

ISS

SPECIAL MESSAGE

TO THE

LEGISLATURE

on

EDUCATION

Governor Elmer L. Andersen.

April 5, 1961

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STATE OF MINNESOTA

SPECIAL MESSAGE TO THE LEGISLATURE ON EDUCATION

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No governmental responsibility has had more consistent and generous support in our state than education. It is important that this legislative session reflect the people's concern by providing adequately for all levels of education in this period of critical expansion. I am writing to summarize my position on a number of the fundamental issues yet to be decided.

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

I know that many formulas for state aid to elementary and secondary education have been proposed to you. I believe that changing the measure of local effort in formula A from 19 mills to 18.5 mills and leaving the foundation aid base at \$270 but using the 1957 EARC report (for both years of the biennium) would result in help needed to offset increased costs. In a small number of districts in the northern part of the state where assessed valuations have taken a decided drop and hardship could be involved in using the 1957 figure, special provision could be made. I believe that an increase from \$87 to \$90 in the formula B aid, is the minimum increase that should be made.

I believe an interim commission should be established to study the state aid formula and review the EARC studies.

Of the greatest importance is the protection of the income tax school fund for support of elementary and secondary education. Anytime the legislature diverts substantial sums of money from this fund, grade and high school education support suffers. In our budget message we tried to undo some of the diversion

of the 1959 session and subsequently provided for moving \$10 million of the income tax surtax that had gone into the general revenue back into the income tax school fund. We should return to complete dedication of the income tax school fund for elementary and secondary schools.

JUNIOR COLLEGES

Junior Colleges are now an integral part of our higher education and are deserving of increased state aid. I recommend \$300 per year for resident students and \$400 per year for non-resident students. It had been my hope that some action could be taken by this session also on the problem of capital needs of Junior Colleges.

STATE COLLEGES

We hope there will be no disposition to reduce the amount of appropriation recommended for state colleges in the budget message. We scrutinized the figures very carefully and felt that no less than the amount we recommended would be adequate in the biennium ahead.

We believe there is a need for a new state college in southwestern Minnesota. We would suggest you pass legislation establishing a college there, providing for the liaison committee on higher education to determine the location, and appropriating enough money to at least acquire the site and draw preliminary plans.

THE UNIVERSITY

The University of Minnesota is of the greatest significance educationally, economically, and culturally to everyone in our state. The demands upon it in

the years ahead will be very great. Our budget message recommended an increase in the appropriation to the University of more than \$10 million. This is a large amount, the largest increase ever recommended to a legislature, yet we wish we might have felt justified in recommending more. The need is there. If the revenues can be found, every additional dollar that you could invest in the University would be money well spent. To consider appropriating any less than our recommendation would be the poorest kind of economy.

I do not believe the legislature should shirk its responsibility by pressuring the Board of Regents into higher and higher tuition rates. This is not only an improper intrusion on the function of the Board of Regents but contrary to the public interest. It tends to make attendance at the University limited to those better off economically rather than those most able to benefit from higher education. We need scholarship programs not high tuition hurdles.

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The presently provided salary for the Commissioner of Education of our state is among the lowest of all the states for such position. We pride ourselves on a fine educational program and make it impossible to find the new leadership now needed because of the limited salary attaching to the top position. Surely you will correct this matter. Likewise, salary adjustments are needed for all of the professional employees of the State Department of Education.

The work of the vocational rehabilitation division of our Department of Education is of the greatest importance. It relies upon the state legislature for funds with which to match federal grants. Appropriations in 1959 were inadequate to carry on a proper program. We trust this will be remedied by this session.

OTHER MEASURES

We urge the continuation of the liaison committee on higher education with adequate appropriation to provide for staff and expense needs.

We believe it would be advisable to enact a measure to provide standards and regulation for the private trade schools.

As Chairman of the Interim Commission Study on Problems of Handicapped Children a number of years ago I remember that our commission also surveyed activities in the field of gifted children and found our state, as so many others, sadly lacking. You have a number of proposals to expand opportunity for gifted students, and we should not neglect the opportunity of developing this most important of all our resources.

Research in education is every bit as important as research in nuclear physics. An important project studying methods of teaching mathematics is accomplishing significant results in our state and it should be supported and supplemented with similar studies in other fields.

Providing adequately for education is made difficult in this session by the depletion of the state income tax school fund, the deficiency in the general revenue fund. Education is by far the greatest user of state funds. I will support your courage in providing adequately for all the needs of education in every way that I can. If this generation does not thank you, the next one will.

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