



**MAINTAIN THE
MOMENTUM**

Hopkins Public Schools 2024 Legislative Priorities

We have so much to be grateful for as stewards and consumers of public education in Minnesota. In 2023, our Governor and Legislature approved significant funding measures: Linking the funding formula to inflation; reducing the cross-subsidies for special education and English learner programs; and providing free meals for all students. We appreciate the dedication and perseverance of our elected team.

We feel seen and are grateful for your ongoing partnership.

Moving forward into 2024, Hopkins Public Schools seeks to build upon these successes and **maintain the momentum.**

With the help of our legislators, we look to narrow the gaps and close the 'loopholes' that still exist in our school systems.

We ask the Governor's office and the Minnesota Legislature to partner with us to focus on our students; their safety, mental wellness, innovative ways of learning, and to celebrate their successes.



MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM

Hopkins Public Schools 2024 Legislative Priorities

1 Expand and Stabilize Student Safety and services by increasing and stabilizing funding, resources, and access.

- Increase the Safe Schools levy from \$36 to \$108 per pupil and expand allowable uses to include training and staffing for non-exclusionary discipline & restorative practices;
- Remove the per-pupil limit in the Long-Term Facilities Maintenance Revenue program and expand allowable uses to include security modifications to buildings, remodeling, and additions to existing space;
- Clarify language related to the use of physical restraints to ensure the safety of students and staff.

2 Expand Mental Health Support for students and staff.

- Work with the MN Dept of Education, the MN Dept of Health and Human Services, and their federal counterparts, to reform and expand the funding mechanisms for School Social Workers and site-based Psychologists;
- Reduce grant-based funding mechanisms, which are not sustainable, and replace them with targeted funding;
- Expand the Full-Service Community School model which embeds mental wellness, student health, and food security.

3 Eliminate Compensatory Funding Qualification based on free and reduced-price lunch applications, and move toward community eligibility for essential services.

- Support legislation to sever school funding from free/reduced meal applications and devise a new model for calculating need-based funding (HF1547, SF2017);
- Consider federal models that already exist to identify need-based funding, including Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), Medicaid, and income tax.

4 Empower Locally Elected School Boards to do the job to which they were elected.

- Grant Local Control to school boards to set school calendars, and allow flexible and innovative spending priorities;
- Allow school boards to negotiate e-learning days and student-to-staff ratios through the 'meet and confer' process;
- Allow flexibility to school districts to determine when to offer newly-mandated courses such as Civics and Financial Literacy.

5 Spur Innovation and Reform outdated processes, procedures, and assessments which have become disconnected from reality.

- Create alternative pathways to graduation, promote student-centered, competency-based education, and grant credits to students wherever their learning occurs;
- Encourage and promote on-site certification programs so students can be career-ready in health services, education, and technology fields;
- Use flexibility allowed under ESSA to reduce the number of required standardized tests so school districts can offer assessments that more accurately measure growth, proficiency, and college or career readiness;
- Direct the MN Dept of Education to ensure that students who opt out of or do not participate in the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) are not counted in district score data sets;
- Work with MN Dept of Education and the MN Dept of Health and Human Services to examine and reform the ratio of adults to students enrolled in before and after- school programs;
- Work with MN Dept of Education and the MN Dept of Health to reduce extraneous paperwork requirements for districts' Special Education programs.

6 Reduce Educator and Staff Workforce Shortages

- Enhance support for programs like Grow Your Own and apprenticeships;
- Work with the Higher Education Committees to further develop additional programs to accelerate teacher education;
- Continue to provide alternative pathways to teacher licensure and return the tiered licensure system to its original version (see [Changes to Tiered Licensure \(HF1224SF1477\).\(PDF\)](#));
- Extend the short-call substitute teaching pilot project to 4 years.

7 Continue to Fund New Expectations for Schools

Despite the historic overall funding increase, districts continue to face financial challenges from decades of underfunding.

- Provide ongoing funding for new programs passed in 2023, including Paid Family Medical Leave, Earned Safe and Sick Time, the READ Act;
- Increase the basic funding formula by an additional 2 percent for FY 2025;
- Acknowledge the major impact of significant inflationary increases in costs associated with utilities, transportation, food, supplies, and insurance; [Education Funding: A Reality Check](#)