



ASSOCIATION OF METROPOLITAN
SCHOOL DISTRICTS

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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New survey shows House and Senate budget proposals would leave school districts with large budget holes and few options.

AMSD asked districts to analyze impact of two proposals as the E-12 Education Conference Committee begins work on final legislation.

ST. PAUL - A recent survey by the Association of Metropolitan School Districts shows that metropolitan school districts would face large budget shortfalls and staff layoffs under the plans currently being considered by lawmakers. AMSD asked their member districts to make budget projections based on two potential funding scenarios: no increase in funding as is proposed by the House and a 3.2 percent cut in funding as is currently proposed by the Senate.

The Senate's proposed plan would create a cumulative budget gap of more than \$222 million and force the reduction of almost 1,300 employees. The House plan would create a budget gap of more than \$135 million and force metro districts to cut approximately 824 full-time positions.

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“School districts rely on the state for the vast majority of their funding,” said Scott Croonquist, AMSD executive director. “This survey shows that for many districts, making ends meet for the 2009-10 school year will be extremely challenging and result in painful cuts. We hope legislators and the governor can reach a final agreement that does better by our students than what is currently being proposed.”

As part of the survey, districts that faced a shortfall were asked to also identify how many licensed and non-licensed staff would need to be cut to balance their budget. The projected budget gap in the survey is the difference between proposed revenue and expenses for providing the same level of services in 2010 as they did in 2009.

The survey shows that districts with expanding student enrollment and those that have recently succeeded in passing an operating referendum will be better positioned to manage the budget challenges without having to make significant cuts to staff and services. For other school districts, the two current proposals would force significant cuts – especially under the Senate plan which reduces funding by 3.2 percent.

“School board members, administrators, teachers and parents all understand the enormous budget challenge facing our state,” said Pat Gleason, chairperson for the AMSD board of directors and vice-chair of the Wayzata school board. “They hold no illusion that our schools and our students will escape pain as we work through this devastating recession. What’s disheartening is that we have not yet recovered from cuts made six years ago. It is absolutely imperative that we make a break from the status quo and begin to phase in the New Minnesota Miracle funding reform so we have a light at the end of this very dark tunnel.”

About AMSD

In existence since 1974, AMSD represents 30 K-12 metropolitan school districts, three intermediate school districts, two joint powers districts, and about 40 percent of the state's students. While AMSD's primary task is to lobby at the state level for the needs of metropolitan school districts, it also is a highly respected source of information for member districts, legislators, the media, and parent advocacy groups on issues ranging from funding to curriculum to policy.

To review the study and to find more information, please visit amsd.org

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