

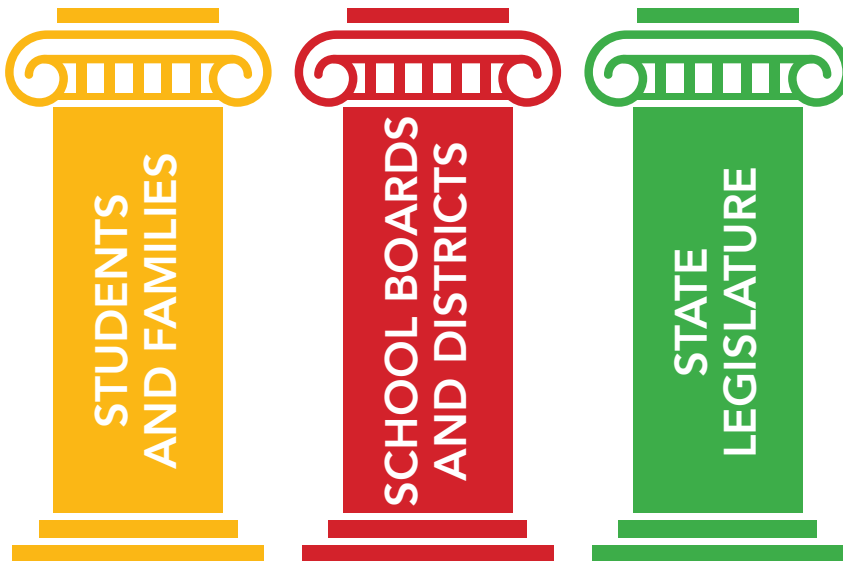


## LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM FOR 2025

### Pillars to Strong Minnesota Public Schools

Public education is one of the fundamental pillars of a thriving community and state. Every day, our schools open their doors to a diverse body of students with unique dreams, goals and aspirations. In these classrooms, students develop essential skills in - reading, math, writing, critical thinking and civic engagement – tools that prepare them for success in an increasingly complex world whether their path leads to college, careers or community service.

Public education is an important investment in our students and in the future of our state. It is our school districts' duty to prepare students for a multi-cultural world and workplace.



The difficult reality is our Minnesota public schools are underfunded. Despite recent funding, districts continue to experience budget shortfalls that lead them to go to the taxpayers for operating levies, tap into budget reserves, and unfortunately, make cuts that negatively impact student learning. Now is the time to build on the past progress and address funding gaps worsened by inflation, new requirements, declining enrollment and the expiration of federal funds.

The Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) is a statewide advocate for public education, representing 331 school districts and over 2,450 elected school board members. Our school boards serve a diverse body of nearly 870,000 students in districts ranging in size from fewer than 100 students to over 38,000.

**38.6%**  
students of color

**42.4%**  
low-income

**1.2%**  
homeless

**9.7%**  
English learners

**18.5%**  
special education



## MSBA Funding Priorities for 2025

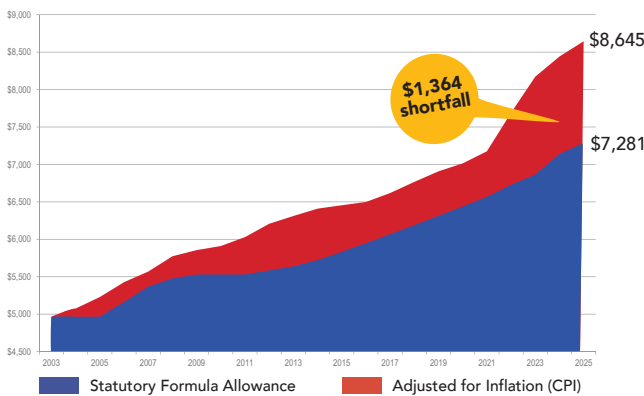
### Increase the General Education Formula

An increase in the general education formula benefits all districts, including other formulas – English learner (EL), compensatory, declining enrollment, sparsity, and transportation sparsity.

Our school districts require an additional 3 percent (approximately \$673 million for the biennium) to address the rising costs of basic school operations (energy, transportation, insurance, curriculum, food, wages and benefits).

Without inflationary dollars since 2003, districts have lost the buying power of the formula, creating a shortfall of \$1,364 per pupil. Increased dollars on the general education formula would provide all schools with approximately \$223/\$227 per pupil FY26/FY27.

**Inflationary Shortfall of the General Education Formula Allowance, 2003-2025**



### Compensatory Funding Formula

Ensure school districts are held harmless in compensatory funding allocations while expanding the criteria beyond direct certification and free and reduced-price lunch forms. Incorporate additional measures to better identify and address students' needs for services.

