

A Voter's Guide for Citizens Concerned about Public Education

*Provided By
The Association of Metropolitan School Districts*



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About This Voter's Guide...

The upcoming election is incredibly important to the future of public education. The Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD) has put together this Voter's Guide for concerned citizens to get involved and have their voices heard. In this guide you will find:

- information about the impact that years of inadequate state funding has had on public education;
- background showing the need to change this trend and consistently invest in public education; and
- a complete list of important questions to ask all legislative candidates.

Please share this Voter's Guide with parents and citizens interested in making a positive difference for public education in the upcoming election. The guide is available at www.amsd.org

**Association of Metropolitan School Districts
Candidate Questionnaire 2006**

1. Minnesota's rank in education spending relative to income fell from 12th in 1996 to 28th in 2003. What would you do about that?

- To catch up school funding to inflation, Minnesota school districts would need an additional \$373 per pupil in 2006. (Association of Metropolitan School Districts)
- Minnesota ranks 46th in the nation in growth in real per-pupil K-12 spending between 1997 and 2002, according to a 2004 report by the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government.
- In 2004 alone, Minnesota school districts spent \$378 million from their general classroom funds to subsidize state and federal unfunded mandates for special education.
- Nearly 90 percent of Minnesota school districts have voter-approved operating levies subsidizing their general school operating funds. (MN Department of Education)

2. What strategies and investments would you support to ensure all children come to school prepared to learn?

- The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis has concluded that one of the best returns on our spending on education comes during the first five years of a child's life. Studies show we get back as much as \$9 for every \$1 spent on early childhood education and as much as \$12-\$16 for the children most at risk. (Art Rolnick's research, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis)
- Less than 50 percent of Minnesota's kindergartners begin school fully prepared to learn. (Minnesota Department of Education)
- There is tremendous inequity in access to free full-day, every-day kindergarten in Minnesota. In 2003-04, 59% of Minneapolis kindergartners and 72% of St. Paul kindergartners attended full-day, every-day kindergarten. Only 10% of kindergartners in the remaining metro-area school districts were enrolled in full-day, every-day kindergarten. The corresponding figure for Greater Minnesota was 27%. (Humphrey Institute report)
- Less than 1 percent of the state's budget is spent on programs (Early Childhood Family Education, Head Start and quality child care) that help get kids prepared to learn.

3. Explain how you would adequately fund Minnesota public schools to meet state and federal mandates.

- Augenblick, Palaich, and Associates, a national firm specializing in education finance research, found in a study that Minnesota shortchanged its school districts by \$952 million in the 2003-04 school year to meet state standards. Full results of an expanded study are expected late summer 2006.
- Education Week graded Minnesota a "D" in its 2006 School Technology Report Card.
- The number of Minnesota students with limited English-speaking skills has doubled since 1998. (Minnesota Department of Education)

AMSD Candidate Questionnaire, continued

- The number of students in poverty and special education students in Minnesota has grown 10 percent and 11 percent, respectively, since 1998. (Minnesota Department of Education)

4. Unlike many states, Minnesota’s current education funding formula does not account for the higher cost of labor in the metropolitan area. Not unlike private businesses, metropolitan school districts face significantly higher labor costs than their rural counterparts. Do you support amending the education funding formula so it recognizes labor cost differentials across the State?

- Private sector wages are over 31% higher in the metropolitan area than they are in non-metro areas of the state.
- It costs 18% more for metro school districts to hire the same staff as compared to non-metro school districts.
- The current education funding formula does not recognize these higher labor costs forcing metro school districts to rely on the operating referendum to pay for the higher cost of labor.

5. In recent years legislation has been proposed that would create a mandatory statewide health insurance pool for all school district employees. Do you support this new mandate?

- This proposal fails to implement any real savings in health care costs and does not address the underlying cost drivers in health care.
- This proposal merely shifts costs around and will result in many, if not most, metropolitan school districts and their employees paying higher premiums.
- The ability of locally elected school boards to address local concerns would be greatly diminished.

6. Students have had fewer opportunities to receive a comprehensive education (such as the arts) because of budget cuts and state and federal mandates. How would you ensure the availability of a comprehensive education so students can compete globally?

- Nearly 90 percent of Minnesota school districts have voter-approved operating levies subsidizing their general school operating funds. (MN Department of Education)
- School fees paid by Minnesota families rose 45 percent from 2002 to 2005. (Minnesota Department of Education)

7. Governor Pawlenty has proposed the “70% solution” which would require that school districts spend 70% of their revenue on state determined classroom expenditures. Who do you believe is in a better position to make education spending decisions – locally elected school boards or state officials?

