



Association of Metropolitan School Districts

# 2018 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

## AMSD MEMBERS

Anoka-Hennepin School District, Bloomington Public Schools, Board of School Administrators (Associate Member), Brooklyn Center Community Schools, Burnsville-Eagan-Savage School District, Columbia Heights Public Schools, Eastern Carver County Schools, Eden Prairie Schools, Edina Public Schools, Elk River Area School District, Equity Alliance MN (Associate Member), Farmington Area Public Schools, Fridley Public Schools, Hopkins Public Schools, Intermediate School District 287, Intermediate School District 917 (Associate Member), Inver Grove Heights Schools, Lakeville Area Public Schools, Mahtomedi Public Schools, Metro ECSU (Associate Member), Minneapolis Public Schools, Minnetonka Public Schools, Monticello Public Schools, Mounds View Public Schools, North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale School District, Northeast Metro Intermediate School District 916, Northwest Suburban Integration District (Associate Member), Orono Schools, Osseo Area Schools, Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools, Richfield Public Schools, Robbinsdale Area Schools, Rochester Public Schools, Rockford Area Schools, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public Schools, Roseville Area Schools, Shakopee Public Schools, South St. Paul Public Schools, South Washington County Schools, SouthWest Metro Intermediate District (Associate Member), Spring Lake Park Schools, St. Anthony-New Brighton Independent School District, St. Cloud Area School District, St. Louis Park Public Schools, St. Paul Public Schools, Stillwater Area Public Schools, TIES (Associate Member), Wayzata Public Schools, West Metro Education Program, West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan School District and White Bear Lake Area Schools.

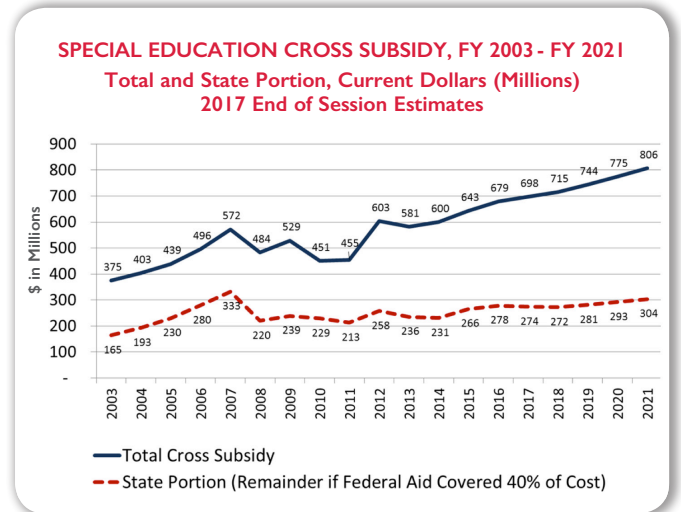
The AMSD Board of Directors recognizes that the 2018 session is not a budget-setting session. The AMSD Board further acknowledges and appreciates that significant new investments were approved during the 2017 session, including a two percent per year increase in the general education formula.

At the same time, the growing special education cross-subsidy continues to exert tremendous pressure on school district budgets and increases the reliance on the operating referendum to provide basic programming for students. In addition, AMSD remains committed to closing the achievement gap and ensuring equitable academic outcomes—high levels of achievement—for all students. Accordingly, AMSD urges state policymakers to address the priorities listed below and on the back side of this platform.

## STABILIZE EDUCATION FUNDING

- Increase special education funding to reduce the state share of the special education cross-subsidy by 10 percent and create a working group to develop a plan to eliminate the state share of the cross-subsidy by 2023;
- Allow locally-elected school boards to renew an existing operating referendum; and
- Direct the Permanent School Fund Commission to study the feasibility of allowing school districts to borrow against the school trust fund to address capital

needs and make recommendations regarding any governance changes needed to ensure that the school trust lands director has the authority to work on behalf of the trust beneficiaries—Minnesota public school students.



Data Source: Minnesota Department of Education



### **REFORM AND STABILIZE THE TEACHERS RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION FUND**

- Reform and stabilize the Teachers Retirement Association Fund and St. Paul Teachers Retirement Fund by increasing employer and employee contributions and adjusting benefits. Use the pension adjustment mechanism in the funding formula to cover the actual increase in the employer contribution to avoid cuts to programs for students.

### **INCREASE AND DIVERSIFY THE TEACHER WORKFORCE**

- Expand programs and incentives to attract, develop and retain teachers, particularly teachers of color and teachers in shortage areas.

### **ENHANCE TAXPAYER EQUITY**

- Increase equalization of the operating referendum, local optional and debt service levies to reduce taxpayer and education funding disparities; and
- Oppose taxpayer subsidies of private education through vouchers, tax credits or scholarships.



### **REDUCE MANDATES AND ENHANCE LOCAL CONTROL**

- Align the World's Best Workforce law to the State ESSA plan to create one accountability plan;
- Maximize federal funding for Medical Assistance services such as social worker costs and 504 health-related services;
- Provide funding for all 11th grade students to take a nationally-recognized college entrance exam and, if approved by the United States Department of Education, replace the high school MCA exams with a nationally-recognized college entrance exam;
- Allow locally-elected school boards to establish the school calendar that best meets the needs of their students and families; and
- Reduce the number of reports required to be submitted to the MN Department of Education.

### **ENSURE SAFE AND MODERN SCHOOL FACILITIES**

- Implement the recommendation of the School Facilities Financing Work Group to establish a school facilities improvement revenue program to allow school districts to enhance safety; and
- Increase the Safe Schools levy and expand the allowable uses to allow school districts to enhance cyber security.


#### **ABOUT AMSD**


The Association of Metropolitan School Districts represents 41 K-12 school districts, six intermediate/cooperative districts and three integration school districts. AMSD member school districts enroll over one-half of the public school students in Minnesota. The mission of AMSD is to advocate for metropolitan school districts and advance legislation that supports student achievement. AMSD stands ready to assist state policymakers by providing current research and data to help them make informed decisions.

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