

May 2009  
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## AMSD Calendar

**May 7, 2009**

Conference Committee  
Deadline to Report  
Omnibus Appropriation  
and Tax Bills to the  
Floor

**May 8, 2009**

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

**May 15, 2009**

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

**May 29, 2009**

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

**June 12, 2009**

Executive Committee  
Meeting, 7:30 a.m., 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**

## Fridley schools join the IB community to focus on "sharing our humanity"



Fridley Middle School students sold cookies to raise money for the Epilepsy Foundation in honor of a classmate who experiences daily seizures.

**A**s an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School, the Fridley Schools will have the opportunity to participate in an exciting new project centered around IB's first community theme, "Sharing Our Humanity."

The theme, which will last for three years, is intended to serve as a focus for the IB and IB World Schools, to capture the excellent initiatives that are already underway

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## From the Chair

A recent Minnesota Poll conducted by the Star Tribune shows that Minnesotans are overwhelmingly opposed to cuts to education funding. When asked if they thought cutting education funding to fix the budget deficit was acceptable, only 22 percent of poll respondents said "yes." Unfortunately, some legislative proposals under consideration at the State Capitol would reduce funding for our schools.

A recent survey of metropolitan school districts shows that education funding proposals under consideration would have dire consequences for our schools. Now is the time to contact your local legislators, legislative leaders and the Governor to urge them to protect education funding and adopt the New Minnesota Miracle. The decisions made in the next few weeks will dramatically impact the level of educational offerings that will be available to our students for years to come.

*Pat Gleason, school board member from Wayzata, is chair of the Association of Metropolitan School Districts.*

# Metro schools face major budget challenge

**A**MSD has traditionally surveyed metro school districts prior to the start of the legislative session to gauge their financial condition. This year, given the historic budget shortfall and the very lean education funding proposals on the table, AMSD conducted a spring survey to give lawmakers a better idea of the financial challenges facing our school districts.

AMSD recently completed a budget survey that asked 32 metro area school districts to assess how the House and Senate proposals would affect their individual district. Districts were asked to assume providing the same services next year. The “Budget Gap” is the amount that revenues would fall short of expenditures. Districts were asked to assume that they would receive the IDEA and Title 1 federal stimulus funds as outlined on the MDE website.

The House proposal includes flat (0% & 0%) funding and extensive use of education accounting shifts. The Senate proposal avoids using shifts but includes a reduction in funding of 3.2 percent per year for the biennium. Both proposals are net of the State Stabilization Funds that are a part of the federal stimulus funds.

The chart below shows the aggregate impact of the House and Senate proposals:

	Senate	House
<b>Budget Gap</b>	\$222.5 million	\$135.7 million
<b>Teacher Reductions</b>	854	512
<b>Other Staff Reductions</b>	421	312
<b>Total Staff Reductions</b>	1,275	824

While the survey shows that school budgets will be extremely stressed next fall under the proposals currently on the table, the second year of the biennium will be even worse.

The Governor’s budget proposal, released earlier in the session, would provide about a 1 percent increase in funding for education next year. The \$135 million budget gap projected under the House proposal would be reduced by about 25 percent under the Governor’s funding plan.

Districts across the state have seen lean budget times over the past few years. All districts that have had to cut budgets understand that it is imperative that the community understands the consequences of proposed cuts. The state is facing an extremely challenging budget shortfall. As discussions move into conference committees it is important that legislators understand the impact their decisions will have on our schools.

While the survey shows that school budgets will be extremely stressed next fall under the proposals currently on the table, the second year of the biennium will be even worse. Some districts will be able to partially mitigate the effects of inadequate funding by using budget reserves for one year. However, reserve money will quickly be drained forcing school districts to make excruciating budget cuts and staff layoffs in the second year of the biennium.

It is likely that a large number of teachers and support staff will not be returning to their jobs in the fall. It is important that everyone involved in education inform their constituents about how legislative actions will impact class sizes and budgets at the local level. Decisions will be made in the next couple weeks that could change the course of education in this state for many years.

**AMSD Members:** Anoka-Hennepin, Bloomington, Brooklyn Center, Burnsville, Columbia Heights, Eastern Carver County, 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, Northeast Metro Intermediate School District 916 (Associate Member), North St. Paul/Maplewood/Oakdale, Orono, Richfield, Robbinsdale, Roseville, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan, Shakopee, South St. Paul, Spring Lake Park, St. Anthony/New Brighton, St. Louis Park, St. Paul, TIES (Associate Member), Wayzata, West Metro Education Program, and West St. Paul

# Fridley IB program challenges students to think globally

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in many schools and to encourage and inspire new activities, in and out of the classroom, around the following topics:

- Global poverty
- Peace and conflict
- Education for all
- Global infectious diseases
- Digital divide—uneven access to information and communication technologies
- Disasters and emergencies

Participation is voluntary, but IB encourages all World Schools to become involved, as the aim of the project is to engage the whole IB community, including parents, students and all those working in schools or working with or for the IB. IB World Schools can explore and address the IB community theme individually or with other IB World Schools. This can be done through:

- Regular classroom teaching by adjusting the focus of normal classroom work within the existing curriculum framework
- Special projects
- Community service

The theme will provide an avenue to engage all students on a common topic, for example global poverty.

Schools are encouraged to approach the topics of the IB community theme through guiding questions, appropriate to the ages of the students, for example:

- What do we mean by poverty?
- What are the causes of poverty?
- Does it matter that some people are much poorer than other?
- What are the links between disease and poverty?

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“Our goal is to share with the global community what our students, staff and community are doing to share our humanity. We will also use this as an opportunity to learn about the projects that children are participating in throughout the world.”

**Tania Wolverton-Falk**  
**IB Coordinator**

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- What actions are being taken to address the global issues of the theme?
- What can we do, individually, to play our part in responding to these issues?

As a district, the Fridley Schools will blog (post online) the community service that our students are engaged in within the curriculum as well as outside of school.

Already, Hayes Elementary is beginning to raise money for the Leukemia Society, and the middle school will be participating in “Caps for Kids” on October 23, to raise money for children with cancer.

“Our goal is to share with the global community what our students, staff and community are doing to share our humanity,” says IB Coordinator Tania Wolverton-Falk. “We will also use this as an opportunity to learn about the projects that children are participating in throughout the world.”

The IB community now includes more than 2,370 schools and 644,000 students, teachers, parents, staff and examiners and other colleagues in 128 countries.

It is believed that the initiation of a common theme will strengthen this large, growing IB community and provide a forum to integrate activities around this theme into school life . . . and to share results, successes and stories.

*This month’s member feature was submitted by Muriel Sharpe, Communications Specialist, Fridley Public Schools.*