- A Standard and Poor’s study of these types of mandates noted no observable relationship between spending an arbitrary percentage on instruction, and student performance.
- Using the same criteria for funds spent “in the classroom,” statewide data indicates this figure for the average Minnesota district is 69.2%.
- Nationally, political candidates have called for more than 65% of school funds to be spent in the classroom, but 244 of Minnesota’s 343 districts already exceed this threshold.

AMSD Candidate Questionnaire, continued

- The Minnesota Department of Education, in its latest analysis on this topic, reported that district and school administration costs represented just 5.64% of total school district expenditures in FY2004.
- Teacher training, heat for school buildings, and investment in school libraries are not counted as “in the classroom” spending. Should the Legislature put pressure on school districts to reduce or eliminate these expenditures in order to reach a 70% measure?

8. Do you support the proposed amendment to dedicate revenue from the Motor Vehicle Sales Tax (“MVST”) for transportation and transit uses? If so, how do you suggest the State replace the \$300 million per year of MVST proceeds currently used for education and other general fund uses?

9. Do you support vouchers or expanded taxpayer subsidies for non-public schools?

- If you support vouchers or expanded taxpayer subsidies, do you believe all schools that accept public funds should be held to the same rules and expectations?
- Religious and private schools currently receive public funds for transportation, textbooks, counseling and special education.
- Minnesota is the only state in the nation that provides both tax deductions and tax credits to subsidize religious schools.

10. How should a school’s success be measured?

Last update: September 05, 2006 – 8:53 AM

Editorial: Back to school, and to elections

Study education issues, positions of those who want your vote.

Thousands of Minnesota children and young adults head back to the classroom today, eager to get started on a fresh, new year. As the students get to know a new grade and perhaps a new school, parents and other voters ought to pay attention too. What they like -- or don't like -- about their public schools should inform decisions about whom to elect this fall.

Summer vacations are over and Labor Day is history, so state and local campaigns are swinging into full gear. This month's primary and the November general elections for state representatives and local school board members will determine who makes policy and funding decisions about schools.

When this crop of candidates knocks on your door or otherwise seeks your vote, get their views on issues such as:

- **Class size.** Scores of parents throughout Minnesota have been upset in recent years when their children were squeezed into classes with 35 to 50 other students.
- **Electives and extracurricular activities.** Dramatic budget cuts over the past five years have put the squeeze on music, art, physical education and other programs seen as luxuries. They're not; their absence results in failure to educate and engage the whole kid.
- **Preschool.** Programs such as Head Start and Early Childhood and Family Education (ECFE) have also been on the chopping block, even though research shows the benefits of making sure children are ready to learn.
- **Higher education.** Tuition has risen substantially, putting postsecondary learning further out of reach for many students.

These are some of the high-priority education issues voters should pursue with candidates. Many of the concerns require either new funding or new ways of reallocating existing budgets. Ask about school finance philosophies. Is school funding adequate? If not, how should additional resources be raised? And what is the best balance for state and local financing of schools?

Also on the budget theme, an estimated 70 school districts this fall will ask voters to raise property taxes to support schools. In those cases, voters should carefully assess the case the district makes for more money and ask tough questions about how it will be spent.

Responsibilities in an election do not all fall on candidates. Voters need to look at their own schools and communities and decide which issues matter to them. Our schools will only be as good as the time voters put into electing good people to run them and fund them.

Fortunately, there are a variety of ways to gather the information. Many candidates have websites that list their positions, and most of those running can be reached by phone or e-mail. Look for candidate forums in your community, where you can hear the candidates' views and question them. If you cannot attend forums, at least follow news stories or listen to radio or television broadcasts of candidate debates and forums.

Minnesotans spend billions on K-12 and higher learning to educate tens of thousands of students -- one of the most important investments government makes. Voters determine how that money is raised and where it goes when they choose candidates for the Legislature and local school boards.

Posted on Thu, Mar. 30, 2006

U.S. schools give students a superior education

KENNETH DRAGSETH

If given the choice, would you send your son or daughter to a school in another country? The reality today is that our students will compete with students from around the world for jobs. Are our schools preparing our students for this challenge? No longer is it acceptable for students to be better prepared than their neighbors. They must now "possess the skills, knowledge, creativity, sense of self-worth and ethical values necessary to survive and flourish in a rapidly changing, culturally diverse, global society," as the Edina public schools mission states.

