

June 2011
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AMSD Calendar

June 17, 2011

Executive Committee Meeting, 7:30 a.m., TIES Building, St. Paul

July 15, 2011

Executive Committee Meeting, 7:30 a.m., TIES Building, St. Paul

August 12, 2011

Board of Directors Meeting, 7:00 a.m., TIES Building, St. Paul

August 26, 2011

Executive/Legislative Committee Meeting, 7:30 a.m., TIES Building, St. Paul

Northwest Suburban Integration District provides integration support and resources for eight member districts

Northwest Suburban Integration School District (NWSISD) serves approximately 100,000 students in over 100 schools in eight districts in the northwest metro. In 2001, a seven-district collaborative of Anoka-Hennepin, Brooklyn Center, Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose, Elk River, Fridley, Osseo, and Rockford was formed when Brooklyn Center, and soon after, Osseo Area Schools, became racially isolated. Mounds View joined NWSISD at the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year. NWSISD functions under Minnesota's Desegregation Rule, collaborating around integration activities that are approved by MDE.



NWSISD's integration plan revolves around three primary goals: "NWSISD will work to create a culturally inclusive learning environment. NWSISD will work to create inter-district interactions among students, staff, and parents that improve intercultural competency and increase student achievement. NWSISD and member districts will actively recruit candidates from racially diverse backgrounds for member districts."

NWSISD has designed and organized its programs, staff, and activities around the three plan goals. Its staff of eight (8) serves to assist its member districts and staff with vision around integration, along with coordination, facilitation, communication, and overall coordination around programming, as well as providing research and information, and new opportunities for partnerships and development.

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AMSD's Mission

To advocate for state education policy that enables metropolitan school districts to improve student learning.



Association of
Metropolitan School Districts

From the Chair:

As we gear up for a special session and hopefully, a resolution to the budget impasse, it is critical that AMSD board members stay in touch with their local legislators. I know it is a very busy time of year with graduations, weddings and many other summer activities, but we must continue to make sure the governor and legislators are aware of our [priorities](#) and the need to adequately fund our schools. Many legislators are holding town meetings or forums and I strongly encourage AMSD members to attend and make your voice heard. The decisions made during the special session will have a tremendous impact on the quality of education available to our students over the next two years and into the future. Thanks for your commitment and dedication to our schools and our students!

Patsy Green, school board member from Robbinsdale Area Schools, is chair of AMSD.

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In recent years, NWSISD programs have functioned with the primary lens of student achievement in mind; essentially all programs currently in place focus on raising the academic bar and closing the achievement gap, with cultural competency as a context or framework. NWSISD's major programs include 15 magnets in three themes (Performing and Fine Arts, International Baccalaureate (IB), and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)); AVID, JMNG (Jobs for Minnesota Graduates); Future Educators Clubs; its Multicultural Resource Center, and Family and Community Empowerment (parent programs).



NWSISD has established 15 high rigor magnet programs in three K-12 strands, including International Baccalaureate, Performing and Fine Arts, and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). These programs/schools are owned and operated by member districts (not NWSISD), and serve over 11,500 students. Over 3500 of these magnet students attend schools outside of their home attendance areas, and of the students who choose to move, there is a larger proportion of students of color doing so than white students. NWSISD magnet data shows three primary trends: a) the bar is raised through increased academic achievement; b) the academic gap is closed between students of color and white students; and c) in the vast majority of programs, the magnets are moving in the direction of de-segregating the schools. Of the fifteen magnets, 10 have received national awards, and all of the IB programs have been authorized by IB. NWSISD

currently has seven additional magnets under development all in the area of STEM, where there is the greatest student seat shortage currently. New magnets are placed strategically in both white and racially segregated schools, using a strategy to “pull” students towards high rigor options by student and family choice.

NWSISD also has highly effective, data-backed secondary programs which are designed to get struggling students on a good academic track and push them toward post-secondary training. Jobs for Minnesota Graduates (JMNG) has tracked data since 2001 and has annually met or exceeded national JAG standards for graduation, and job and post-secondary placements. Its record of taking the bottom 20th percentile of students and graduating, assisting them in employment, and in getting them to attend colleges is at a nearly 100% success level. In addition to JAG, the AVID program supported by NWSISD has a great track record. While only in existence the last three years, records indicate nearly identical results to that of JAG. This program targets the middle 50%, but gets great academic results by getting these students into the post-secondary education pipeline.

NWSISD assists districts in selected professional development programs and training, and also provides resources to teachers and classrooms through its Multicultural Resource Center and multicultural online calendar. NWSISD also coordinates Future Educator Clubs in most of the districts' high schools, specifically targeting and recruiting students of color to encourage them along a path of careers in education. Member districts are seeing a long term benefit of this program as some of their college graduates are returning to apply for jobs in their districts.

