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## New view of schools starts with rethinking where money goes

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The Vision 2015 initiative to rethink public schools launched last October with a sense of urgency about academic standards, teacher professionalism and family involvement. Since education already takes \$1.3 billion from the state budget, this winter it became clear that neither the governor nor Legislature would come close to the \$35 million price tag on Vision 2015's ideas.

But there is still forward motion. Philanthropies, business and district partnerships have been sought to start projects, like a new virtual online school for middle and high school students.

And significantly, Gov. Minner this week created another working group to examine state K-12 spending, where the money comes from, how it is distributed, and alternatives to today's formulas.

There already are vast sums going to education at the national, state and local levels. It's clear that simply adding more is no assurance that the system will adapt effectively for the right results. New directions should entail redirecting funds to best advantage.

Marvin Schoenhals, the WSFS bank chairman who also leads Vision 2015, said that taxes and equalization formulas should be part of this critical examination. Voter revolts in school referendums have made the same point more bluntly.

Gov. Minner has yet to select the 19 members of this new Leadership for Achievement in Education Committee, but Vision 2015 will be represented.

They also will be charged with drafting a one-page performance report card to compare school, district and state achievements.

So Vision 2015 has gotten its big message across. When more is expected of schools, basic assumptions including finance have to change.

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