



# Stillwater Area Public Schools (ISD 834)

# 2026 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

## Who We Are:

The Stillwater Area Public School District serves about 8,300 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.

Thank you for your ongoing support of our students, staff and schools!

## 2025-26 School Board

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## Education Funding Priorities

### Increase Local Optional Revenue (LOR)

- Increase LOR to \$947 per pupil and link it to the general education formula.
- Generates \$223 per student annually ( $\approx$  \$2 million for Stillwater).
- LOR has not increased since 2013, significantly reducing purchasing power.

### Restore Special Education Funding

- Repeal cuts to special education cross-subsidy aid and transportation reimbursement.
- Special education is the fastest-growing mandated cost in the district.
- The impact of reducing the special education transportation reimbursement by 5% in FY26 is \$350,000. In FY27, the reduction is projected to be at 10% less, or \$725,000.

### Increase Transportation Sparsity Aid

- Stillwater spends \$14.1 million annually (9.2% of the general fund) to transport 7,500 riders across 150 square miles.
- Transportation costs have exceeded the budget by more than \$1.5 million annually for several years.

### Maintain Compensatory Education Funding

- Hold districts harmless to current funding levels.
- Without hold harmless, Stillwater would lose \$300,000, directly impacting targeted student supports.

### Allow Renewal of Existing Technology Levies

- Permit school boards to renew voter-approved capital projects (technology) levies at the same rate.
- Ensures continuity of Stillwater's \$4.7 million technology levy while reducing election costs and administrative burden.

## Safety and Security

### Increase the Safe Schools Levy

- Increase the levy from \$36 to \$100 per pupil.
- Generates approximately \$578,000 for Stillwater.
- The levy has not been increased since 2013, despite growing safety and mental health needs.

### Fund Non-Exclusionary Discipline Requirements

- Provide funding for mandated non-exclusionary discipline practices.
- Effective implementation requires additional staff such as behavior specialists, deans, and assistant principals.

## Policy Priorities

### Address Minnesota Paid Leave (MPL) Impacts

- MPL has increased staffing instability, substitute costs, and instructional disruption with no funding offset.

### Modernize Hours-of-Instruction Requirements

- Provide flexibility to support Pathways College and Career programming, including work-based and competency-based learning.

### Replace the High School MCA with the ACT

- The ACT meets federal requirements, reduces redundant testing, and provides more meaningful college- and career-readiness data.
- The high school Math MCA assessment, given junior year, has an opt out rate of 18%.