

2025 Legislative Session Impact Report

MSBA Protected Local Control, Advanced State Priorities, and Stood Against New Mandates

MSBA Government Relations

The 2025 Minnesota Legislative Session brought intense budget debates, high-stakes negotiations, and a growing list of mandates. MSBA stood strong throughout — fighting for school boards, defending local authority, and ensuring your voice was heard at every step. Here's what we accomplished, what we stopped, and where we're headed next.



"Thank you to all board members who have engaged in the legislative process this year. When we speak with one united voice as school board members, we not only amplify the needs of our schools and communities but also strengthen our impact in the legislative process."

Denise Dittrich and Kimberly Dunn Lewis
Minnesota School Boards Association
Government Relations Team



Legislative Achievements

Protected inflation indexing on the General Education Formula

The formula remains tied to inflation, with a 2.74% increase in FY26.

Compensatory

The hold harmless provision for compensatory revenue was modified.

Expanded Facility Support and Bonding Flexibility

Roof repairs and maintenance now qualify under Long-Term Facilities Maintenance (LTFM) for all districts.

Protected Pension Stability

TRA employer cost increases will be covered by the state — not school districts.

Modernized Open Meeting Law

Boards can now participate remotely from non-public locations, and required notices can be posted on a district website and the MN Newspaper Association's site at no cost.

Wins for Local Control

School Start Date Flexibility

Districts may begin school before Labor Day in the 2026–27 and 2027–28 school years.

Sustained Substitute Flexibility

Made permanent the pilot program allowing local rate of pay for short-call substitutes.

Referendum Flexibility*

School boards may reauthorize one-time capital projects referenda by Board action.

More Flexibility in Food Service Fund*

Expanded eligible expenditures include food service tech, lunchroom supervision, and waste management.

Common-Sense Seclusion Reform*

Seclusion allowed with prior parental consent.

Mandates and Proposals That Didn't Pass

Blocked Unfunded State Mandate Protecting Local Control

- Unfunded unemployment insurance mandates—state will continue to pay for two more years.
- Government entity may suspend ongoing data request if the requester does not show up to inspect data.
- Even-year school board elections.
- New economic interest statement requirements for elected officials and certain staff.
- Student school board membership mandates.*
- School construction near landfill sites.*
- Expanded service animal regulations.*
- Additional health curriculum mandates.*
- Statewide cell phone ban.*

*Indicates subject is still under negotiation until final policy and finance bill is released.

Strategic Advocacy

- Built bipartisan legislative relationships by holding over 60 meetings with legislators.
- Day at the Capitol - 196 attendees from 84 districts had 274 meetings with legislators.
- Elevated local board voices by having school board members testify in committee and have testimony cited in floor debates and committee discussions.
- 28 Virtual Advocacy Events:
 - Friday Chat Room and Friday Chat Room Plus
 - Know Before You Go
 - Roadmap to Advocacy Class
 - Advocacy Tour meetings
 - Pre-Delegate Assembly meetings

Still On the Agenda: 2026 and Beyond

Education Issues

- Mitigating future cuts to staff and programs.
- Reform compensatory funding.
- Adjust Local Option Revenue (LOR) for inflation.
- Redefining instructional hours to promote redesign in our high schools.
- Absenteeism – launch statewide campaign and change the 15-day drop.
- Transition from Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) to a nationally normed college entrance exam.
- Equalization.
- Student discipline.
- Blue Ribbon Commission on Special Education to make recommendations which will result in cost savings.

Workforce Issues

- Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST) modifications.
- Paid Leave modifications.
- Unemployment for non-licensed staff.
- Managerial rights.
- Pay for striking workers.
- Rest breaks and remedies.

If you have questions or would like more information, contact our government relations team.



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