



Stillwater Area Public Schools (ISD 834)

2025 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Thank you for the significant investments you made in public education during recent legislative sessions. We appreciate your support of our schools.

At the same time, historic inflation, staffing shortages, and recently enacted state mandates have created a new set of budget challenges for our district.

In 2025, we urge you to fully fund or repeal unfunded mandates from previous years.

Impact of Unfunded Mandates

- **READ Act:** We received \$334,146 in READ Act Literacy Aid and \$301,534 in READ Act Teachers Comp Aid.
 - Our anticipated curriculum costs = \$1.3 million. This does not include additional professional development costs incurred.
- **Minnesota Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Paid Leave Programs:**
 - The cost for summer UI claims for 2024 was \$390,000.
 - Expansion of paid time off does not take into account the district's replacement/substitute costs.
- **School Meals:**
 - If our district is not held harmless in compensatory funding, we will experience a \$300,000 loss with direct certification only.
- **Non-Exclusionary Discipline Requirements:**
 - Principals are spending more time addressing behavioral issues than focusing on instructional leadership.

Who We Are: The Stillwater Area Public School District serves about 8,200 students from 18 unique communities along the St. Croix River – from Marine to Afton and a portion of Woodbury. Our boundaries stretch 30 miles and cover approximately 150 square miles.

2024-2025 School Board

Sarah Grcevich
grcevichs@stillwaterschools.org

Katie Hockert
hockertk@stillwaterschools.org

Pete Kelzenberg
kelzenbergp@stillwaterschools.org

Chris Lauer
lauer@stillwaterschools.org

Rob Parker
parkerr@stillwaterschools.org

Alison Sherman
shermana@stillwaterschools.org

Andrew Thelander
thelander@stillwaterschools.org

Superintendent Michael Funk
funkm@stillwaterschools.org

Education Funding

- Increase the basic formula allowance by 3% over current law for FY26 and FY27.
- Reduce the cross-subsidies in the Special Education and English Learner programs.
 - Our English Learner cross subsidy in FY24 was \$940,000.
 - Our Special Education cross subsidy in FY24 was \$3.5 million.

Student Behavior and Support

- Expand the allowable uses of long-term facilities maintenance funding to include security modifications and additions for instructional spaces.
- Increase the safe schools levy and allow districts flexibility in how dollars are spent.
 - Our district currently spends \$757,000 in this area, but only receives \$446,000 (maximum allowed levy).

Assessments

- Discontinue the current practice of including scores of students whose parents choose to opt out of the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA).
- Replace the high school MCA with the ACT college entrance exam.

Other Priorities

- Allow districts to recover the rapidly escalating costs of data requests, including associated legal costs.
- Allow school boards to establish the school calendar that best meets the needs of their students, staff, and community.