So how are we doing with our American educational system? Based on my experience, I would not want my child in any school system other than the U.S.

For the past 15 years, I have had the opportunity to travel around the world visiting schools and meeting with educational leaders from more than 20 countries in Asia, Central America, Europe and South America. I have visited classrooms, talked to teachers and administrators, had conversations with parents, and met with national educational leaders.

Although I always learned something, I returned with a great sense of pride in the greatest educational experiment in history — American public education. In every country I have visited, educators and parents have asked how they can make their educational system more like America's. They did not suggest our system should be more like theirs.

Multicultural U.S. We forget that the United States is the most diverse country in the world. We are a nation of immigrants. For most of us the only distinction is when your ancestors came to this country. In the countries I visited, a major culture prevailed. In many countries, different ethnic groups did not get along, and some were heavily discriminated against. The fact that we educate all our students, no matter their race, family background, financial status or disability, is not matched worldwide. We don't define students' options for life with entrance tests in sixth or ninth grade, but rather we give students opportunities to succeed at any time. These opportunities enhance our students' ability to compete in the changing world.

In the United States we seem fixated on test scores, continually comparing ourselves to countries like Singapore, China, Taiwan and Japan. These less culturally diverse countries do well on math and science tests. But our best schools in the United States do as well, according to the Test of International Mathematics and Science. What we have, which they envy, is the ability of our students to be creative, solve problems, work collaboratively and analyze data.

Our graduates develop more companies, gather more patents, receive more Nobel prizes, and lead with a can-do attitude. Other nations want to know how, and are trying to emulate our programs. In China, Beijing elementary schools are instituting a Minnesota-based program called "cooperative learning," so children in one-child families learn to work together. Other countries are trying to move away from a traditional adherence to performance on standardized tests to other measures of intelligence. We are moving toward more testing on basic subjects, resulting in less time for creativity in the classroom, while other nations are working hard to overcome our creativity lead.

Central control. In most countries, local control is nonexistent or minimal. They do not have school districts. The educational system is run by a central bureaucracy. The quality of an education in many countries is dependent on who can provide the most money for politicians with oversight. We are blessed with involved parents and responsive local school boards. They set direction, and needed change can happen rapidly. In centralized systems this is not the case.

In nearly all of the countries I visited, I did not see special education. Students who could not perform up to the academic or physical standards either did not attend or were put in separate schools. Their educators are amazed at how we integrate all students.

Extracurricular programs in most schools are not sponsored by the schools. Free or small-fee opportunities for all students to experiment with different fine arts or sports activities do not exist.

American schools must continue to improve. However, the programs that we put forth honor our diversity, celebrate our creativity and problem-solving abilities, value our local leadership, have a commitment to educate all students and provide enriching nonacademic opportunities. These attributes make me proud to say I wouldn't trade our system for any in the world.

Dragseth is superintendent of Edina public schools.

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Last update: August 15, 2006 – 12:43 AM

Jay Kiedrowski and John Gunyou: Toward a more competitive state

Rather than just debate taxes in Minnesota, let's focus on where and how those resources are being invested.

Jay Kiedrowski and John Gunyou

Taxes are always an issue in any election year, and this one is no exception.

Growth & Justice recently jump-started the tax debate with its report, Invest for Real Prosperity. The liberal think tank maintains that higher taxes are needed to fund more public investment so that Minnesota can prosper in an increasingly competitive world.

Conservative tax opponents were quick to respond, touting our recent fall out of the top 10 states in taxes. They argue that tax cuts benefit Minnesota's economy by encouraging private investment.

Here's the perspective of a couple of fiscal moderates: Rather than simply debate taxes, we should be focusing on where and how we invest those resources to strengthen Minnesota's competitive position.

Of course taxes have to be reasonable, but not at the expense of the public investments that made this state great. The disturbing reality is, we're slipping behind other states, and that does not bode well for the future.

In 1992, the average Minnesotan spent 17 cents out of every dollar of their income to pay for public services. Today, we're spending 16 cents. That means we're now spending a smaller share of our income on public services.

