

Mark Your Calendar!

APRIL 8

AMSD Board Meeting 7 AM, TIES Building

Senator Steve Kelley and Representative Jeff Johnson are scheduled to provide updates on the legislative session at the April Board meeting.

News Briefs

Share Your Good News in Connections

Please submit good news happening in your district, or ideas for the monthly spotlight, to share with fellow AMSD members and legislators.

Send your ideas to Amy Parnell, AMSD communications consultant at amymparnell@msn.com by the 15th of each month to be included in a future issue of *Connections*.

AMSD's Mission

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



Bringing programs back to District 622 good for kids and saves money

A combination of increasing student enrollment in special education services and rising tuition costs to serve them outside the district has prompted administrators in the North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale Schools to create programs to bring students home.

In its efforts to bring students back into the district and realize potential cost savings in the process, Special Services will operate five new programs in local schools next year. In doing so, the district hopes to pay approximately \$400,000 less in outside tuition costs.

Declining enrollment at the elementary level makes it possible to house these programs in district schools for the 2004-05 school year, a change from previous years when competition for classroom space was high.

"We believe it is better for students to participate in programs within their home district," said Special Services Director Lorie Schulstad-Werk, "so that they are more connected to their peers and community."

Additionally, said Werk, it will be more cost effective to operate these programs in-house rather than pay tuition to other districts, although those options still remain "for students who need more intensive programming."

Returning to the District 622 next year are:

- ▶ A high school transition program serving 20 students;
- ▶ A center-based program serving up to 12 high school EBD (emotional/behavioral disorders) students;
- ▶ An autism/neurobiological program serving 10 students;
- ▶ A developmental cognitive disabilities program serving six students; and



North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale Schools are bringing a number of special education services "home" to benefit students and realize potential cost savings.

From the Chair

Task Force Report Headed in Right Direction

As you know, the Governor's School Funding Task Force has released its preliminary report on school funding in Minnesota. At this point, we are encouraged that this draft recognizes both geographic cost differences and student mobility—two issues vitally important to our membership. We are also glad to see that the report emphasizes providing local flexibility to school boards in how the basic formula or "instructional service allocation" is spent in each district. It also recognizes that local districts should still have the ability to go to their communities for additional funding. However, there is still much work to be done. The Task Force is currently fine tuning its final report which will likely be presented sometime this spring.

This report will serve as the basis for recommendations brought forward regarding school funding during the legislative session in 2005. AMSD is eager to work together with the Governor and legislators during the interim and next session, and will continue to monitor and keep you up-to-date of additional progress this spring.

Keith Broady, board member for the St. Louis Park Public Schools, is chair of the Association of Metropolitan School Districts.

Reduced funding must be reinstated this session

Last December, the Association of Metropolitan School Districts' (AMSD) 26 member school districts projected a combined shortfall of nearly \$62 million for the 2004-05 school year. Since that time, AMSD has been actively working with legislators to seek additional funding to provide much needed relief to strained school district budgets.

Unfortunately, many AMSD districts now face additional funding challenges since the federal government announced that Title I funds, provided for students who receive free or reduced lunches, will also be reduced. Column one in the attached chart illustrates the estimated Title I revenue that will be lost.

It is vital that the Legislature take action before the session ends May 17 to provide school districts with basic funding needs. In addition to urging Minnesota's Congressional delegation to reinstate Title I funding, it is crucial that the Minnesota Legislature put levy authority back in place that was cut in last year's session. Column two in the attached chart illustrates the estimated reduction in levy authority for each AMSD district.

While restoring the levy authority that was cut last

legislative session won't solve the budget problems faced by metropolitan school districts, it will provide some much needed relief. "Getting

this funding back in place only gets us back to ground zero," said Keith Broady, AMSD chair. "It doesn't even begin to provide the funding

that is still desperately needed to meet the diverse needs of the many students our districts serve."

Title I and Levy Reductions for FY 05

	Estimated loss of Title I revenue ¹	Estimated Lost Levy Revenue for FY 05 ²
Bloomington	\$65,706	\$307,550
Brooklyn Center	\$29,510	\$91,965
Burnsville	\$127,735	\$949,587
Chaska	\$44,624	\$294,394
Eden Prairie	\$49,543	\$660,819
Edina	\$26,704	\$1,379,549
Fridley	\$34,667	\$187,449
Hopkins	\$169,798	\$396,901
Inver Grove Heights	\$48,211	\$335,244
Mahtomedi	\$14,289	\$232,901
Minneapolis	\$1,655,985	\$2,102,146
Minnetonka	\$0	\$530,396
Mounds View	\$65,706	\$1,338,048
North St. Paul	\$289,827	\$847,846
Orono	\$49,191	\$242,424
Richfield	\$50,965	\$322,052
Robbinsdale	\$419,905	\$585,685
Roseville	\$44,409	\$144,538
St Anthony - New Brighton	\$24,654	\$94,863
St Louis Park	\$101,594	\$516,551
St Paul	\$893,105	\$2,786,322
Shakopee	\$81,254	\$82,328
South St Paul	\$109,908	\$355,905
Spring Lake Park	\$46,533	\$632,166
Wayzata	\$0	\$707,079
Intermediate 287	NA	NA
AMSD Total	\$4,443,820	\$16,124,708

1. Source: Dept of Education revised Title I spreadsheet
 2. Source: House Research Feb. 2003

Bringing programs back... (continued from page 1)

► An Elementary Day Treatment program that can accept up to 10 students. District 622 Special Services provides program-

ming for 1,683 students, representing 11.01% of the district's enrollment. *This month's district spotlight was submitted by Natalie*

Johnson, director of communications for the North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale Schools.