It is the primary mission of the Anoka-Hennepin School District to effectively educate each student for success. The Anoka-Hennepin School District serves 38,678 students and 227,567 residents living in 13 suburban communities spread across 172 square miles north of the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Anoka-Hennepin operates 24 elementary schools, six middle schools (grades six through eight), and five high schools, plus alternative middle and high school sites. The student composition profile is non-white students 22.2%, English Language Learners 6.63% (10.36% elementary), students who qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch status 34.06% and students receiving special education services 14.3%. Our families have the lowest per capita income in the seven county metro area and one in four adults has a college degree.

Adequate Funding
While acknowledging that the 2014 session is a policy session it is still important to note that the Anoka-Hennepin School District faces an annual cost increase of 3% or $12 million per year to maintain current levels of service to students. Among the challenges the district faces: 1) a cross subsidy of special education that has grown to $31 million dollars to provide the services mandated by law, 2) declining enrollment leads to a loss of revenue that can reach $3 million a year. Community members and auditors have rated the school districts management of resources very highly. The school district invests over 70% of its general fund dollars in the classroom to serve students while less than 3% of its resources are directed to the administration of the school district.

Safe and Supportive Schools
The Anoka-Hennepin School District strives to provide a safe and supportive education environment for all students. Enhancements have been made to facilities, mental health support, data systems, staff training, counseling etc. These investments in student well being all come with a cost. We would ask the legislature to partner with school districts in meeting these challenges.

Compensatory Education Revenue
The school district supports a review of the compensatory funding formula for both fairness and adequacy.
- A formula amount of $1,650 per compensatory pupil unit is required to meet needs.
- Allow flexibility in the use of funds but retain a focus on closing the achievement gap.

Early Learning
Early learning scholarships are an important new source of funding for school based early learning programs. However, scholarships are only effective if there are foundational programs to apply scholarships toward. Minnesota has not invested in the funding formulas of school based early learning programs for decades (1991 School Readiness and 2003 Early Childhood Family Education). This lack of attention to funding school-based programs is beginning to cripple a school district’s ability to respond to the early achievement gaps in our student populations.
Innovation and Process
Circumstances and demographics vary widely from school district to school district in Minnesota. We ask that the legislature provide school boards with the necessary tools and incentives to apply local solutions to meet the needs of the students.

Post-secondary Collaborations
Minimize the current barriers for collaboration that exist with higher education institutions.
- Common licensing requirements of instructors
- Minimize financial disincentives for colleges and school districts to participate
- Combine state standards with MnSCU coursework

Other
- Eliminate the mandate for the 2% staff development set aside.
- Align the goal setting process for Focus Schools, Q Comp, Integration and Title.
- Streamline the Health and Safety review process
- Single document reporting for aligned state and federal programs

MN High School League
The Minnesota High School League is considering a proposal in football that would eliminate conferences and instead move toward sectional scheduling. We believe this proposal preempts local school board authority. Further, it destroys traditional rivalries, increases costs of operation and expands on existing competitive imbalances that exist in Minnesota’s large school class.
- Adopt legislation that requires the HS league to consider student economic circumstances when determining competitive play conferences and sections. (SF1535/HF1699 students' economic circumstances to include the number and percentage of students eligible to receive a free or reduced-price lunch in the school and district, the per capita income of persons residing in the district, the amount of the referendum levy in the district, and the district referendum market value.)
- Oppose HF399/SF233 to prevent the High School league from eliminating voluntary local control of conference play guaranteed in current law 128C.07 subdivision 8.