While that's good news for advocates of lower taxes and smaller government, it's troubling to those of us more concerned about Minnesota's future. Here's why:

In 1992, Minnesota ranked 15th among states in total education spending as a share of personal income, even after all the cuts to solve the state's last budget crisis. We're now 36th among states. Minnesota might be out of the top 10 in taxes, but we're nearing the bottom 10 in our support for education.

We're doing even worse with Minnesota's transportation infrastructure, the other cornerstone of our economy. MnDOT classifies more than one-third of state roads as "too far gone," and for the first time in 20 years, Minnesota's road quality index is declining.

Minnesota has long been a higher tax state, but that's not inherently bad -- it all depends on how we invest those resources. If our tax dollars are invested in the right public services, our competitive position is strengthened.

That strategy worked for decades. Moderate Republicans and centrist Democrats collaborated to create a superior education system and built the infrastructure needed to sustain economic growth.

During past recessions, governors of all parties raised taxes and reduced spending to weather those storms. This time, our governor instead chose to cut services and use accounting gimmicks to avoid raising state taxes.

That means class sizes increase from Woodbury to Eveleth and college tuition doubles. That means local streets continue to deteriorate, and our metro freeways remain parking lots. That means our competitive position is weakened.

Here's what we need to do to strengthen that position:

First, return to investing 17 cents per dollar of our income into public services over time. For the next few years, the growth in tax revenues is expected to keep pace with ongoing needs, but we still need to fix the problems caused by those shortsighted service cuts.

Most important, we must reverse the slide in our support for education. Minnesota has never been below average, and certainly not lower than Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana or Texas -- states we used to make fun of.

We also need to reinvest in the transportation infrastructure that drives our economy. MnDOT estimates an annual need of at least \$1.7 billion to sustain our road and transit systems, and the only plan in sight would meet less than one-fifth of those needs.

But as we restore those investments, we must also work harder to reform how we are spending our public dollars to get more accountability. A decade ago, major bipartisan education, health care and welfare reforms were enacted. Emerging from this latest fiscal crisis, we have little to show, other than smaller budgets.

Minnesota has led the nation in economic growth -- until now. For the first time in years, our growth is lagging behind other states. Minnesota's gross state product per capita only increased 0.6 percent in 2005, compared with 2.5 percent nationally.

Let's hope that was an anomaly, and not a harbinger of the consequences of shortsighted leadership. Strategic investments in human capital and public infrastructure always have been, and should always be, the key to Minnesota's economic prosperity -- not tax rankings.

Jay Kiedrowski is a senior fellow in public and nonprofit leadership at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs and was commissioner of finance under Gov. Rudy Perpich. John Gunyou is Minnetonka's city manager and was commissioner of finance in the Carlson administration.

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Last update: August 14, 2006 – 5:55 PM

Editorial: Vouchers remain a bad, wasteful idea

Don't waste energy and money on yet another plan.

Although voters widely oppose them and research shows mixed results, school voucher advocates won't let the concept go. Even studies that prove family income and stability have the greatest affect on learning don't deter them.

That disregard for public opinion and data raises questions about the true goal of the voucher movement: Is it to help students or dismantle public schools?

Last month, a group of Congressional Republicans and Department of Education leaders announced a \$100 million plan to give vouchers to low-income children to leave their struggling public schools. Called "Opportunity Scholarships," the plan would give parents \$4,000 per year to put toward private school tuition or another public school outside their district.

In another example of not letting facts get in the way of their plan, the idea was resurrected the same week an Education Department-commissioned study showed that public and private school students do equally well on standardized tests when they come from similar backgrounds.

It is ironic that Republicans propose spending millions to help students leave schools even as they underfund No Child Left Behind -- the very approach they recommended to improve public schools.

While frustration with poorly performing schools is understandable, the solution does not lie in abandoning public programs. Public schools are doing a good job for millions of students. The question is how to best invest public dollars to expand that success.

Because it's clear that family stability and income are predictors of academic success, why not devote more federal dollars to anti-poverty measures like job training, employment and affordable housing?

