

CONNECTIAMS^{NS}

News from the Association of Metropolitan School Districts

November 2025

Volume 23

Number 2

Hastings High School Brings Cutting-Edge Medical Technology to Students

November 7, 2025

Board of Directors Meeting

7 a.m. - 9 a.m.

Quora Education Center
NE Metro 916
Little Canada

November 11, 2025

Annual Conference

7:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Minneapolis Marriott
Northwest
Brooklyn Park

November 21, 2025

Executive/Legislative Committee Meeting

7:30 a.m. - 9 a.m.

Anderson Center
Bethel University
Arden Hills

December 5, 2025

Board of Directors Meeting

7 a.m. - 9 a.m.

Quora Education Center
NE Metro 916
Little Canada

This summer, Hastings High School became the first high school in Minnesota to introduce a groundbreaking educational tool: the **Anatome Table**. Often described as a "life-sized, 3D interactive computer," the Anatome Table is revolutionizing how students learn anatomy, physiology, and health sciences. Thanks to a combination of community support, district innovation, and forward-thinking partnerships, students now have access to state-of-the-art technology that was once only found in medical schools and advanced research institutions.



A Transformational Investment

Dr. Kristine Wehrkamp Herman, Superintendent, views the acquisition as a pivotal moment for the students of Hastings High School. "The investment in the Anatome Table will potentially give our students an advantage when they enter the next stage of their career or college pathway. The hands-on opportunity that students will experience in multiple facets of the sciences that this tool provides will help them determine their future career path."

The Anatome Table replaces traditional consumables, like dissection specimens or lab kits, with digitized real human cadavers. Students can manipulate 3D images to study skeletal structures, vascular systems, or organ functions with extraordinary detail, down to a resolution of half a millimeter. The system includes cadavers of varying ages and conditions, allowing students to explore both normal and pathological anatomy in ways that deepen understanding beyond a textbook.

The model Hastings purchased also includes science applications across biology, physics, chemistry, Earth, and space science, ensuring that students in multiple disciplines, not just those pursuing healthcare, will benefit.

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Today is Election Day! Fifteen AMSD member districts have important [referendum questions](#) on the ballot and 21 member districts have school board elections. If you have an election in your school district, and you haven't already done so, make sure you VOTE today and encourage your family and friends to join you. Thank you, and I'm excited to see many of you at the AMSD annual conference on Nov. 11.

From the AMSD Chair, Jim DeMay, Mounds View Board Member

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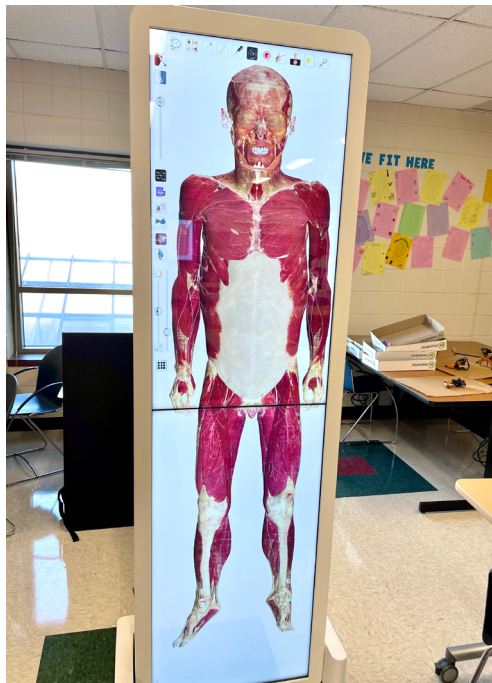
Striking a Balance Between Classroom Instruction and Industry Engagement

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Innovation Backed by Community

The idea to bring this technology to Hastings grew out of conversations at a Minnesota School Board Association training, where district leaders first saw the table demonstrated. After further research and discussions with vendors, the district identified creative budgeting solutions and secured crucial outside funding to make the purchase possible.

A significant portion of the funding was made possible through a generous contribution from the Ruth and George Doffing Charitable Fund, demonstrating once again how community partnerships strengthen Hastings Public Schools. “We are incredibly fortunate to have a community that supports our students so strongly,” said School Board Chair Carrie Tate. “This table represents not only an investment in technology, but an investment in the future of every student who walks through our doors.”



