

AMSD

CONNECTIONS

News and Updates from the Association of Metropolitan School Districts

November 2010
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AMSD Calendar

November 5, 2010

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

November 19, 2010

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

Legislative Preview

January 7, 2011

8:00 a.m.—10:00 am
Grand Hall
TIES Building, St. Paul

SAVE THE DATE!

January 19, 2011

8:00 AM—12:00 PM

2010 AMSD Winter Conference

"Building a Bridge to the Next Generation of Public Education"

Grand Hall, TIES Building, St. Paul

AMSD's Mission

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



**Association of
Metropolitan School Districts**

Building Community in Roseville: Police and School Partnerships

Police officers often come to schools for DARE programs or safe driving presentations. In Roseville Area Schools, they also come for lunch. Beginning this school year, officers with the Roseville Police department started dropping by Roseville Schools' cafeterias for informal conversations with elementary through high school students. The results have been unexpected for both the students and police officers. "Our students are excited to see the police officers in the lunchroom," said Florence Odegard, principal at Central Park Elementary. "Students ask a lot of questions. It is a positive way to build relationships. It is important for students to informally interact with police officers – students need to understand that police officers are 'real' people who genuinely care about their wellbeing."



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From the Chair:

Not surprisingly, most of the media attention during the campaign season has been directed at the race for governor and the state and congressional races. However, there will also be some very critical school referendum questions on the ballot.

As the research article in this month's newsletter highlights, Minnesota school districts are very reliant on revenue received through voter approved operating referenda. Once upon a time, referendum revenue was used to provide extras – programs and offerings that went beyond what students needed to meet graduation requirements. Those days are long gone. Today our school districts rely on referendum revenue to provide the basic programming our students need to meet state and federal requirements and to try to keep class sizes at manageable levels that are conducive to learning.

School referendum elections are one more reason that it is critically important that Minnesotans get engaged in the electoral process. Do your homework, study the issues and the ballot questions, and find out where the candidates stand on critical education issues. Most importantly, get to the polls and vote on November 2!

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

Police officers enjoy developing positive relationships with students in Roseville

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The student/officer lunches aim to increase police involvement in the community and develop positive relationships with students. Ben Rezny, a Roseville Detective, says the idea grew out of his years as a School Resource Officer for Roseville Area High School. “By the time I worked with a student as the liaison officer, the relationship wasn’t usually a friendly one,” he recalled. “You realize that most of the students are good kids, they just sometimes make bad choices.” He realized how important it was to develop positive relationships with students, especially high school students, before there is a problem and students cross the threshold of behavior that breaks the law. “If we can develop ties with students that are positive and healthy, when we need to see them, we already know them,” Detective Rezny said. “There is some trust there, and we can get to the bottom of a bad choice and move on.”



The officers drop by for lunch at Brimhall and Central Park elementary schools, Parkview Center School (K-8), Fairview Alternative High School and Roseville Area High School. Officers have the option of whether or not to be in uniform. “I love that our officer comes in uniform,” said Kristen Smith-Olson, principal at Parkview Center School. “It’s a great way for kids to become more familiar with them. Then, if they are in a situation where the police are called – say a car accident – it isn’t scary or a surprise that they have a gun.”

Officers talk casually with students about whatever is on their mind – the Vikings, the weather, school sports – and keep it informal. “Elementary students want to talk about the equipment we have – the badge, handcuffs, taser. High schools students are more interested in the lifestyle of a police officer – what it is like and the situations we encounter,” said Rezny. And the reception they receive also differs by age. “The younger students will run up to us and want to hang out,” said Rezny. “High school kids want to talk, but it’s not cool in front of peers, so you have to break that initial barrier. Once you get past that, students open up.”



The positive, informal contact also builds trust so that students seek out the officer privately as someone they can go to that will help them. “They’ll come to you with all sorts of problems – homework, teachers, domestic abuse, bullying. Students feel more supported, that they can trust us to help and it will be handled in a way that doesn’t make it worse,” said Rezny. “And it also gives an interesting perspective on all of the students. They really know what is going on in the community.”