### Long-term Facilities Maintenance Revenue (LTFM)

Remove the cap on LTFM, allowing all districts, not just a handful, to access funding for essential facilities maintenance based on a 10-year plan, approved by the school board and the Commissioner. If the cap is not lifted, we ask that roofs, pavement and security be added as allowable expenditures. This will provide fair and adequate resources for all schools to maintain safe and functional school facilities – a fundamental expectation of the public.

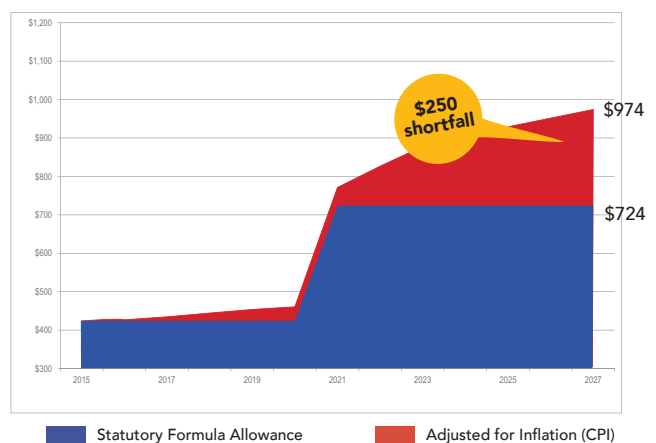
### Funding for New Benefits

Fully fund the new Paid Leave statewide initiative. Fully fund summer unemployment insurance for non-licensed staff or repeal the law. Maintain ESST as a separate benefit to uphold its intended purpose while allowing for reasonable employer safeguards.

### Local Optional Revenue Levy Adjustment (LOR)

Increase the LOR school board levy authority from \$724 per student to \$974 per student to adjust for inflation beginning with its inception. The additional \$250 per pupil would significantly reduce financial burdens for districts.

**Inflationary Shortfall of the Local Optional Revenue (LOR) Allowance, 2015-2027**





## MSBA Policy Priorities for 2025

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### **Local School Board Authority**

Maintain local decision-making. Review, modify, or repeal existing unfunded mandates where possible. Resist any new mandates. Allow school boards greater flexibility to: transfer fund balances, expand uses of Fund 2 dollars, continue the substitute teacher pilot program but eliminate the \$200 minimum pay, modify the qualifications for student support personnel aid, and/or broaden the classification of Type III vehicles.

### **Restore Managerial Rights**

Repeal the requirement that local school boards negotiate "adult to student ratios" in classrooms, "student testing" and "student to personnel ratios" as terms and conditions in collective bargaining. Reinstate the "number of personnel" in matters of inherent managerial policy.

### **Capital Projects Levy**

Grant school boards the authority to renew a capital projects levy one time, enabling stability in funding for equipment, facilities, supplies and technology related initiatives. This request is modeled after the 2023 operating referendum renewal.

### **Data Requests**

Amend Minnesota Government Data Practices Act to authorize school districts to assess and recover actual costs of searching and retrieving government data if the requesting individual abandons or fails to inspect the data once it has been prepared.

### **Open Meeting Law**

Eliminate the three-day notice requirement for remote meetings to allow board members to participate in meetings remotely in case someone is sick or can't attend in person after the three-day posting.

### **School Attendance Initiatives**

Launch a statewide campaign to promote and engage families and students in the benefits of consistent school attendance. Extend the enrollment drop period for student absences from 15 days to at least 20 days, facilitating continued support for students facing barriers to attendance.

### **Standardized Testing for High School Students**

Minnesota should transition from the high school Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) to the widely accepted, nationally recognized ACT, aligning assessments more closely with career and college readiness. The ACT not only helps students see the direct connection between their efforts in high school and future career paths, but it opens doors to those who may not have considered post-secondary education a path forward.

### **Broaden Definition of Instructional Hours**

To better prepare students for future careers and post-secondary options, we must broaden the definition of instructional hours. This change would allow students to access more electives and courses that aligns with students' interests and career goals.

Recent legislative changes in credit requirements for graduation limit the valuable career pathways to meaningful coursework. By offering more flexibility in instructional hours, we can provide a wider range of electives and hands-on learning experiences that support students' individual paths, whether toward college or vocational careers. This approach ensures students earn credit for their efforts and schools receive funding for offering meaningful educational opportunities.

### **Voluntary Pilot Program for Extended School Year**

Allow school districts to voluntarily explore extending the school year, aimed at improving student achievement and addressing workforce challenges.

### **Stabilize Workforce**

Support policies to address the shortage of staff by reducing barriers to licensing and hiring.