

INNOVATIVE EDUCATION



Hopkins Public Schools 2025 Legislative Priorities

We are grateful for your ongoing partnership that allows Hopkins to stay innovative, student centered, and authentically inclusive.

Moving forward means that we acknowledge that change is necessary if we want our students to have the skills they need to succeed. Hopkins Public Schools has a long history of excellence while doing what is right for our students. This foundation allows us to build a new model of education together; one that puts **students at the center**.

To reduce the opportunity gap, we must move beyond traditional practices that fail to equitably serve all learners. Hopkins is committed to creating a school system that ensures a bright future for every student, regardless of race, gender, culture, or economic status.



INNOVATIVE EDUCATION



Hopkins Public Schools 2025 Legislative Priorities


We urge the Governor's office and the Minnesota Legislature to collaborate with us in prioritizing individual student growth, encompassing academics and key traits like critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, empathy, adaptability, and multiple literacies. These qualities empower Hopkins scholars to view themselves as agents of positive change. With legislative support, we aim to advance student-centered learning and assessment.

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

- Safety Resources: Increase the Safe Schools levy from \$36 to \$108 per pupil and allow its use for training and restorative practices.
- Mental Health Support: Stabilize funding for school social workers, psychologists, and community school models that address wellness, health, and food security.
- Enhance Facilities: Allow the Long-Term Facilities Maintenance program to fund security modifications and additional class space.
- Cybersecurity Preparedness: Establish clear and funded policies for cyber reporting and protection. Ensure that such policies reflect the best practices required by other states.
- Restorative Justice: Move away from grant-based funding streams for implementing restorative justice best disciplinary practices so that critical relationships between students and adult staff can be maintained.

2 Reduce Educator and Staff Workforce Shortages and elevate the teaching profession, providing greater access.

- Teacher Recruitment: Expand "Grow Your Own" and apprenticeship programs, accelerate teacher education, and provide alternative licensure pathways.
- Expand and make the pilot program permanent by providing state-funded stipends for student teachers to reduce barriers to becoming licensed educators.
- Support paraprofessional staff: Analyze real data on current and projected paraprofessional salaries from resident school districts to understand the true costs of retaining valuable—and mandated—staff.
 - Hopkins employs ~225 paraprofessionals, earning an average wage of less than \$25K/year.
- Provide increased funding to hire non-licensed staff and help cover the costs of before-and-after-school care.
 - Hopkins Schools currently serves 747 students in before-and-after-school care programs, with 86 students still on the waiting list. This highlights the urgent need for additional resources.
 - Adjust the basic formula to reflect the actual costs of compensating and retaining essential—and mandated—paraprofessionals and other support staff.



INNOVATIVE EDUCATION

Hopkins Public Schools 2025 Legislative Priorities

3 Expand Student-Centered Learning and Assessment

to create meaningful and personalized experiences that prepare each and every student for a successful future.

- Modernize Education: Promote competency-based education, alternative graduation pathways, and career-readiness certifications.
- Reform outdated 'seat time' requirements and grant credits to students wherever their learning occurs.
- Transform Assessments: Decrease reliance on standardized tests and implement systems that better measure growth, mastery, and readiness. Direct the Minnesota Department of Education to establish a working group based on the recommendations of the 2017 Future Assessment Design Working Group.

4 Empower Local School Boards

School districts need time to implement the expansive new programs and requirements adopted during the last biennium. We urge state policymakers to refrain from enacting any new mandates and:

- Allow boards to manage school calendars, prioritize innovative spending, and negotiate e-learning days and class sizes.
- Enable school boards to post proceedings and decisions online for community access rather than requiring districts to pay to post them in local newspapers.

5 Continue to Fund Equitable Education for all Students

Despite a significant educational investment during the past 2 sessions, school funding is still short.

- Increase Per-Pupil Funding: Raise the basic funding formula by 3% for FY2026.
- Raise the inflationary cap from 3% to 5%. In funding considerations, recognize increases in utilities, transportation, and essential supplies. These costs have far outpaced the increases in the basic funding formula.
- Increase Local Optional Revenue (LOR) from \$724 to \$957 per pupil.
- Reform Funding Mechanisms: Transition from relying on free/reduced meal applications for compensatory funding to need-based models such as CEP or Medicaid.
- Support Essential, Mandated Services

These mandates have been required and have not been fully funded while demand is increasing:

- Special Education programs
- English Language Learner programs
- Universal School Meals program