



School District Integration Revenue

Update to 2005 Evaluation Report

Problems Identified

- **Unclear Purpose.** Minnesota statutes and the Department of Education's (MDE) Desegregation Rule outlined a variety of ways in which school districts could use their integration revenue, ranging from opportunities for "interracial contacts" to staff development programs. In addition, school district staff had varying and contradictory ideas as to how they could use their integration revenue.
- **Insufficient Oversight.** MDE did not conduct regular evaluations of districts' integration plans or review all racially identifiable schools to determine whether intentional segregation occurred.
- **Funding Formula Problems.** The integration revenue formula did not reflect the needs of different districts and provided a disincentive for districts to achieve racial balance among their schools. In addition, MDE had no role in school districts' decisions to become "voluntary" districts (districts that voluntarily choose to participate in an integration plan), and it had limited authority regarding how the Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth school districts used their integration revenue.

Changes Implemented

- **MDE Oversight Improved.** MDE reviewed 14 racially identifiable schools to determine whether intentional segregation occurred. MDE staff also increased site visits, published revised expenditure guidelines, sponsored a statewide integration conference, and identified "promising" integration practices.

Action Needed

- **Clarify Purpose of Program.** The Legislature should develop more specific and focused statutory language regarding the purpose of the Integration Revenue program. This would help to reduce inconsistencies across districts and increase the likelihood that districts are providing the opportunities intended by the Legislature.
- **Revise the Funding Formula.** The Legislature should consider changing the funding formula to more directly link funding to a district's integration responsibilities. For example, school districts with greater integration responsibilities or with larger populations of protected students should receive more integration revenue funding.
- **Increase MDE's Approval Authority.** The Legislature should give MDE authority to approve voluntary districts before they are able to participate in the program. The Legislature should also give MDE approval authority of the Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth school districts' integration budgets.