Finally, the NWSISD parent programs work intensely with underserved parents to help them improve their skills in assisting their own students academically. While data from this program is not directly tied to student achievement, NWSISD is seeing increased parent involvement and participation, as well as seeing parents support their students academically, in a significant and positive way.



This month's member spotlight was submitted by Mark Robertson, Superintendent, Northwest Suburban Integration District.

A Blueprint For Education Funding in the 21st Century

The Education Finance Working Group appointed by Minnesota Department of Education Commissioner Brenda Cassellius recently released its report, *Funding Education for the Future*. The report provides a broad array of recommendations to improve the adequacy, equity and stability of Minnesota’s pre K-12 funding system to help close the achievement gap and raise achievement for all students.

The 23-member group was led by co-chairs, Tom Nelson, interim superintendent of Stillwater Area Schools, and Peggy Ingison, Chief Financial Officer of Minneapolis Public Schools. Other working group members included Edina Superintendent Ric Dressen, Bloomington Superintendent Les Fujitake, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan School Board Member Art Coulson, St. Paul School Board Member Elona Street-Stewart and East Metro Integration District Business Manager Shari Thompson.

The working group operated under a tight timeline with its initial meeting on March 30. Group members reviewed the work of several prominent education funding studies and legislative reform proposals from the past decade.¹ The charge of the working group included an expansive agenda: improving the adequacy, equity and stability of K-12 education funding; simplifying and streamlining education funding; preserving local control; closing achievement gaps; and promoting high achievement for all students. The group’s final report is outlined below and contains twelve recommendations addressing topics ranging from all-day kindergarten to recognizing and rewarding student academic growth.

Table 1: Funding Education for the Future Proposal

| Issue | Working Group Proposal |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Early Learning | Invest in early learning, with resources targeted first to all-day kindergarten for students living in poverty. |
| Referendum Levies | Roll a portion (\$400) of referendum levies into the general education formula to provide a more adequate, uniform and stable funding base for all districts and charter schools, and to lessen reliance on local referenda. |
| General Education Levy | Establish a uniform general education levy by consolidating and replacing existing school levies, including a portion of existing referendum levies rolled into the formula. There will be no increase in total school levies with a component of the levy spread on tax capacity and a component spread on referendum market value. |
| Formulas and Student Calculations | Simplify funding formulas and student accounting to make E-12 education funding more understandable and transparent. |
| Basic Skills Funding | Reform basic skills funding by rolling extended-time funding into compensatory education revenue targeted to concentrations of poverty and allowing districts flexibility in the use of an additional 10% of revenue. |
| Integration Funding | Refocus integration funding by including it in the basic skills portion of the general education revenue. Funding will be based on the number of students of color in each district with each district receiving \$600 times the number of students of color enrolled in the district. Funding would be all state aid and some transition funding is recommended. |
| Growth | Recognize and reward growth by creating a noncompetitive grant program to recognize schools with outstanding growth in student achievement and disseminate best practices. |
| Special Education Funding | Change special education tuition bill by sharing of excess special education costs between the resident school district and the serving school district or charter school for open-enrolled students. |
| Regional Costs | Recognize regional cost differences by rolling a portion of referendum revenue into a new location equity levy for the seven county metro area and for non-metro regional centers. |
| General Education Formula | Restore inflation-adjusted general education formula to FY 2003 levels by setting the formula allowance at \$6,290 for FY 2013. |
| Charter School Lease Aid | Reduce charter school lease aid as an offset to formula increases. |
| Revenue Increases | Phase in revenue increases and uniform general education levy to assure a smooth transition. |

One of the key recommendations for AMSD members is the recognition of regional cost differences by rolling a portion of referendum revenue into a new location equity levy for the metro area and for the non-metro regional centers. This has been an issue long championed by AMSD. The Working Group reviewed a report by the Hamline University School of Business and data gathered by Minnesota Department of Education staff that clearly confirmed the geographic cost differences that exist in Minnesota. The charts on the following page show why the average operating referendum in the metropolitan area is \$683 per pupil higher than in non-metro school districts.

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¹ Past studies and legislation regarding education funding reform in Minnesota include: *Investing in Our Future*, *PS Minnesota* and *New Minnesota Miracle*.

