



# **2023 Legislative Platform**

**Legislative Breakfast  
March 3, 2023**

# Stillwater Area Public Schools' Statistics

Enrollment (K-12+) =  
**8,202 students**

## Buildings:

Early childhood center = 1

Elementary schools = 7

Middle schools = 2

High school = 1

Alternative learning center = 1

Based on 2022-2023 Enrollment Data

Special Program Participation	
*National School Lunch	23%
Special Education	15%
English Learner	4%

Federal Race/ Ethnicity	
American Indian	1%
Asian	7%
Black	7%
Pacific Islander	0.05%
White	77%
Hispanic or Latino	7%

\*NOTE: This is the first year the state is using a Direct Certification process to identify students eligible for free or reduced-price meals because they have already been approved for participation in other nutrition supplement programs.

# Priority #1: Stabilize education funding

- Increase the basic education formula by 4% each year; indexed to inflation.
- Fully fund the Special Education and English learner (EL) cross subsidy.
- Increase Transportation Sparsity revenue to eliminate the funding gap for pupil transportation costs.
- Lift the Safe Schools levy cap and/or provide additional funding to allow districts to hire additional support staff to address the safety and mental health needs of students.

# Why stable education funding matters

## In Stillwater Area Public Schools:

- We have a \$1,263 per student gap this year because the state's general education funding formula has not kept pace with inflation since 1992- this equates to **\$11.2 million in lost revenue** this year alone for our district.
- The special education shortfall resulted in a **\$12 million adjusted net cross subsidy** for fiscal year 2022.
- The English Learner shortfall resulted in a **\$650,000 funding gap** in 2022. The need for English Learner programming has increased significantly in our district.
- For fiscal year 2023, the district's transportation revenue will cover just **\$2.4 million (or 23%) of the total transportation costs of \$10.5 million.**



# Priority #2: Empower local decision-making

- Allow local school boards to renew an existing operating referendum.
- Resist new, statewide unfunded mandates.
- Provide sustainable funding for Multi-Tiered Systems of Support and programs like BARR (Building Assets Reducing Risks), Responsive Classroom, etc.
- Provide districts the flexibility to adapt learning environments for positive student outcomes and the ability to make decisions based on local needs.

# Why local decision-making matters

- Creates more stability and consistency for community, staff and students.
- Allows district leaders to focus limited resources where they are most needed.

## Examples from Stillwater:

- Our existing operating levy equates to **14.5% of our total operating budget**.
- The impact of COVID on our students remains, but federal funding is expiring. We're facing a federal fiscal cliff in September 2024 (or before).
  - **Losing \$1.7 million** for social/emotional and mental health supports (ie. social workers, psychologists, behavior supports).
  - **Losing \$1.3 million** for academic support (ie. Intervention teachers, student engagement specialists, tutoring).
- Staffing challenges are impacting the services we can provide students and families. For example:
  - Child care waitlist has been as high as 400 students.

# Legislative Session: Factors to Consider

## Universal Meals:

- Concerns about the impact on our compensatory funding, which is estimated to negatively impact the district **\$271,000 annually**

## TRA Rule of 90:

- Increased employer contribution for every teacher in district costs **\$1,260,778**
- Operationally, easier to lose teachers to retirement when we're already facing a teacher shortage

## Parental Leave, Sick Leave and Unemployment:

- Would increase district's budget and compete with general fund dollars needed to support our students



# Community Education Priorities

The childcare crisis is a workforce issue:

- **HF150/SF53:** Modify current Childcare Stabilization base grants to maintain current level of funding through June of 2023
- Governor is proposing \$353 million in FY24-25 and \$345.5 million in FY26-27 to make the childcare stabilization grants permanent

Introduce an Adults with Disabilities program in the Stillwater area:

- **HF1045/SF864:** \$1/capita for the community education adults with disabilities program

Improve access to Community Education programs by increasing the levy:

- **HF683/SF666:** Community education revenue program funding would increase from \$5.42/capita to \$7/capita
- Has not been increased since 2007





# Legislator Comments



**Stillwater**  
AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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# Questions

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