Minnesota employers so they can reinvest and hire new workers. But to create jobs in the long run, we can't be economically competitive with other states and with the rest of the world unless we improve student achievement. And that means improving education through long-overdue reforms – reforms which neither Mark Dayton or Tom Horner are willing to consider. I see reforming education to be as much about jobs and future prosperity as it is about learning.

My education reform agenda focuses on three main pillars: improving teacher and school accountability, addressing teacher effectiveness, and facilitating innovation within our current system. In the next few years, we need to make 50 years' progress in reform – we need a 21st century education model for a 21st century economy. The challenge we face today isn't about accounting or dollars spent – it's a challenge to fundamentally change how we teach our kids to succeed in the modern world. I am outlining a vision for how to move Minnesota back on top not just in the U.S. but also internationally. We have one goal in our reform plan: improving educational outcomes for our students.



Tom Emmer

PART I: ACCOUNTABILITY

The starting point of educational reform is measuring outcomes, reporting those outcomes to the public and rewarding improvement and success.

Measure

Testing is the best way to measure student progress. What gets measured will get done.

Enhanced student testing involves:

Create a baseline

A firm baseline provides our testing program a point from which improvement is measured.

Set high standards

A competitive global economy requires our students to lead the way in aptitude and achievement.

Improve test quality

Improve upon the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment.

Report

After measuring student achievement, report the results.

Improved reporting requires:

Enhance Local access

Report results to parents, students and employers in an understandable manner. Give teachers the important information and feedback they need throughout the year and in a timely manner.

Empower school leaders

Give teachers and administrators the opportunity to correct deficiencies.

Grade the schools

Give parents and students the option of moving out of a classroom or a school that isn't doing a good enough job.

Reward

Reward teacher and school performance of those who improve and succeed.

Modify our reward system emphasizes:

Focus on those who excel

For too long we have treated our teachers who excel the same as those who do not – and even those who do a poor job. We need to reward those who excel.

Institute real performance pay

Rewards for teachers should be real, tangible, and yes, unequal. The best should get paid the best.

PART II: EFFECTIVENESS

In order to ensure that every teacher in every classroom is effective, teacher ineffectiveness must be addressed.

Alternative pathways to licensure

Open the classroom doors to well-qualified adults who haven't taken the traditional steps to become teachers.

Encourage the best and the brightest from all walks of life to share their experience with students.

Tenure reform

Evaluate teachers annually.

Re-evaluate tenure once every five years.

Evaluation

Evaluate teachers based upon how much progress their students make.

Measure teacher effectiveness to promote improvement.

Counsel teacher career changes for ineffective teachers after 3 consecutive years of poor performance.

Revamp the teacher education system

Require higher standards for enrollment, residency programs, and partnerships with school districts.

Hold the higher education system accountable for graduating teachers who are prepared to be effective in the classroom.

Competency

Institute more rigorous teacher competency exams for licensure.

Withhold limited licenses from teachers that cannot pass competency exams.

PART III: INNOVATION

It is important to recognize that children come in all shapes, sizes, colors, and dispositions. One size does not fit all, and moving away from the traditional command and control model of education requires giving real authority to educators in return for responsibility for achieving genuine results.

Innovation in the public education system includes:

Reduce burdensome mandates

Allow school districts to petition the state for exemptions from mandates of their choice.

School reform involves empowering educators to do their job without onerous, prescriptive orders from above.

Create Urban School District Empowerment Zones

Schools with the toughest jobs – educating a large population of students struggling to navigate the social and academic challenges of the school system – need the most empowerment to take assertive steps to close the achievement gap.

Schools will be exempt from a greater number of state and local mandates – including some collective bargaining provisions.

School boards have ability to place effective teachers in the classroom.

Expand early childhood education

Utilize state-provided scholarships for children to attend approved public or private pre-schools.

Pre-school programs need to be measured for effectiveness in the way K–12 schools will be.

Increase education options

Make sure that students and parents have as many choices as possible to find the right fit for their educational goals.

Increase strong charter school options – replicate the charter school models that have been successful.

Enhance Minnesota’s budding virtual online schools.