

Hopkins Public Schools - **Legislative Action Coalition**



Brilliant Futures 2020 State Legislative Platform for Public Education

In Hopkins, we are inventing a bold new educational model that delivers a **brilliant future for all students**, regardless of their race, gender, culture, or economic status. To fulfill that promise we must pursue an agenda of innovation and equity leadership that prepares students of today for the 21st-century workforce and world.

We seek to remove barriers to advancing this vision at the legislative level and therefore urge the Governor and Legislators to address our 2020 platform priorities.

Bold Innovation

Make Minnesota **the** leader in education innovation. Our public schools are preparing students **now** to solve some of the world's biggest and most complex problems in an economy that is highly globalized and rapidly changing. Help us disrupt the current educational system – designed for the 19th Century – to eradicate predictable outcomes and secure brilliant futures for every student in Minnesota.

Educator Excellence and Equity

Promote excellence in the teaching profession and ensure students have access to educators from diverse backgrounds by upholding the current tiered-licensure system and expanding pathways to recruit, prepare and retain teachers of color.

Brilliant Beginnings

Brilliant futures begin in early childhood where the foundation for life-long success is laid, yet our innovative programs are constrained by unfunded mandates. Partner with us to rectify this unsustainable situation by making early childhood Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) funding consistent and predictable.

Enhance Local Control

Local school boards require flexibility to address the unique needs of their communities. There are numerous instances where the Legislature has substituted its judgment for that of public school boards, locally elected, who reflect the needs of their communities.

Our Constitutional Obligation

Without stable and predictable funding Hopkins Public Schools is unable to be innovative and meet student needs. Funding for crucial services needs to be stabilized, increased, and unrestricted so that schools can use resources where they will have the most impact.

What Matters for Minnesota's Future



BOLD INNOVATION

Make Minnesota *the* leader in education innovation. Our public schools are preparing students *now* to solve some of the world's largest and most complex problems in an economy that is highly globalized and rapidly changing. Help us disrupt the current

educational system - designed for the 19th Century - to eradicate predictable outcomes and secure brilliant futures for every student in Minnesota.

To ensure that **all** Minnesota students have access to innovative programming and global experiences, we ask that you help us:

Expand Access to Qualified Teachers and Staff from around the U.S./ World

- Create a simple, streamlined process for qualified, licensed, experienced educators from other states (or countries) to expand their license to Minnesota, without having to repeat completed coursework.
- Expand programs and incentives to attract, develop and retain teachers, particularly of color and teachers in shortage areas.
- Maintain multiple pathways to licensure in the tiered licensing system.

Change the status quo of standardized tests. Meaningful assessments should aim to be an accurate measure of a student's strengths and weaknesses; useful to both the student and teacher for the advancement of her education. MN Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) do not provide this data, which is why many students opt out.

- Hopkins High School is reflective of statewide trends:
 - In 2018/19, 46% opted out of 11th grade Math MCA's
 - In 2018/19, 21% opted out of 10th grade Reading MCA's
 - MCA's do not offer an accurate snapshot of our schools, nor do they provide meaningful data that benefit students.
- Allow one or more school districts to pilot a replacement of the High School MCA's with a nationally recognized assessment such as the ACT's, as provided by ESSA statute. Hopkins Public Schools looks forward to participating in this pilot.

Encourage Flexible Partnerships by allowing public school districts to merge with charter schools within the district's geographical boundaries. There is power in the collective and if joined together, the combined resources and talent of both entities will provide greater opportunities for students. **Support HF2046, as amended**, from the 2019 legislature.

What Matters for a Diverse Workforce



EDUCATOR EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY

Promote excellence in the teaching profession and ensure students have access to educators from diverse backgrounds by **upholding the current tiered-licensure system** and expanding pathways to recruit, prepare and retain teachers of color.

In response to a forecasted statewide teacher shortage, the 2017 Minnesota Legislature requested that the Legislative Auditor look into the teacher licensure system in Minnesota. At the conclusion of its report, the Legislative Auditor recommended Minnesota streamline its teacher licensure process and encouraged state policymakers to consider adopting a tiered licensure system and creating a new agency to oversee the process.

The 2018 Legislature and Governor responded by adopting a new 4-tiered teacher licensure system and a new state agency, the Professional Educator and Licensure Standards Board (PELSB) to implement the new system. Minnesota's adoption of this new system has been an **important first step** for school districts to attract high quality candidates from other states, including states with larger populations of diverse teachers.

To ensure that Minnesota's teachers reflect the diversity of their students, we ask that you help us:

Encourage out-of-state recruitment, critical to diversifying Minnesota's teacher workforce, since only 4% of Minnesota's teachers are people of color and only 11 percent of graduates from Minnesota teacher preparation programs are people of color.

- Hopkins Public Schools reports 47% students of color, higher than the state average of 34%.

Simplify the licensure process for out-of-state teachers seeking to teach in Minnesota.

Maintain the tiered licensure system that provides a pathway to recruit, hire and retain high quality Language Immersion, CTE and Career Pathways teachers, thus ensuring students have the opportunity to be global citizens, graduating from high school ready for career or college.

- Hopkins Public Schools is adding a Spanish Immersion program (Fall 2020) for K-6 students, as part of its Language Academy, which includes the Chinese Immersion program. Hiring Native speakers to teach in these programs depends on the tiered licensure system.

Support Policy Amendments proposed in the Increase Teachers of Color Act 2019 (HF824/SF1012) which provide Non-Conventional and Residency Programs, Grants for teacher candidates in Shortage Areas, and Expansion of Grow-Your-Own programs for paraprofessionals.