The response from officers has been enthusiastic. “The officers love it, and want to do more,” said Rezny. “We have a stressful job, but we’ll go to lunch with students and come back more lighthearted, positive and energized for our job.” The officers also experience more connectedness to the community. “These officers will be at a local store out in the community and the students and parents will approach them,” said Rezny. “They know the officer from positive encounters.”

And simply having lunch with students has opened up many new relationships. School principals know the officer assigned to their school better and are more comfortable accessing them for advice before problems reach a crisis stage.

In the end, it is a simple lunch in a school cafeteria. But the ripple effects of these informal, positive encounters spread throughout Roseville schools and the community.

This month’s member spotlight was submitted by Karen Schaub, Director of Community Education and Public Relations for Roseville Area Schools.

Referendum Revenue Funds Core Education Programs

On November 2, seventy-five school districts across the state will be asking voters to approve or renew an operating referendum. Five AMSD member districts have at least one operating referendum question on the ballot this fall: Brooklyn Center, Elk River, Mounds View, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan and West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan. In addition, the Hopkins School district has two ballot questions – one for a capital projects levy for curriculum and technology and the other for a capital bond for safety and security improvements. You can access these school district’s web sites to gather more information [here](#).

School districts rely on referendum revenue to fund basic educational programming for their students. As the chart below shows, over the past decade the number of school districts with a referendum question on the ballot has ranged from a high of 197 in 2001, to a low of 53 in 2008. The passage rate for school districts has also varied significantly during this time frame from a high of 75.3 percent approval in 2005 to a low of 42.7 percent in 2006.

