

Mark Your Calendar!

REGIONAL MEETINGS SET

Regional meetings have been scheduled for the following dates in January. All AMSD legislators will be invited to attend the regional meetings for a presentation of the AMSD platform and an informal dialogue about educational issues.

January 12

Central regional meeting at 3:30 p.m. in the TIES building.

January 13

Eastern regional meeting at 3:30 p.m. in the TIES building.

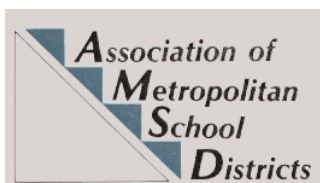
January 14

Western regional meeting at 3:30 p.m. at Minnetonka High School, Small Auditorium.

Happy Holidays!

AMSD's Mission

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



Bertrand Weber, left, is the new director of the Royal Cuisine Program for the Hopkins Public Schools. Weber's vision for the future will combine entrepreneurial venues, student learning and nutritional cooking.

Hopkins Combines Good Nutrition, Student Learning and New Revenue Potential

“Feel the wind of change, come taste the future,” was Bertrand Weber’s invitation to Hopkins School District 270 staff and students, as he launched an effort to emphasize the “nutrition” in school nutrition at all Hopkins Public Schools this fall.

As the new director of operations for District 270’s Royal Cuisine Program, Weber’s vision for tasting the future includes making lunches and breakfasts from scratch with fresh, all-natural ingredients, including fresh fruits and vegetables. With over 20 years of restaurant and hotel management experience, Weber’s goal is to offer healthy, high-quality meals and snacks to students that they like to eat.

Eventually, Weber hopes to involve students in the growing of some foods that they can prepare and eat. He is already involved in teaching lessons for some of the district’s family and consumer sciences courses.

Weber is also working on the creation of Royal Rock Enterprises, which will combine entrepreneurial venues, student learning, and nutritional cooking. Royal Rock Enterprises will be designed to enhance the use of District 270’s facilities, particularly the Eisenhower Community Center and Hopkins High School, by members of the surrounding communities. Designed

From the Chair

Publishing Voting Results is Important

The AMSD Legislative Committee has been studying whether or not AMSD should develop a “report card” to publicize how our elected officials vote on issues important to public education in the metropolitan area. At our last board meeting, many members shared support for such an idea, while others expressed caution.

As an organization that advocates for public education, I believe it is important to our mission, to our members and to the communities we serve to inform our communities of how our legislators voted on key issues important to public education. At the same time, we need to present this information in a respectable and fair manner. One example to consider is the voting results publication produced by the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, which we reviewed at our last meeting.

At this point, we are very seriously considering publishing a summary of how our elected officials vote on issues important to metropolitan school districts. We would share it with members and communities served by AMSD districts so they have firsthand information about how their legislators voted. If you have additional thoughts about the issue, please contact Scott Croonquist or me.

Keith Broady, board member for the St. Louis Park Public Schools, is chair of AMSD.

as a business venture, the goal for Royal Rock Enterprises is to enhance the revenue potential of the district.

Royal Rock Enterprises will focus on offering catering services to the internal and external school district community. It involves the new kitchen and dining facilities currently under construction at the Eisenhower Community Center, and Hopkins High School. These entrepreneurial businesses will be called Royal Rock Catering, the Wetlands Café and Catering at Eisenhower, and the Royal Rock Café at Hopkins High School.

Royal Rock Catering has already launched, and a special holiday menu for small parties has been developed. Weber wants Royal Rock Catering to be competitive, both in terms of quality and pricing.

The Wetlands Café likely will open in early January 2004. It will offer diners a daily lunch special, sandwiches, pizza, and an Espresso Bar with fresh pastries and on-site fruit blenders. The Royal Rock Café is not expected to open until November/December 2004. It currently is under construction along with the new 900-seat theater and new student-dining facility at Hopkins High School. Both cafes will be open to the public.

This month's member spotlight was written by Eileen Harvala, public relations director, for the Hopkins Public Schools.

