

AMSD

CONNECTIONS

News and Updates from the Association of Metropolitan School Districts

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Mark Your Calendar!

SEPTEMBER 1

Legislative Committee Meeting, 7 a.m.
TIES Building, St. Paul

SEPTEMBER 8

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

The annual Friend of Public Education Award will be presented to Senator Linda Scheid and Representative Doug Meslow.

SEPTEMBER 23

2005 Minnesota Education Summit
8:30 a.m.-3:15 p.m.
Minneapolis Convention Center

See this issue of Connections for more information.



Kindergartners at Kaposia Education Center enjoy a mock Thanksgiving feast. Full-day kindergarten allows teachers to use creative learning opportunities such as the Thanksgiving feast.

South St. Paul Leads in K-12 IB and Full-Day Kindergarten

This fall, the South St. Paul Public School district is embarking on two new major initiatives: district-wide full-day kindergarten and K-12 International Baccalaureate. South St. Paul will be a state and national leader on both fronts.

All kindergarteners in South St. Paul will now have the opportunity to attend full day, everyday kindergarten without a fee. After examining very compelling research on full-day kindergarten, the South St. Paul School Board decided that the benefits of full-day kindergarten justify the expenditure. The South St. Paul School Board is hopeful that the state of Minnesota will soon fund full-day kindergarten for all Minnesota students.

The second initiative is implementing International Baccalaureate (IB) in grades K-12. South St. Paul will become the first district in the state and one of fewer than a dozen nationally to implement K-12 IB. South St. Paul High School has had an International Baccalaureate Diploma Program since 1986. The first IB diploma candidate from South St. Paul attended Harvard and her fresh-

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From the Chair

Back-to-school season is upon us once again. In my first column as AMSD chair, I would like to highlight some of the new and exciting things happening at AMSD this fall. First, I want to welcome our newest member, the Elk River School District. AMSD now represents 30 school districts and joint powers districts throughout the metropolitan area. AMSD is the voice for metropolitan school districts and our broad and growing membership enhances our ability to ensure that the needs of our learners are addressed by state policymakers. We are thrilled that the Elk River School District is AMSD's newest member!

Another exciting change at AMSD is our newly redesigned website. The new site contains information on AMSD legislative priorities, member contact information, links to research and reports, education related news, and more. The updated site is easier to navigate and contains an abundance of information. Log on to www.amsd.org to check it out. Have a great start to the school year!

Carol Bomben, board member for Eden Prairie Public Schools, is chair of the Association of Metropolitan School Districts.

AMSD's Mission

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



**Association of
Metropolitan School Districts**

Overview of Education Week “Technology Counts 2005” Report

Education Week recently released its annual report on technology and education. The report compares states on a variety of measures related to technology, including student access to computers and the internet and technology training and standards for pupils and administrators. The most striking feature of the report is Minnesota’s low ranking on nearly every measure reported. Our state is falling behind in terms of funding, access, and training. In addition, the federal government is likely to provide significantly less funding for technology next year. Clearly, our state policymakers need to act if we are to ensure that our students will have the skills and knowledge necessary to compete in today’s high tech world.

In the past 5-10 years technology needs have changed dramatically. Today, most schools in the United States have internet access and, on average, one computer for every 3.8 students. In the 2004-05 school year 99% of schools in the nation had internet access. Because most schools are now equipped with computers and wired to the internet, it’s easy to assume that technology costs have gone away. Nothing could be further from the truth. A consistent and reliable source of funding for technology is essential for upgrading networks and computers, training teachers on the use of technology for raising student achievement, and building the data management systems schools need to keep up with reporting requirements.

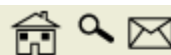
Technology directors in 44 states and the District of Columbia say inadequate

	Minnesota	National Average
Students per instructional computer located in classrooms	10.1	7.6
Students per internet connected computer located in classrooms	10.1	8.0
Percent of computers with high speed internet access	83%	87%
Percent of schools offering distance learning for students	18%	25%
Percent of instructional computers that are laptops	10.5%	13.3%

funding and competition from other spending priorities are the biggest challenges they face. Unfortunately, based on President Bush’s 2005 budget proposal, the outlook could get worse before it gets better. The President proposes severe cuts in the technology grant fund for states over the next year.

The data from the *Education Week* survey is even more worrisome for Minnesota. *Education Week* ranked Minnesota in the bottom quintile in the nation in “Technology Leadership.” The rankings are based on: providing students with access to computers and the internet, ensuring teachers and administrators have the training and qualifications to use technology effectively, and adopting policies that make innovative use of technology. AMSD Chair, Carol Bomben notes, “It is frustrating to see Minnesota ranked near the bottom on so many technology measures. Clearly, Minnesota needs to invest now if it hopes to offer its learners the opportunities available to students around the nation and the world.”

Policymakers have an additional reason to invest in technology: the Minnesota Department of Education plans to implement an entirely computer-based assessment system by 2009. School boards and staff members are excited about the significant advantages of moving to computerized testing; however, significant investments in infrastructure, hardware, and staff training will be required to make the plan a reality.



Don’t forget to log on to www.amsd.org to view AMSD’s new web site!

man year was waived because of the IB diploma.

This year the South St. Paul District is starting the process to be certified in the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (PYP) and also the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (MYP). Although the IB diploma program is very rigorous and for self selecting high achievers, the PYP and MYP programs are designed for all students. These programs are appropriate for special education students,

gifted students and all those in between. The district has been approved to start the PYP at Lincoln Center Elementary and Kaposia Education Center. It will take approximately three years to fully train all teachers and implement the PYP program. The district has also been approved for the MYP at the seventh through tenth grade levels. Plans are to start the program in seventh grade this year and add one grade a year for the next three years.

Parents, staff, and stu-

dents are thrilled about the exciting new opportunities available in South St. Paul!

This month's district spotlight was submitted by Dana Babbitt, Superintendent of South St. Paul Public Schools.

Mark your calendar to attend the 2005 Minnesota Education Summit on September 23. The annual summit, sponsored by the Alliance for Student Achievement, will be held at the Minneapolis Convention Center. This summit provides the opportunity for the community to come together to learn about and discuss the demands being placed on schools and students and how they can efficiently and effectively be met in this era of scarce resources and increasing demands. Registration information is available at www.alliance-forstudentachievement.org.

AMSD Board Members Recognized at Annual Meeting



AMSD board members were recognized for their committee service at the August annual meeting. Pictured from left to right are Stan F. Mack, II, Superintendent of Robbinsdale Area Schools; Gordon Backlund, School Board Member from Fridley; and Keith Broady, School Board Member from St. Louis Park.



Newly elected AMSD Chair Carol Bomben, School Board Member from Eden Prairie, welcomes the opportunity to lead AMSD in the coming year.

Members of AMSD include: Bloomington, Brooklyn Center, Burnsville/Eagan/Savage, Chaska, East Metro Integration District 6067, Eden Prairie, Edina, Elk River, 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, Wayzata, West Metro Program-Joint Powers School District 6069 and West St. Paul.