



Association of Metropolitan School Districts

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Omnibus Education Finance Bill

The Omnibus Education Finance conference committee report has been adopted by the conference committee and could be brought to the floor of the House and Senate for approval as soon as Friday, May 17.

Summary of Key Issues

Budget target

Appropriates \$43 million in FY24-25 and \$18.046 million in FY26-27. The \$18.046 million in ongoing funding is for the additional VPK slots and to correct a drafting error in last year's bill related to compensatory revenue.

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten

Increases the number of VPK slots from 7,160 participants to 12,360 in FY25.

Read Act

- Modifies the distribution of the \$35 million appropriation for curriculum and intervention materials included in last year's bill. Under the new language, the funds are distributed to districts, charter schools, and cooperatives at the greater of \$2,000 or \$39.94 times the number of students served. The aid can be used to implement the requirements of the Read Act or for any allowable uses under literacy incentive aid.
- Appropriates \$31.375 million to facilitate the required staff training to be distributed at the greater of \$2,000 or \$36.06 times the number of students served. A district must use the funding only to compensate eligible teachers for completing approved training required under the Read Act. Requires a district to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the exclusive representative of the teachers in the district that provides how this funding will be used. Compensation of eligible teachers may include stipends, payments based on a teacher's regular hourly rate of pay and the number of hours necessary to complete the approved training and full or partial reimbursement for training in structured literacy that was paid for by the teacher, and later approved under the Read Act. Eligible teachers are currently employed by a district, currently serving in a position that requires a license issued by PELSB, are required to receive approved training under the Read Act, and have registered for, started, or completed the approved training.

- Expands the allowable uses of literacy incentive aid to include employing an intervention specialist, approved screeners, and stipends for teachers completing approved training.
- Requires MDE and CAREI to identify or develop training for volunteers and other persons not employed by a district that provide Tier 2 intervention to students in Minnesota school districts by June 10, 2025.

Student Attendance

Appropriates \$4.687 million in FY25 only for a pilot program for 12 school districts to support districts developing and implementing innovative strategies to improve student attendance and help policymakers determine how to effectively support district efforts to improve student attendance and engagement.

Teachers

Appropriates \$6.543 million in FY25 only for a paid student teaching pilot program for eight identified higher education institutions.

Student Support Personnel Aid

Expands the definition of "student support services personnel" to include individuals working to reduce chronic student absenteeism. Requires school districts and charter schools to reserve student support personnel aid in a restricted fund balance. Authorizes a district to carry unspent aid forward for use in subsequent fiscal years subject to certain reserve balance limits. Effective for FY24 and later.

Special Education Teacher Pipeline Grant

Expands the individuals who may participate in the special education teacher pipeline program to any school employee who demonstrates a willingness to be a special education teacher.

Food Service Fund — Expanded Uses

Authorizes a school district with a three-year surplus in its school food service fund to charge the costs of lunchroom furniture (tables and chairs) to its food service fund instead of recording the costs as general fund expenditures.

Compensatory Revenue

Extends the statewide compensatory revenue hold harmless beyond FY27.

Paid Leave for School Closures

Requires that when a scheduled instructional day is canceled for any or all of that school day, all school employees must be paid their full wage for that day if the school day is counted as an instructional day.

Paraprofessionals

Requires schools to work with their paraprofessionals when developing the training programs. For the 2024-2025 school year only, reduces the annual required minimum hours of training for

paraprofessionals from 8 to 6 hours. Requires schools to pay the fees for paraprofessional training and testing for the 2024-2025 school year. Creates a process for MDE and PELSB to work with interested parties to revise the required paraprofessional qualifications and the qualifications used to determine eligibility for state special education aid calculations. Establishes the criteria under which a paraprofessional meets the federal personnel qualifications.

Statewide Health Standards

Adds health as a required statewide academic standard, instead of a locally adopted standard, but maintains local standards until statewide rules implementing state standards go into effect.

Apprenticeship Program

Appropriates a one time grant of \$1,030,000 in fiscal year 2025 to the Department of Education for grants to the four intermediate school districts for their special education registered apprenticeship program. Allows the grant proceeds to be used for program oversight, stipends, tuition, fees, program costs incurred by the apprentices, stipends for mentor teachers, and the cost of substitute teachers.

Medical assistance - Third Party Billing

Clarifies the 2023 law authorizing certain school social worker services to be included in third-party billing to the state's medical assistance program.

Crisis Management

Requires the commissioner to make available a model cardiac emergency response plan.

Alternative to publishing

Allows a school district whose qualified newspaper ceases to exist for any reason except consolidation with another newspaper, to publish its proceedings on the school district's website instead of publishing the proceedings in a newspaper. The school district must also request that the same information be posted at each public library located within the school district for the notice's publication period. This expires Aug. 1, 2026.

Task Forces/Working Groups/Legislative Study Groups

- Establishes a task force on English learner programs to analyze how public schools use EL revenue at the site level and the administrative level.
- Establishes a student attendance and truancy legislative study group to evaluate ways to increase student attendance and reduce truancy.
- Establishes a working group to make recommendations on literacy training, screeners, and curriculum for students who are deaf, deaf-blind, and hard of hearing.

- Establishes the Teacher and Paraprofessional Compensation Working Group to advise the Legislature on strategies and recommendations to provide competitive compensation to teachers and paraprofessionals in Minnesota elementary, middle, and secondary schools.
- Establishes a task force to examine the distribution of earnings from the permanent school fund.