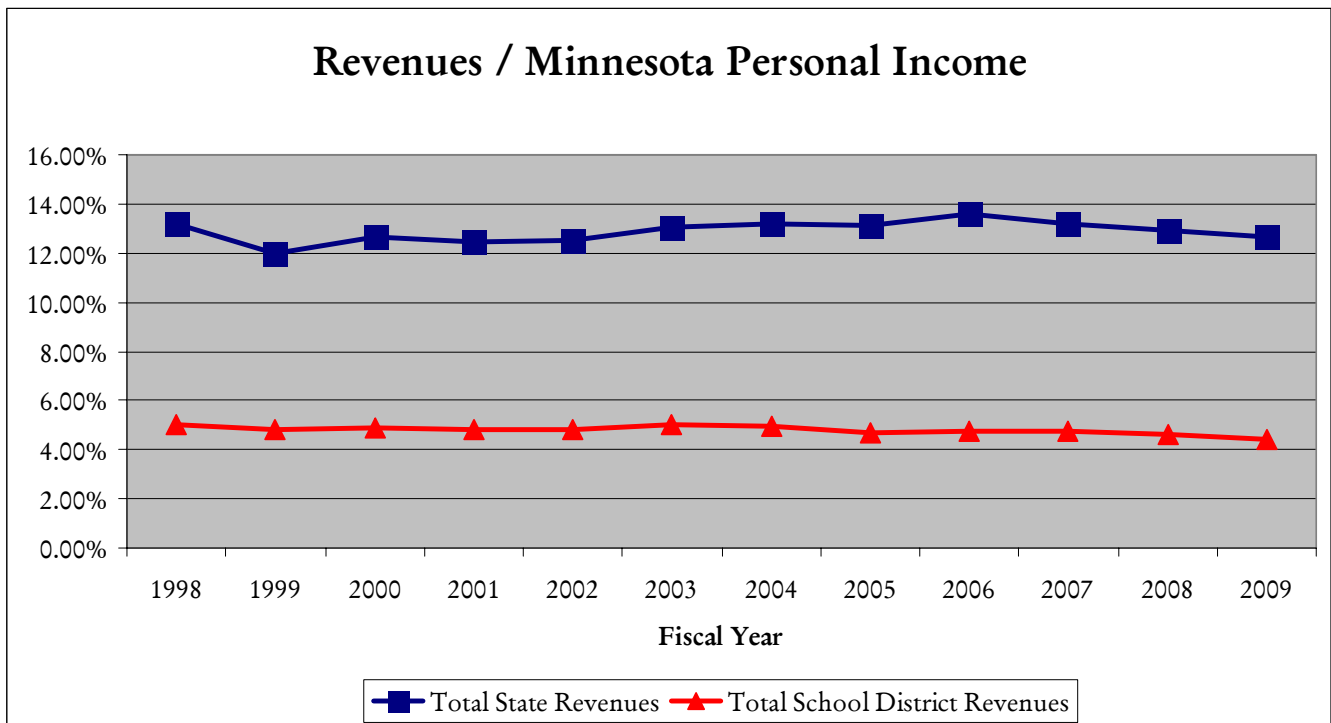
Raising living standards for the poor would have a lasting and widespread effect upon student learning -- a much greater impact than encouraging a few thousand students (out of millions) to leave public programs.

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School District Revenues Lagging Behind Personal Income Growth

A widely accepted way to gauge the overall cost of providing government services is to count all revenues and divide by the total personal income earned by residents living in the government jurisdiction. The well-known “Price of Government” index uses a comparable methodology.

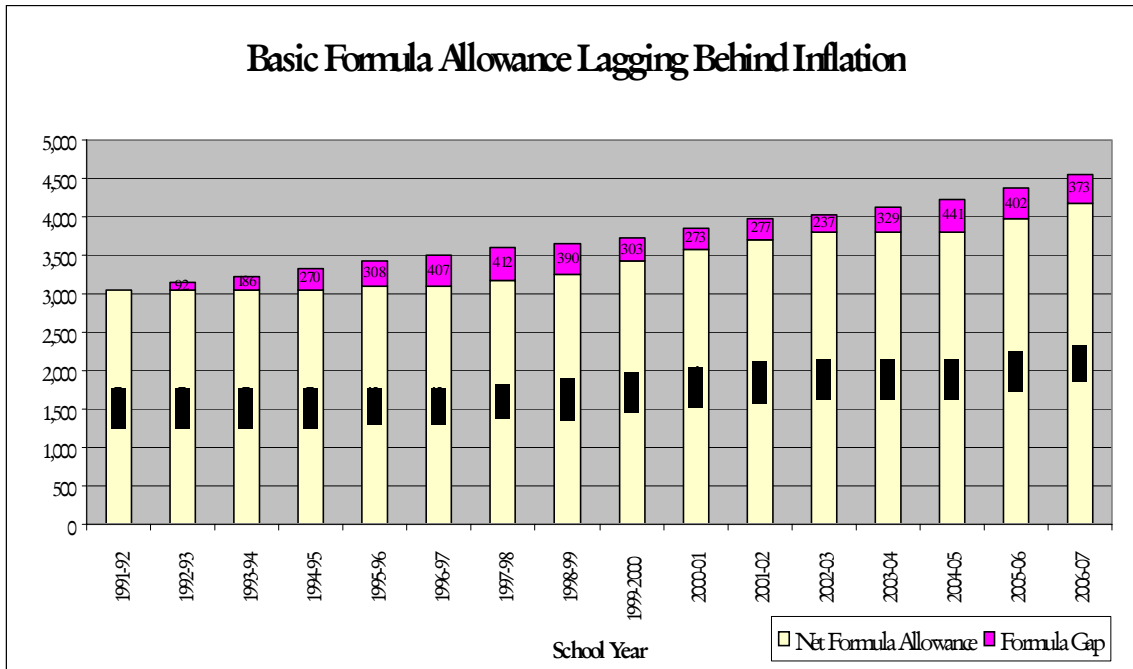
As the graph below indicates, the school districts’ index is roughly one-third that of State government, and revenues have not been keeping pace with personal income, prompting the downward trends in the graph.



