



Stewartville Public Schools Legislative Priorities January 23, 2024

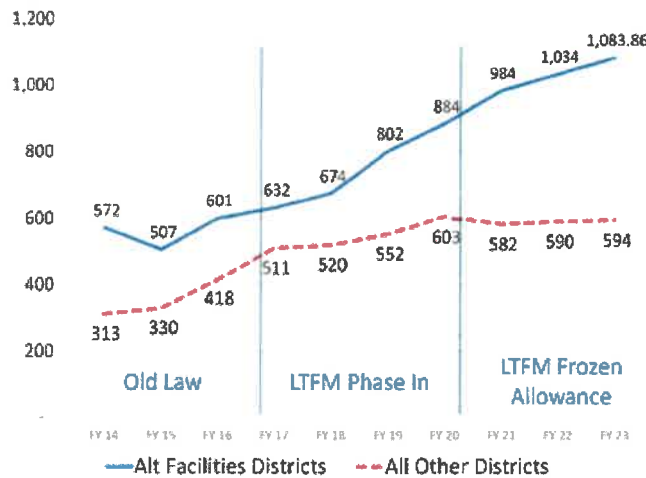
Funding Issues

Long-Term Facilities Maintenance (LTFM)

Eliminate the per pupil cap on the Long-term Facilities Maintenance Revenue to allow all school districts to address their critical facility maintenance needs efficiently and effectively, which would include expanding the allowable uses to include repair and replacement of entire roofs, boilers, sidewalks, and parking lots.

- School Districts limited in LTFM funding usually have to obtain voter approval to do this work or bond against their LTFM funding and pay interest on the bond. For Stewartville, a project updating HVAC, lighting, and parking lots will cost \$3 million in interest alone.

Long-Term Facilities Maintenance (LTFM)



The Long-Term Facilities Maintenance (LTFM) program combined old deferred maintenance, health & safety, and alternative facilities, with options to use "old law" options to fund applicable costs if current allocations are less than old law.

LEA's not in the old alternative facilities program are limited to \$380 per PU in revenue and eligible health and safety projects over \$100,000. Lower building ages also lowers the per pupil revenue.

Districts may bond against their LTFM revenue to complete projects ahead of annual revenue.

Equalization makes this a higher levy revenue.

READ Act

Provide permanent, ongoing funding for Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) approved science of reading training programs beginning January 1, 2024.

- The costs of training Stewartville teachers and instructional support staff outside of the contracted work day would be in excess of \$275,000, which is not funded by the READ Act legislation. As a result, the district will be decreasing the number of student contact days over the 2024-2025 through 2026-2027 school years in order to provide the time to complete the required training.
- Colleges and universities will not be keeping pace in ensuring graduates with teaching licenses will meet the training requirements.
- School districts in SE MN hire many applicants from Iowa and Wisconsin. Ultimately, the cost of training new teachers will be borne by school districts, thereby negatively impacting the general fund.
- One-time funding for these costs will only create another unfunded cross-subsidy into the future.

School Unemployment Aid

Create an ongoing and permanent funding stream for school districts costs associated with unemployment insurance by hourly employees during between term breaks in the school calendar.

- Either provide a reimbursement model for unemployment costs or allow school districts to levy for the costs.
- If school districts do not receive funding for these expenses, this will become another unfunded mandate and cross-subsidy, negatively impacting the general fund.
- If funding is not provided, districts will be required to ask voters to increase operating levies to pay for unemployment costs.

Compensatory Funding

Ensure the funding mechanism for compensatory funding allows for full funding for programs supported by Compensatory Aid. Loss of stable and consistent funding will impact the general fund and the sustainability of programming to support our students.

Voluntary PreKindergarten

Expand Voluntary PreKindergarten funding to provide early childhood education opportunities to all four-year olds who qualify for free or reduced meal eligibility.

- Stewartville has applied for Voluntary PreKindergarten funding every year and does not receive any grant support. The majority of the funding goes to VPK programs in the Metro area.

Operational Issues

New Requirements for Data Collection and Reports

Increased requirements to provide data to union leadership has resulted in strains on Human Resources staff and departments.

- Within 20 days of the date of hire, provide personal information (address, home phone numbers, personal email address) to the union representative.
- Every 120 days, provide a list of employees to the union representative.
- Within 20 days, must provide a list of employees separating employment and those transferring out of the bargaining unit.

Managerial Rights of the Employer

Repeal the language in the 2023 Jobs and Labor Bill that requires “adult-to-student ratios in classrooms,” “student testing,” and “student-to-personnel ratios” as terms and conditions in collective bargaining and reinstate “the number of personnel” from the matters of inherent managerial policy.

- Employers must be able to make determinations of staffing levels in order to ensure and maintain financial stability.

Transportation of Students

It is essential to maintain the status of school provided transportation as a student privilege and not a student right.

- Do not adopt any law that restricts a school district to provide a safe transportation service for students and drivers and maintains the school district’s ability to discipline students in accordance with school district policies.

Earned Safe and Sick Time

The time and effort required to track Earned Safe and Sick Time absences has significantly impacted the Human Resources staff.

Paid Family Medical Leave Act

Indications are that the preliminary premium rate of 0.7% will not provide the funding needed for this program. Any increases in the employer costs will again impact the general fund and become another unfunded mandate and cross-subsidy.