Omnibus Education Policy Bill

The Omnibus Education Policy Bill conference committee has reconciled the differences between the House and Senate bills. The House and Senate have adopted the conference committee report and it is on its way to the Governor for his signature.

Summary of Key Issues

- Replaces the term “World’s Best Workforce” with “Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness” in state statute.
- Requires school districts to adopt a policy on students’ possession and use of cell phones in schools by March 15, 2025. Requires the principals’ associations to collaborate to make best practices available to schools on strategies to minimize the impact of cell phones on student behavior, mental health, and academic attainment.
- Requires MDE to establish criteria for evaluating a district’s application to use a four-day school week plan and its community-wide impacts, and requires approval of a four-day plan to remain in effect for at least six years.
- Establishes a new section of law titled Access to Library Materials and Rights Protected. The bill prohibits a public library, including a school district library or media center, from banning, removing, or otherwise restricting access to a book or other material based solely on its viewpoint or the message, ideas, or opinions it conveys. The bill does not limit a public library’s authority to decline to purchase, lend, shelve or remove, or restrict access to books legitimately based on practical reasons such as shelf limitations, rare or antiquarian status, damage, or obsolescence, or legitimate pedagogical concerns. The bill also does not limit the rights of a parent, guardian, or an adult student under the parental curriculum review statute.
- Makes several modifications to the Read Act including:
 - Expands the allowable uses of Literacy Incentive Aid and extends the deadline for completing the required evidence-based training for teachers and staff by one year. Establishes two phases for training to be completed. Phase one is for teachers and staff who must complete training by July 1, 2026, and phase two is

for teachers who must complete training by July 1, 2027. Teachers and staff included in phase one are reading intervention teachers working with students K-12, classroom teachers of students in K-3 and in prekindergarten programs, special education teachers, curriculum directors, instructional support staff, contractors, volunteers who assist in providing Tier 2 interventions, employees who select literacy instructional materials for the district, and teachers licensed to teach English to multilingual learners. Phase two includes teachers who provide reading instruction to students in grades 4-12 and teachers who provide instruction in state-approved alternative programs.

- Requires districts to screen students, kindergarten through third grade three times each school year.
 - Lowers the hours of instruction for the 24-25 school year only, for students in elementary school by 5½ hours for a district that enters into an agreement with the exclusive representative of the teachers that requires teachers to receive at least 5½ hours of approved evidence-based training.
 - Starting in the 2026-27 school year, to provide a Tier 2 literacy intervention, a paraprofessional or other unlicensed person, including a volunteer, must be supervised by a licensed teacher that has completed training in evidence-based reading instruction approved by MDE.
 - Requires MDE to partner with CAREI to make a list of 15 evidence-based intervention models available to districts as they are approved starting Nov. 1, 2025. MDE must ensure the models are reviewed by a contracted third party for culturally responsive guidance and materials, and make those findings available to districts once the review process is complete.
 - Requires MDE and CAREI to conduct a final curriculum review of previously submitted curriculum by March 3, 2025, to review curriculum that is available to districts at no cost.
 - Allows MDE to partner with one or more institutions of higher education to conduct independent and objective reviews of curriculum and intervention materials.
 - Requires PELSB to conduct an audit that evaluates whether and how approved teacher training programs for candidates for early childhood education, elementary education, and special education meet subject matter standards for reading. The board must submit an initial report to the legislative committees with jurisdiction over kindergarten through grade 12 and higher education by Jan. 15, 2025.
- Delays the start of the requirement that students complete a course in government and citizenship in Grade 11 or 12 to the 2025-26 school year.
 - Allows several school districts, whose local newspaper recently closed, to post their official proceedings on their district website instead of publishing them in the newspaper until Aug. 1, 2026.

- Requires school boards to provide written notice to a coach whose contract the school board declines to renew for the following school year no more than 60 days after the end of the regular season for the activity as established by the high school league. The notice requirement does not apply if the school board declines to renew the contract based on the coach's misconduct or failure to perform duties or the district's financial limitations.
- Allows a district to conduct an assessment for developmental adapted physical education as a stand-alone evaluation without conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the student. Allows a parent to request that the district conduct a comprehensive evaluation.
- Establishes a working group on special education licensure reciprocity.
- Requires districts to provide students space to receive mental health care through telehealth appointments.
- Encourages school districts to develop a policy to notify parents any time their child has been removed from a classroom for more than 10 minutes.
- [LINK: View the final Education Policy Bill Conference Committee Report.](#)

Elections Policy Bill | HF4772

The Elections Policy Bill has been adopted by the conference committee and includes the following provisions:

- An appointment to fill a vacancy on a school board that occurs less than two years prior to the expiration of the term is valid for the remainder of the unexpired term, and no special election is required. A school board may, but is not required to, fill a vacancy that occurs less than 90 days prior to the expiration of the term.
- Allows Minnesota school boards to pass a combined polling place resolution only when a change is made. Under current law, public school districts are required to pass the same consolidated polling place resolution every year, even when no changes have been made.

Earned Sick and Safe Time Language Adopted

The Omnibus Transportation, Housing, and Labor Bill Conference Committee approved several provisions in the Labor Articles of the bill including language in the Senate bill that makes paid leave accrued prior to Jan. 1, 2024 subject to the written notice and documentation requirements in the employer's applicable policy or applicable collective bargaining agreement as of Dec. 31, 2023 — provided that an employer does not require an employee to use leave accrued on or after Jan. 1, 2024, before using leave accrued prior to that date.