Source: Minnesota Department of Revenue, Price of Government Data, end of session, 2006.

General Education Formula Diluted By Inflation Over Time

When examined since the 1991-92 school year, the formula allowance specified in State statute has offered districts reduced resources to provide top-quality instruction. The table below illustrates that the allowance is now expected to fund the services included in 1991, plus finance services and programs (“roll-ins”) added since without funding mechanisms. Once these costs are deducted and inflation is considered, the amount of funding available for core programs is considerably behind our level of fifteen years ago. In the coming fiscal year, the basic formula allowance is \$373 per pupil behind the 1991 level of funding.



Source: Minnesota Department of Education; Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis; Association of Metropolitan School Districts analysis.

Districts Reallocate Funds to Meet Unfunded Special Education Mandates

School districts bear the responsibility to provide special education services to students, regardless of whether funding is available to do so. As a consequence, districts subsidize the provision of special education services by diverting funds from other core programs. This subsidy, known as the “adjusted net cross subsidy,” amounted to over \$378 million in fiscal year 2004, the most recent figures available. Each individual member districts’ adjusted net cross subsidy is shown in total dollars and on a per student basis. WADM = weighted-average daily membership, an enrollment figure.

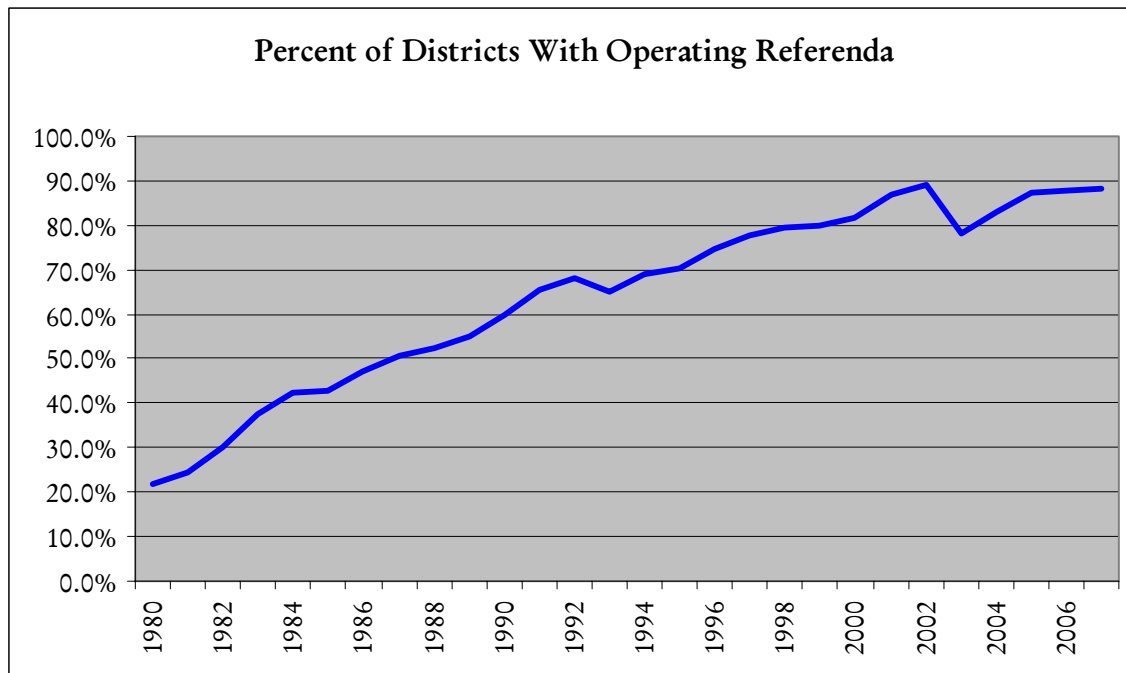
District Number	District Name	Adjusted Net Cross Subsidy*	Per WADM
271	Bloomington	4,969,920	401.22
286	Brooklyn Center	591,940	294.74
191	Burnsville	6,319,100	495.67
112	Chaska	3,645,615	388.48
272	Eden Prairie	4,785,332	402.86
273	Edina	3,376,260	403.90
728	Elk River	4,707,045	397.04
14	Fridley	1,298,437	436.15
270	Hopkins	4,547,151	473.23
199	Inver Grove	1,886,508	419.38
832	Mahtomedi	1,309,583	368.05
1	Minneapolis	24,953,438	528.93
276	Minnetonka	3,905,780	439.06
621	Mounds View	4,816,411	389.02
622	North St. Paul-Maplewood	5,966,945	431.32
278	Orono	1,041,838	359.41
280	Richfield	1,880,647	381.15
281	Robbinsdale	6,610,097	408.25
623	Roseville	3,429,339	459.25
720	Shakopee	2,328,384	416.23
6	South St. Paul	1,458,874	371.84
16	Spring Lake Park	1,626,155	331.71
282	St. Anthony-New Brighton	616,801	320.83
283	St. Louis Park	2,718,019	540.35
625	St. Paul	23,710,724	490.01
284	Wayzata	4,221,454	376.57
197	West St. Paul	2,711,785	490.50
	AMSD Total	129,433,583	
	State Total	378,706,399	