Connecting Students to Real-World Pathways

The Anatomage Table is arriving at the perfect time. This fall, Hastings High School launched its new Healthcare Professionals class in partnership with Allina Health. The course was designed to provide juniors and seniors with a broad overview of careers in healthcare, ranging from pharmacy to radiology to nursing. Interest has been overwhelming, with more than 120 students signing up for the course's first semester, creating a waitlist rarely seen for a brand-new program. The class strikes a balance between classroom instruction and industry engagement. Nearly 40 healthcare professionals from Allina are scheduled to interact with students, providing firsthand insights into their roles and responsibilities. Lessons range from reading lab results to simulating patient care scenarios. In one case study, students evaluate a fictional 65-year-old patient experiencing chest pain, using vital signs and test results to determine next steps.

The Anatomage Table has quickly become a centerpiece of this class. Students use it to explore anatomy interactively, trace blood flow through the heart, or examine case studies drawn from real patient data. By bridging classroom instruction with authentic medical scenarios, the table helps students see how science translates into healthcare practice.

A Unique Learning Opportunity

At the time of its purchase, Hastings was believed to be the only high school in Minnesota with access to this advanced tool. Traditionally, the Anatomage Table has been used in higher education settings, including medical schools, nursing programs, and research institutions. Bringing it into a high school setting is a bold move, designed to give students early exposure to college-level learning experiences.

“The earlier students can explore their interests, the better prepared they’ll be to make decisions about college and career,” said Doran. “This table allows them to experiment, to ask questions, and to engage in science at a much deeper level than ever before.”

Whether a student chooses to pursue healthcare, engineering, science, or another pathway, the skills gained through interactive, inquiry-based learning will serve them well. For some, it may spark a lifelong passion for the medical field. For others, it may provide a foundation in critical thinking and problem-solving that can be applied in various contexts. The Anatomage Table expands opportunities for students and strengthens the pathways that connect their learning today to success tomorrow.

This month's member feature was submitted by Kari Gorr, Director of Community Education and Communications, Hastings Public Schools.

State Demographics Predict Declines in Student Populations — Increases in Racial, Ethnic Diversity

Minnesota schools are at a population crossroads as the state — and our school districts — must prepare not only for declining birth rates statewide, but the influx of new immigrant communities in recent years that will need support, engagement and infrastructure, if they are to succeed.

That's the prediction from the Minnesota State Demographic Center, which forecasts that the state's overall student population will continue to drop year-over-year into the foreseeable future while the school-age population grows more diverse.

Minnesota State Demographer Dr. Susan Brower told the AMSD Board of Directors in October that while births had been declining statewide well before the pandemic, she speculates that statewide population and workforce growth will continue to slow into the foreseeable future. At the same time, she noted, the percentage of racial and ethnic diversity in Minnesota's school-age population will continue to increase.

That is consistent with the MN Department of Education's latest special population report showing nearly 11 percent of students statewide were identified as English learners in 2024-25. More than 91,000 students were eligible for English learner services, an increase of more than 7,000 students from 2023-24.

Meanwhile, the total number of children statewide, by age, is shrinking. As the 2024 chart of Minnesota Children by Single Year of Age and Sex shows, births in Minnesota have been steadily declining statewide, creating successively smaller cohorts of school-age children from ages 17 to 0.

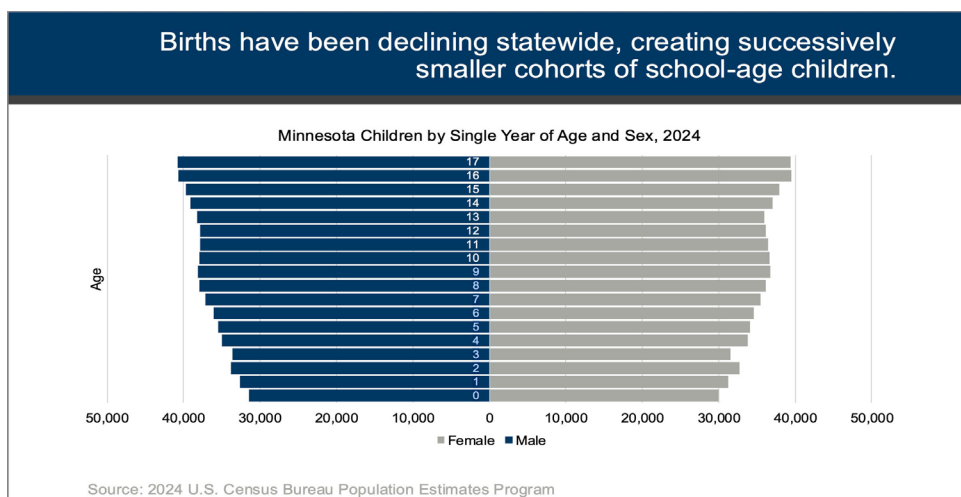
"This is a bigger kind of social and economic trend that's happening," Brower said. "It's tied into our economics and to social norms, and I don't expect to see it turn around anytime soon."

