

Electrify Minnesota's schools for better health, energy savings

Students outside Richfield High School. Photo by Fresh Energy.

Minnesota's Climate Action Framework aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from commercial and residential buildings by 50% below 2005 levels. With 2,000 schools across the state, targeting the **electrification of school buildings is a critical strategy** in meeting pollution reduction goals. With programs like **Solar for Schools** and the implementation of **electric school buses**, the state is already investing in emissions reduction efforts that will benefit the health and future of students.

Legislative action is needed to help school districts access funding to upgrade heating and cooling systems and energy efficiency projects.

Some school districts are working independently to electrify their school buildings, like Saint Paul Public Schools, but further action is needed from the Legislature to improve air quality and lower carbon pollution in schools across Minnesota, **providing more local control and helping schools to cut costs.**

Simple changes for school HVAC, energy efficiency.

A few simple language changes to existing statutes will allow for school districts to access new funding for heating system improvements and energy efficiency projects:



Expand capital grants and loans' eligible uses to include heating system improvements.



Update the Long-Term Facilities Maintenance Revenue (LTFMR) qualifications to include energy-efficiency projects.

Simple changes for school HVAC, energy efficiency.

Expand capital grants and loans' eligible uses to include heating system improvements.

- Currently, under the state's Maximum Effort School Aid Law, **capital grants and loans may not be used to pay for heating system improvements.**
- Allowing heating system improvements to qualify for a capital grant or loan would **make electrification more affordable** for districts unlikely to get voter bond approval.

Update the Long-Term Facilities Maintenance Revenue (LTFMR) qualifications to include energy-efficiency projects.

- Currently, LTFMR may not be used for energy-efficiency projects. However, the revenue can be used for "health and safety for indoor air quality projects" that cost more than \$100,000.
- **"Energy-efficiency projects" should be considered eligible costs for LTFMR**, as they also require school districts to create a long-term, ten-year plan that would include electrification.

Upgrade school infrastructure for a brighter, cleaner future.

Allowing schools to utilize capital grants and loans and LTFMR for heating system upgrades and energy efficiency is important to **make climate and energy funding opportunities more accessible** for schools across Minnesota.

These state level funding streams can also be stacked with federal funding opportunities, allowing for greater opportunities to upgrade school infrastructure across the state and investing in Minnesota's future, **creating cost-efficient, healthier schools for children.**

Want to join us?

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