* Calculation of Adjusted Net Cross-Subsidy:			
	Special education expenditures		
	Less: Categorical revenues		
	Less: General ed revenue attributable to special ed students served more than 60% outside of regular classroom.		
	= Adjusted Net Cross-Subsidy		

Source: Minnesota Department of Education, Program Finance.

Minnesota Districts Respond to Reduced Funding by Proposing Ballot Measures

In 1980, roughly one in five Minnesota school districts asked voters for the authority to levy referendum revenue for operations. Over the past two decades, as districts have sought to meet new mandates without adequate funding streams, many more have placed levy requests on the ballot. In fiscal year 2007, 302 of Minnesota's 343 school districts – 88% – will receive voter approved referendum revenue.

Anyone familiar with the process of proposing and passing these ballot measures will testify that it is not the most efficient way to finance core school programs. However, under the current funding system, revenue raised via the operating referendum is crucial to providing core academic programming and increasing student achievement.



Source: Minnesota Department of Education, Program Finance.

Frequently Asked Questions about Operating Referendum

Association of Metropolitan School Districts

August 9, 2006

Didn't the Legislature provide \$800 million for E-12 education in 2005? Why do districts need more?

In the 2005 legislative session, the Governor and Legislature approved \$566 million in new state aid. The \$800 million total *included* \$95 million in an accounting shift as well as an estimate of what would be generated by new local levies. Of the \$800 million in total new funding for schools, \$139 million was expected to come from local levies. Of the \$139 million in local levies, the Minnesota Department of Education estimated that \$32 million would come from passage of new referenda.

Didn't the Legislature provide supplemental funding for energy costs in 2006?

In the 2006 session, the Legislature approved supplemental funding of \$3.67 per pupil to assist school districts with energy costs. A survey of AMSD members showed an average projected annual increase in expenditures for heating and transportation of **\$47.61** per pupil for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2006.¹

Isn't the basic formula sufficient? Hasn't it increased in recent years?

The basic formula would have to increase by an *additional* \$373 per pupil over the next fiscal year just to maintain a level of funding after inflation equal to that invested in the 1991-92 school year.

Isn't a referendum just for "extras"?

