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**Subject:** Jeb Bush Shares Roadmap for Reform with Minnesota Legislature



## **Jeb Bush Shares Roadmap for Reform with Minnesota Legislature**

### *Minnesota Takes Steps to Transform Education for the 21st Century*

**St Paul, Minnesota** During the last decade, Florida student achievement in reading and math has increased dramatically, while Minnesota student achievement has remained stagnant, according to the Nations Report Card (National Assessment for Educational Progress). Today, Jeb Bush, Chair of the Foundation for Excellence in Education and Governor of Florida from 1999 to 2007, shared the lessons of reform that reversed a generation of decline in public schools and led to sustained rising student achievement in the Sunshine State.

The quality of education in America will determine our destiny as a nation, said Jeb Bush. Governors and Legislators must seize the opportunity to transform education for the 21st century.

"Minnesota has a long history of education reform," said Minnesota House Speaker Kurt Zellers. "We want to ensure our students are getting the best education with a system focused on equipping students to compete in the world's economy. Our reforms, some modeled after successful programs in Florida, will give Minnesota students the education they need and deserve."

"In order to ensure an educated workforce, we need to follow a course of meaningful education reforms," said Senate Majority Leader Amy Koch (R-Buffalo). "Minnesota has one of the largest achievement gaps in the nation, and if we are serious about closing that gap, we cannot continue the status quo approach in our public schools."

In his address to a special joint meeting of the Minnesota Senate and House of Representatives, Bush outlined the policies that improved results in Florida and can make the difference in Minnesota, including:

- Raising standards and expectations for all students,
- Grading schools on a scale of A F,
- Making reading a requirement of advancing to the fourth grade,
- Rewarding schools and teachers for rising student achievement, and
- Providing an unprecedented array of educational choices for students.

Florida made incredible progress in the last ten years with minority students making the

greatest gains, said Bush. If Florida can do it, Minnesota can do it.

The Minnesota Legislature is currently considering legislation to increase accountability by grading schools A-F based on student learning, improve literacy by placing a command focus on reading and expand educational choice for Minnesotas students. The legislature passed and Governor Dayton recently signed legislation to provide quality teachers additional pathways to enter the classroom.

Florida has 2.7 million public school students. The student population is majority minority and half the students are living on the poverty line (eligible for free and reduced price lunch). In 1998, nearly half of Floridas fourth grade students were functionally illiterate. Today, more than 70 percent of Floridas 4th graders are reading on grade level or higher.

Click the following link to watch the press conference with legislative leaders: [http://www.senate.mn/media/media\\_video\\_popup.php?type=live](http://www.senate.mn/media/media_video_popup.php?type=live)

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The [Foundation for Excellence in Education](#) is igniting a movement of reform, state by state, to transform education for the 21st century economy. Excellence in Action, the organizations flagship initiative, is working with lawmakers and policymakers to advance education reform across America.

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