Local Voters Support AMSD Districts... Adequate State Funding Still Needed to Meet Students' Needs

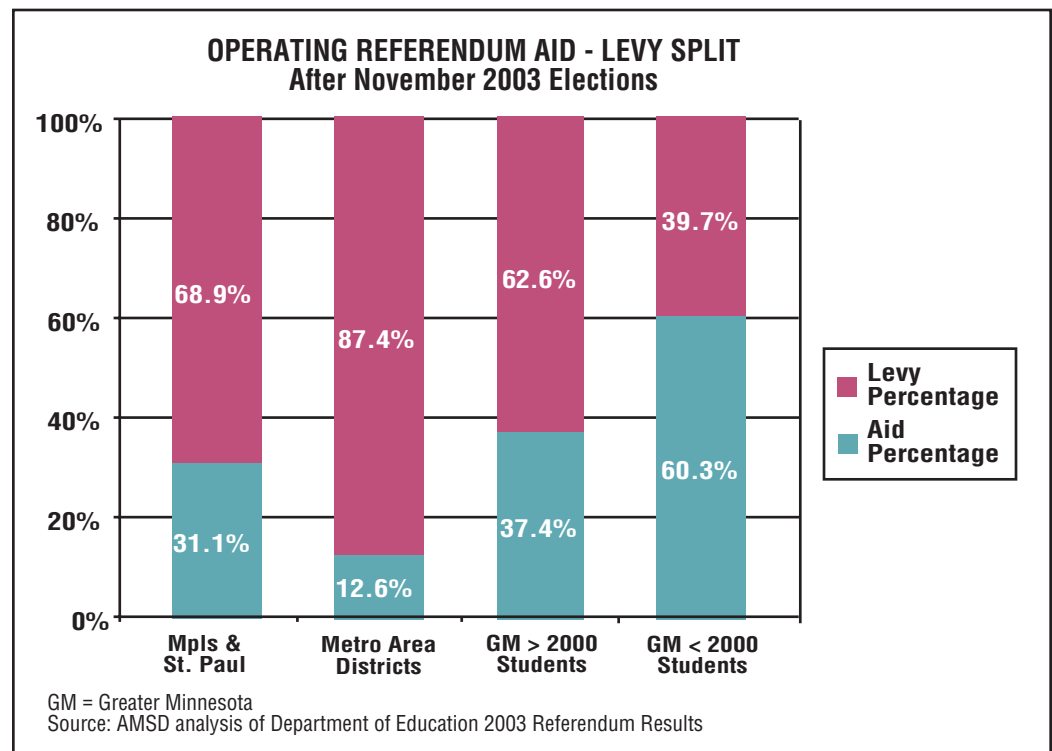
Last month's school district elections were telling in many ways. The good news was that all AMSD districts were successful. Over 60% of voters in the eight AMSD districts that conducted levy or bond referendums voted yes. This is clear evidence that metro residents support their schools and put a high priority on public education. However, as important and gratifying as it is for local residents to support their schools, passing local referendums does not make up for inadequate state funding for public education.

The bar chart below shows that metro school district

operating referendums are funded primarily by local property taxpayers, in comparison to Greater Minnesota districts where a large share of operating referendum revenue is generated through aid from the state. Furthermore, referendum revenue accounts for a much higher percentage of the total general education dollars in AMSD districts than in other metro and Greater Minnesota districts. On average, operating referendum revenue accounts for 13.2% of total general education revenue in AMSD districts. This percentage is 7.6% in non-AMSD districts in the metro

area, and 5.9% across the state.

It is clear that local voters in AMSD districts are doing their part to help fund public education. Now it is the state's turn. In the 2003 session funding for public education was reduced by \$185 million. The Legislature and Governor need to listen to the resounding message that came out of this year's elections—that there is strong support for providing adequate funding for schools to meet the educational needs of ALL students.



Members of AMSD include: Bloomington, Brooklyn Center, Burnsville, Chaska, Eden Prairie, Edina, Fridley, Hopkins, Intermediate District 287, Inver Grove Heights, Mahtomedi, Minneapolis, Minnetonka, Mounds View, North St. Paul/Maplewood/Oakdale, Orono, Richfield, Robbinsdale, Roseville, Shakopee, South St. Paul, Spring Lake Park, St. Anthony/New Brighton, St. Louis Park, St. Paul and Wayzata.