Operating referenda have grown in importance since they were first put on the ballot in the early 1970s. In 1980, less than a quarter of districts relied on voter approved operating referenda. Today, over 88% of districts rely on the operating referendum. This increase reflects the fact that operating referenda are no longer seen as a way to pay for "extras." Districts now rely on operating referenda to fund basic, core academic programs.²

How much of districts' revenue comes from the operating referendum?

The amount of a district's revenue that comes from the operating referendum varies greatly from district to district. Metro districts rely most heavily on the operating referendum since, on average, metro districts receive the lowest amounts of state aid. Reliance on the operating referendum has also grown over time: In 1984, referendum revenue made up less than 3% of total education revenue, by 2007 that figure will increase to 9.95%.³ In fiscal year 2007, some metropolitan school districts will depend on the operating referendum for up to 21% of their revenue.⁴

Isn't Minnesota already a leader in education funding?

- In 2002, according to the Census of Governments (COG), Minnesota fell below the national average for per pupil spending for the first time since the COG began collecting the data 13 years ago. A National Center for Education Statistics study with data from 1970 through 1992 showed that Minnesota never dropped below the average during that time period.

¹ AMSD 2005 Energy Survey, conducted October 1 – November 15, 2005. Figures use AMCPU for pupil count. The \$47.61 is comprised of \$37.45 for heating expenditure and \$10.16 for transportation expenditure.

² Crowe, Greg "A History of the School Operating Levy Referendum," *Money Matters*, December 2002. Fiscal Analysis Department, Minnesota House of Representatives.

³ Crowe, Greg "A History of the School Operating Levy Referendum," *Money Matters*, December 2002. Fiscal Analysis Department, Minnesota House of Representatives.

⁴ Minnesota Department of Education, WhatIf 2007 worksheet.

- According to a report by The Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government, Minnesota ranked 46th in the nation in growth in per-pupil spending on K-12 education between 1997 and 2002.
- In 2003, Minnesota ranked 28th in current K-12 education spending per \$1,000 of personal income (in 1995, Minnesota ranked 12th).⁵
- Minnesota received a “D” grade, one of the three worst marks in the nation, from Education Week magazine in its analysis of the availability of technology for students, teachers and administrators.⁶

Didn't the State take over responsibility for funding education in 2001?

In 2001, the Legislature passed legislation to assume a greater responsibility for funding education. In recent years, however, State support for education has diminished leaving local districts to pick up the slack. The State has reduced the percentage of school district revenue it contributes from 86.7% in fiscal year 2003 to 80.5% in fiscal year 2007.⁷ Local operating referenda are necessary to make up for the under-investment by the State. In fact, 302 of Minnesota's 343 school districts have received authorization from voters to collect an operating levy in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2007. Of AMSD's 27 districts able to receive such authorization, 26 have held referendum elections since 2001. Twenty three of those districts have held more than one referendum election since 2001.

For questions, more detail, or additional research related to school district referenda, contact the Association of Metropolitan School Districts at 651-999-7325.

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, “Public Education Finances: 2002,” September 2004, Table 8.

⁶ “Technology Counts 2006: The Information Edge,” *Education Week*, May 4, 2006, 54.

⁷ Minnesota House Research, “Appropriations and Levies for Elementary, Secondary and Community Education Including State Agencies,” July 25, 2006.

Web Sites of Interest

Major Political Party Information

DFL Party	www.dfl.org
Independence Party	www.mnip.org
Republican Party	www.gop-mn.org

Major Party Candidates For Governor

Tim Pawlenty	www.timpawlenty.com
Mike Hatch	www.hatch2006.org
Peter Hutchinson	www.teammn.com

Candidate Information

League of Women Voters	www.lwvmn.org
Secretary of State	www.sos.mn.us

Education Information

Association of Metro School Districts	www.amsd.org
Alliance for Student Achievement	www.allianceforstudentachievement.org
P.S. Minnesota	www.psmnnesota.org

About AMSD . . .

The mission of AMSD is to advocate for state education policy that enables metropolitan school districts to improve student learning

AMSD Believes that:

- **Student success is critical to Minnesota's future**
- **Public education must be the highest priority of state government**
- **State education policy should support the unique needs of metropolitan districts**
- **Districts are in the best position to make local education decisions**
- **Speaking with one voice enhances our impact on state education policy**

In existence since 1974, AMSD currently represents **thirty K-12 metropolitan school districts, one intermediate school district, and two joint-powers school districts** and the **nearly 300,000 students** in those districts, over **32% of the state's students**.

For further information please contact us:

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Members of AMSD

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