But planning for a school-aged population to downsize — while it's simultaneously growing in immigrant and non-English speaking populations — offers Minnesota a chance to realign its educational resources for the future, Brower said.

"Even speaking about funding formulas, we've created formulas that work during a period of ongoing growth, both population growth and growth in the child population."

"We're really at a different place here, and while this can be unsettling to be kind of in a new place, we can also take stock and say OK, now that we're here, what would work better going forward, given the fact that we're not likely to be growing as much, given the fact that we're likely to have these other kind of costs in the state budget?"

"It gives us this opportunity to rethink some of how we've done things in the past."



Immigrants a Significant Source of Growth in MN in Recent Years

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Data trends have shown that for more than 20 years young adults lead the exodus of Minnesota's population decline — which is a characteristic of the greater Midwest region losing its 19, 20, and 21-year-olds to post-secondary schools in other states and opportunities in larger cities and the coasts. But while young adults may fly their proverbial nests, many other populations see opportunity in Minnesota.

Brower said data from the last three years showed a net population increase of an estimated 30,000 from international immigration — "a really high number" — which she credited to Minnesota's "large, growing, and a well-economically-situated metropolitan area, which tends to be more of a destination spot for new immigrants." Brower noted that the recent growth in the number of international immigrants is likely to slow given the changes in federal immigration policy.

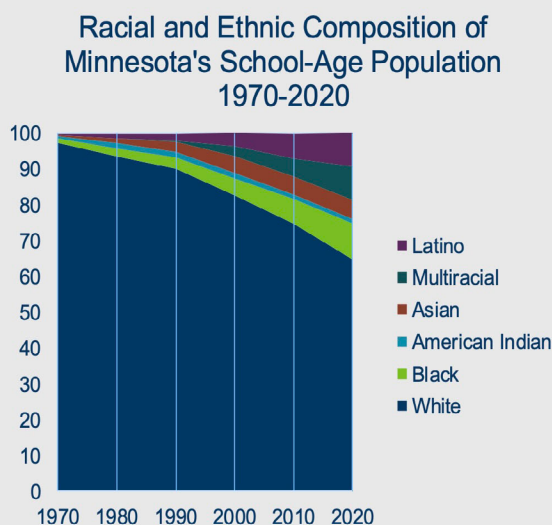
That influx also means increases in racial and ethnic diversity for Minnesota's school-age population, which brings opportunities and challenges. Currently one in five children in Minnesota — 20 percent — have at least one foreign-born parent.

Additional staff and support are critical to help these students succeed. Several AMSD districts now report more than 20 percent of their student population eligible for English learner services including Minneapolis, Saint Paul, Richfield, Burnsville, St. Cloud and Columbia Heights — which reported nearly half (48.3 percent) of its student population in 2024-25 as eligible for EL services.

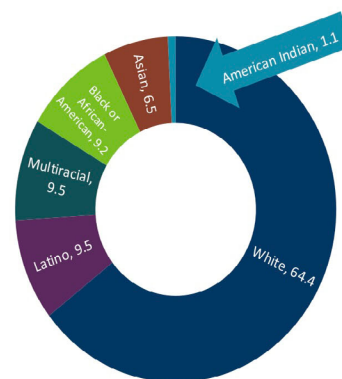
"The Legislature needs to come along," Brower said. "The whole state, communities need to come along and understand that we are in a different place than we were in the past."

- [LINK: View the Minnesota State Demographic Center Data](#)

The racial and ethnic diversity of Minnesota's school-age population continues to increase.



Population Ages 5 to 17 Years by Race Minnesota, 2023



Source: ipums.org from U.S. Census Bureau data