Operating Referendums Proposed / Approved Statewide

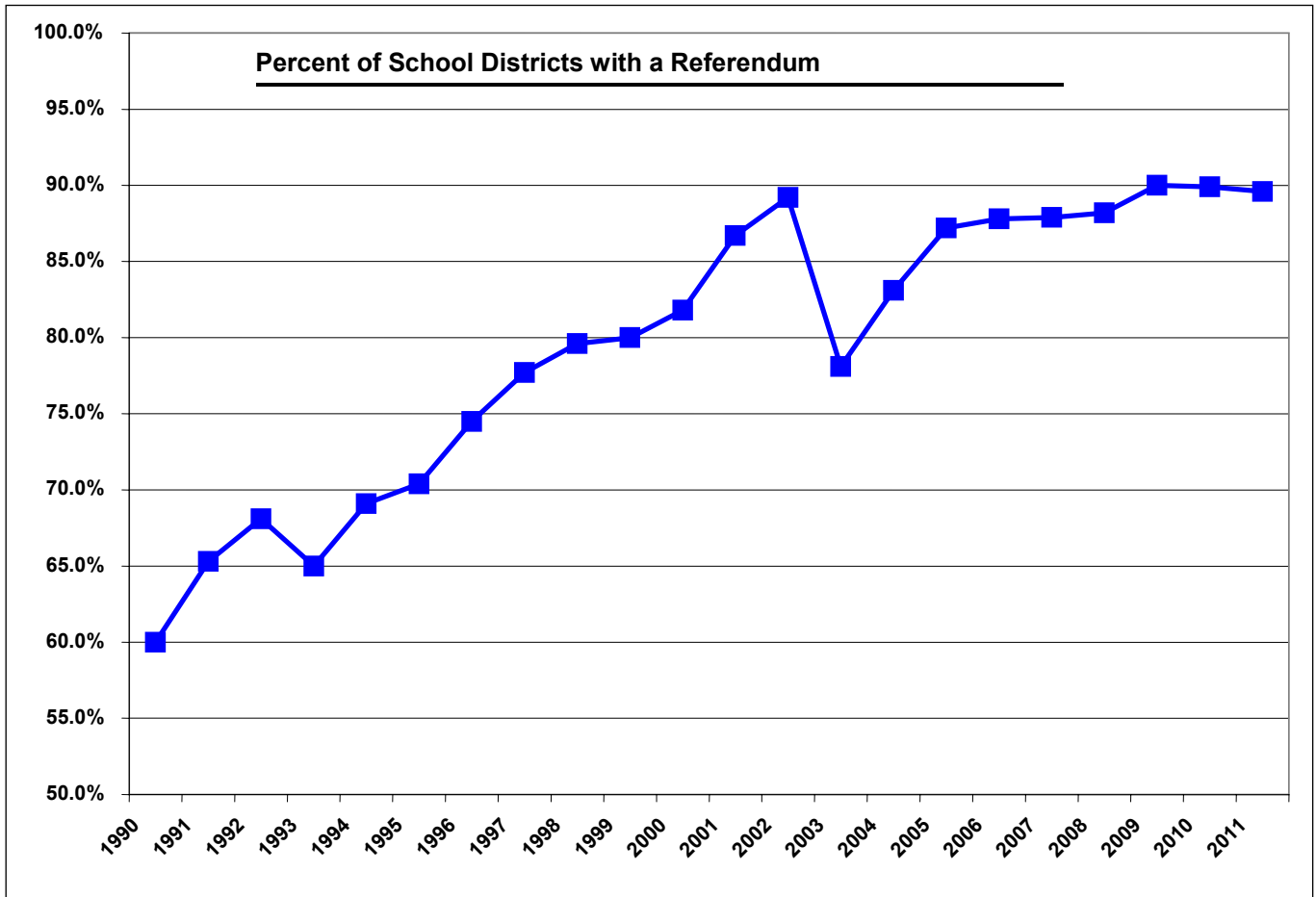
Election Year	CY 2000	CY 2001	CY 2002	CY 2003	CY 2004	CY 2005	CY 2006	CY 2007	CY 2008	CY 2009
First effective fiscal year	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Total questions proposed	71	207	111	117	89	106	86	132	68	78
Total questions approved	47	136	61	78	44	78	33	76	30	49
% Approved:	66.2%	65.7%	55.0%	66.7%	49.4%	73.6%	38.4%	57.6%	44.1%	63%
# Districts proposed	70	197	93	90	72	89	75	100	53	59
# Districts approved	46	135	56	64	40	67	32	67	27	42
% Approved:	65.7%	68.5%	60.2%	71.1%	55.6%	75.3%	42.7%	67.0%	50.9%	71.2%

Source: MDE “OperatingRefCY2009.xls”

Over the past 20 years, the number of school districts that have come to rely on referendum revenue has increased significantly. As the chart on the following page demonstrates, about 90% of school districts depend on revenue received from an operating referendum. The number of school districts with a referendum declined sharply in 2003 after the state replaced \$415 of referendum revenue with state aid. However, the number has consistently increased since then due to declining state support for education. Given the significant budget challenges facing the state, the reliance on the operating referendum is not likely to diminish in the foreseeable future.

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.

Ninety Percent of School Districts Rely on Referendum Revenue



Source: MDE "OperatingRefCY2009.xls"

Metropolitan school districts are particularly reliant on referendum revenue. As the chart below shows, in FY2011 the average AMSD school district will depend on referendum revenue for almost 13 percent its total operating revenue. Some AMSD member districts receive almost 20 percent of their total operating revenue from the operating referendum! Not surprisingly, the failure of an operating referendum question can have devastating consequences for a school district. Consequently, school officials spend an enormous amount of time meeting with citizens in their district to explain the referendum request. School superintendents and school board members are always happy to answer questions from members of the community.

Percent of Total Operating Revenue from an Operating Referendum

District	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
AMSD Average	11.2%	7.6%	10.4%	10.8%	10.8%	11.4%	11.5%	12.2%	13.1%	12.9%
State Average	6.2%	3.6%	5.5%	5.9%	6.1%	6.8%	7.1%	8.2%	9.2%	9.3%

Source: MDE "DistRev02-11Feb10Forecast-1.xls"