HOPKINS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

LEGISLATIVE ACTION COALITION

The Hopkins Legislative Action Coalition represents the students, families, and educators of Hopkins Public Schools.

Give Students 100: Strengthening Safe Schools Revenue for Student Safety

Overview

We request increasing the Safe Schools Levy from $36 to $100 per pupil and expanding allowable uses to include district-employed mental health professionals.

Safe Schools revenue has not been increased since 2013, despite the substantial expansion in what constitutes a modern, effective school safety and security plan. Districts have been left with fewer resources to meet far greater demands. [1]

Frozen Funding, Expanding Responsibilities

The Minnesota State Legislature last increased Safe Schools revenue in 2013, raising the amount from $30 to $36 per pupil. [2] There has been no further increase since.

In 2013, the Legislature also expanded allowable uses of these Safe Schools Funds to include facility security enhancements, school climate improvements, and mental health collaboration. [2] In 2023, the Legislature again expanded allowable uses of those funds to include cybersecurity measures, recognizing, correctly, that digital threats had become a critical school safety issue. These newly-allowed measures include software subscriptions, system upgrades, and cyber insurance. [3] Each expansion responded to real needs in Minnesota schools.

The allowable uses of Safe Schools Levy funds now fall into three buckets: Cybersecurity, Mental and Chemical Health, and Facilities and Infrastructure. The challenge Hopkins faces is that the same $36 per student is now supposed to fill all three of those buckets. This single revenue source now funds prevention programs, facility security enhancements, climate improvements, mental health collaboration, chemical abuse counseling, cybersecurity software subscriptions, managed detection services, and cyber insurance. Cybersecurity and insurance is no longer optional. It is a critical and costly operating expense that districts must renew annually. For example, 82% of K-12 districts experienced cyber incidents between July 2023 and December 2024. [4]

Between 2015 and 2025, cumulative inflation has eroded purchasing power by approximately 36 percent. [1] The $36 amount was never designed to carry this many uses, and inflation has made the gap worse each year.

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Hopkins Public Schools' Example

Hopkins has worked intentionally to build the kind of integrated safety program envisioned in the 2013 and 2023 expansion of allowable uses of the Safe Schools revenue. Our Holistic Safety Team coordinates counselors, social workers, administrators, and security staff across social-emotional, physical, and digital domains. When a student shows signs of crisis, they need a modern and responsive support system available. That requirement should not compete with security equipment upgrades or software subscriptions.

The math illustrates the challenge:

"At $36/pupil, that annual budget wouldn't be enough to redesign a school entry in a meaningful way. Even at $100/pupil, that just gets to where you could do maybe one a year, so in Hopkins, it would take us 11 years to get through our schools, not considering any other school safety needs, such as cameras, radios, staffing, counselors, or others that support holistic safety." — John Wetter, Hopkins IT Director

Even with a significant increase to the Safe Schools Levy, districts across this state will face years of work to address accumulated infrastructure needs. Without such an increase, sustaining both personnel and infrastructure becomes impossible.

The Hopkins Legislative Action Coalition Request

We ask our state legislators to:

1. Increase the Safe Schools Levy from $36 to $100 per student. The Association of Metropolitan School Districts has endorsed this approach, calling for the same $100 per pupil funding in its 2026 legislative platform. [5]
2. Expand allowable uses of those funds to include district-employed mental health professionals. This means allowing districts to extend long-term employment to school-based counselors, social workers, and psychologists. This increase in funds would allow districts to adequately fund mental health programs and prevention work without forcing administrators and school board members to sacrifice the other buckets.

Recent acts of violence against public servants and students in our state are stark reminders that the threats we plan for are not distant or abstract. Identifying, preventing, and responding to crises requires layered, cooperative, and sustained effort—trained staff, robust mental health supports, threat assessment, secure facilities, and the capacity to act quickly. These are not one-time expenses, and cannot be met with outdated funding levels. Schools are among the most visible and trusted public institutions in our communities. They are worth protecting. Increasing the Safe Schools Levy from $36 to $100 per student is a practical, responsible step that reflects the seriousness of this moment and affirms our shared obligation to keep our students, educators, and communities safe.

The Hopkins Legislative Action Coalition welcomes the opportunity to discuss this proposal further with legislators and staff.

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References

[1] Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis Consumer Price Index Calculator. 2015–2025 cumulative inflation approximately 36%; $36 in 2015 ≈ $49 in 2025 dollars. Inverse: $36 today ≈ $26.47 in 2015 purchasing power. https://www.minneapolisfed.org/about-us/monetary-policy/inflation-calculator/consumer-price-index-1913-

[2] Laws of Minnesota 2013, ch. 116. Increased Safe Schools levy from $27 to $36 per adjusted pupil unit, effective FY2015. https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2013/0/116/

[3] Laws of Minnesota 2014, ch. 312. Added facility security enhancements, school climate, mental health collaboration to allowable uses. https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2014/0/312/

[4] Laws of Minnesota 2023, ch. 55, art. 8, sec. 15. Added cybersecurity measures including software, system upgrades, and cyber insurance. https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2023/0/Session%2BLaw/Chapter/55/

[5] 2025 CIS MS-ISAC K-12 Cybersecurity Report. Sample of 5,000+ K-12 organizations; 82% experienced cyber threat impacts; 9,300 confirmed incidents. https://www.cisecurity.org/insights/white-papers/2025-k12-cybersecurity-report

[7] Association of Metropolitan School Districts 2026 Legislative Platform. Calls for increasing Safe Schools levy to $100 per pupil. https://www.amsd.org/shared-files/14231/