

# Omaha Together One Community

## *Criteria for Educational Equity*

OTOC has developed the following set of criteria upon which to assess all educational equity plans proposed by school districts, legislators and/or civic leaders.

ISSUE	OTOC CRITERIA TO ASSESS PLAN
<b>FUND PUBLIC EDUCATION PROPORTIONAL TO NEED: SOURCE, FORMULA, ALLOCATION</b>	
<p>Primary source of funding public education in Nebraska is local property taxes. Currently, state aid is determined based upon need and resources <u>by district</u>, thus creating a disproportionate reliance upon state aid due to the discrepancies in the amount of property tax wealth per resident student.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Address property tax inequities</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Create the means for all of Omaha's residents to share responsibility for the public education of all Omaha's students</i></li> </ul>
<p>The state aid formula is intended to provide adequate resources based upon need, including extra funding for students who receive free and reduced price lunch and English Language Learners (ELL). The formula increments, which currently cap at 30% of a district's students in poverty, have failed to adequately provide sufficient and timely.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Expand the weighting system in the funding formula, providing additional poverty needs adjustments beyond 30%</i></li> </ul>
<p>The state of Nebraska owes the public schools \$500 million in funds slashed from funding allocation between 1999 and 2004. The promise to reinstate the funds when economic times improved has not been kept.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Restore and fully fund the state aid formula</i></li> </ul>
<b>ADVOCATE EQUITABLE POLICY: TRAINING, PROGRAMS, FUNDING</b>	
<p>All citizens of Omaha share the responsibility to properly educate all students in our community. Polite attempts to get widespread support and cooperation from civic and school leaders in all districts have not been successful.</p> <p>Studies prove that small class size makes a significant difference for students especially those who don't speak English and those who live in poverty.</p> <p>Publicly funded preschool and all day Kindergarten, currently provided for students in most suburban districts, will prove equally valuable for poorer students, and arguably crucial for their future success.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Fund training and/or graduate education for teachers to address individual student needs. (e.g., English as a second language, those who live in poverty, and gifted)</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Develop policy to ensure stable, qualified staff in every building</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Address the special problems of students whose families move frequently, which impacts the classroom learning environment of all students</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Provide summer school and pre-kindergarten classes on an equitable basis based on need</i></li> </ul>
<b>PROMOTE INTEGRATION: ETHNIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC</b>	
<p>Omaha needs to face and address issues of poverty, race, and socio-economics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Increase integration both between and within districts</i></li> <li>✓ <i>Fund transportation that promotes diversity</i></li> </ul>
<b>PROVIDE EQUITABLE GOVERNANCE</b>	
<p>Parents, educators and community members deserve a voice in determining the best education for our students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Include representation from ethnic minorities and various socioeconomic levels on governing boards</i></li> </ul>