Expand access to existing funding streams like the Grow Your Own Pathways to Teacher Licensure Grants, Minnesota Teacher Mentorship and Retention Grants, the Collaborative Urban and Greater Minnesota Educators of Color Grants.

What Matters for Early Learning



BRILLIANT BEGINNINGS

Brilliant futures begin in early childhood where the foundation for life-long success is laid, yet our innovative programs are constrained by unfunded mandates. Partner with us to rectify this unsustainable situation by making early childhood

Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) funding consistent and predictable.

Hopkins funds our innovative early childhood programs through a **braided funding model**. At times, this model which pulls funds from different pools can result in unintended segregated learning of our students. This is *not* how we educate children in Hopkins, and **it places a burden on our staff to satisfy redundancies in the system** as they meet the requirements of up to four revenue streams for one classroom of children.

To ensure quality early learning models that serve all families we ask that you help us:

- **Ensure flexible funding for early childhood programs** so students enter classrooms that represent the full diversity of their community.
- **Streamline the financial aid application for parents** to increase access for our most vulnerable families. It is currently three pages of instructions for an 11 page application.
- **Permanently fund School Readiness-Plus** so that schools can rely on those dollars for program consistency and staffing.
- **Address the teacher shortage**, attract teachers of color to this field and retain the early childhood staff we currently have by **providing alternative pathways to teacher licensure**, **keep the current tiered system** and **create a statewide starting rate of pay** ensuring that all licensed teachers are compensated at the same rate.
- **Streamline the system for meeting Parent Aware requirements** by acknowledging the high standards school districts have already set and maintain.

Join us in crafting a **bold new piece of Early Learning legislation** that ties all of the funding streams together, simplifies funding sources, and eliminates unnecessary barriers to early learning for all Hopkins families.



LOCAL CONTROL

Local school boards require flexibility to address the unique needs of their communities. There are numerous instances where the Legislature has substituted its judgment for that of public school boards, who are locally elected and reflect the needs of their communities.

Local control and citizen input are the cornerstones of our public school systems, yet **over 30 bills were introduced in the 2019 session to restrict local control.** Each Minnesota school district faces unique needs which depend on a variety of factors, including demographics, geography, and district size. Elected school boards are best positioned to work with their students, staff, parents, and community members to address local needs and challenges. Historically, school boards have governed curriculum and graduation requirements.

We believe the Legislature should oppose any legislation that increases administrative costs and limits locally elected school boards' ability to address the unique needs of their students and community.

To ensure that locally elected school boards retain the authority given by their constituents we ask that you help us:

Resist implementing one-size-fits-all mandates which usually result in more spending and less control by our school boards.

Allow School boards to renew operating levies without being forced to conduct an expensive referendum, since, historically, 99% of them pass. The support is broad with majorities of both Republicans and Democrats expressing support. Recent referendum renewal elections provide further evidence of public support. Over the last six years Minnesota school districts have placed 92 operating referendum renewals on the ballot. All 92 have passed - often with overwhelming majorities. Here is the operating levy renewal rate for the last 6 years:

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Year	Approval
2014	18 of 18 approved
2015	22 of 22 approved
2016	14 of 14 approved
2017	20 of 20 approved
2018	8 of 8 approved
2019	10 of 10 approved

Restore the authority of school districts to determine their own property tax rates, like all other taxing authorities in Minnesota (including the Metropolitan Mosquito Control District).

Exempt school districts (or any entity covered by a collective bargaining contract) from the onerous administrative requirements of the recently passed ‘wage theft’ law. (Minnesota Statutes 181.032, paragraph (f)).

- Hopkins has had to hire two part-time people in order to comply with the onerous administrative requirements of the wage theft law. The legislature did not provide any additional funding to cover those salaries.
- Senator Eric Pratt, the author of this legislation, reacted to the Department of Labor and Industry’s interpretation of the law saying “During the next legislative session, it would be our intent to clarify and fix the language with suggestions from employers and the help of [MDE] to properly carry out the intent of the wage theft legislation...”

Permit local school boards to set school calendars that are unconstrained by date limitations that were set in the early 1900’s when Minnesota was primarily an agrarian state.



What Matters for *All* Minnesota Students

OUR CONSTITUTIONAL OBLIGATION

Without stable and predictable funding Hopkins Public Schools is unable to be innovative and meet student needs. Funding for crucial services must be stabilized, increased, and unrestricted so that schools can use resources where they will have the most impact.

The Minnesota Constitution makes it the duty of the Legislature to establish a general and uniform system of public schools, and make such provisions by taxation or otherwise to secure a thorough and efficient system of public schools throughout the state (Article XIII, Section 1. Uniform system of public schools).

To ensure thorough and efficient public schools, we ask that you help us:

- **Fully Fund Special Education** as mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a law that makes available a **free appropriate public education to eligible children** with disabilities throughout the nation and ensures special education and related services to all students.
- **Provide immediate and stable resources for school-linked mental health services** as well as proactive student-focused initiatives such as wellness centers, in school meditation and conflict resolution training.
- **Ensure safe and secure schools** by expanding access to funding resources and making funding permanent.
- **Uphold Article XIII, Section 2, Prohibition as to aiding sectarian schools** by keeping public dollars in public education.
- **Target social justice reforms** and aid the move from a punitive to a restorative culture in Minnesota schools.

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- **Respect all students** and prohibit the punishment and shaming of students whose family is unable to pay school meal fees. No child should incur a debt because of financial constraints beyond their control.
- **Uphold Article XI, Sec. 8, the Permanent School Fund** by maintaining the integrity of the School Trust Lands and the decision-making authority of the Director of the School Lands Trust.