Reforming Minnesota's School Funding System

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Table 2: Differences in Average Teacher Salaries by Strata, FY 2011

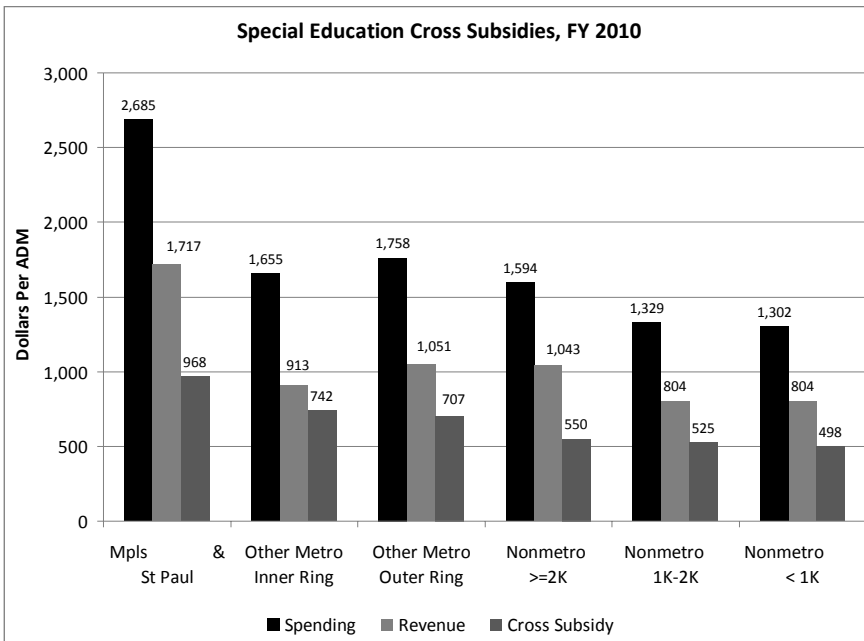
Table 2 shows that metropolitan area school districts and rural regional centers face significantly higher wage structures than their rural counterparts. Table 3 highlights the significant special education cross subsidies faced by metro school districts. The recommendation to establish a location equity levy will reduce the reliance on the operating referendum to fund these regional cost differences.

On May 25, 2011, at the final meeting of the Working Group, Governor Mark Dayton thanked the members for their participation and contributions. He told members that he looked forward to reading the report and said that they had “set a really high marker.” In response to a member’s question, on whether the report could be considered during the upcoming special session, the Governor responded by saying, “Anything is possible; anything is impossible.”

| | # Teachers | Average Salary |
|-------------------------------|------------|----------------|
| TOTAL | 52,473 | 53,698 |
| MPLS & ST PAUL | 4,777 | 63,921 |
| OTHER METRO, INNER | 5,107 | 56,036 |
| OTHER METRO, OUTER | 15,231 | 58,932 |
| NONMET >=2K | 11,092 | 51,665 |
| NONMET 1K-2K | 6,023 | 48,947 |
| NONMET < 1K | 6,562 | 45,696 |
| CHARTER | 2,604 | 39,259 |
| OTHER | 1,076 | 54,407 |
| Subtotal, Metro Districts | 25,115 | 59,292 |
| Subtotal, Non-Metro Districts | 23,677 | 49,319 |

Source: May 11, 2011. Online PowerPoint. 26 May 2011.
 <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Accountability_Programs/Program_Finance/General_Information/Educ_Finance_Work_Group/index.html>

Table 3: Special Education Cross Subsidies



Commissioner Cassellius believes the report offers, “...a blueprint for our future – a future in which we meet Minnesota’s constitutional obligation to provide a ‘uniform system of public schools’ with improved education funding that takes what’s good and makes it better.” The members of the working group share the Commissioner’s enthusiasm as the report passed unanimously. The report and other supporting material is available on the MDE web sit:

http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Accountability_Programs/Program_Finance/General_Information/Educ_Finance_Work_Group/index.html

Source: May 11, 2011. Online PowerPoint. 26 May 2011.
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AMSD Members: Anoka-Hennepin, Bloomington, Brooklyn Center, Burnsville, Columbia Heights, East Metro Integration District 6067, Eden Prairie, Edina, Elk River, Fridley, Hopkins, Intermediate District 287, Intermediate District 917 (Associate Member), Inver Grove Heights, Mahtomedi, Minneapolis, MSU Mankato Center for Engaged Leadership (Associate Member), Minnetonka, Mounds View, Intermediate School North St. Paul/Maplewood/Oakdale, Northeast Metro District 916 (Associate Member), Northwest Suburban Integration District (Associate Member), Orono, Osseo Area Schools, Richfield, Robbinsdale, Roseville, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan, Shakopee, South St. Paul, Spring Lake Park, St. Anthony/New Brighton, St. Cloud, St. Louis Park, St. Paul, Stillwater, TIES (Associate Member), Wayzata, West Metro Education Program, West St. Paul, and White Bear Lake.