

AMSD

CONNECTIONS

News and Updates from the Association of Metropolitan School Districts

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AMSD Calendar

June 18, 2010

Executive Committee Meeting

7:30 a.m., TIES Building, St. Paul

July 16, 2010

Executive Committee Meeting

7:30 a.m., TIES Building, St. Paul

August 5, 2010

Board of Directors 7:00 AM—8:30 AM

Northland Inn, Brooklyn Park
Prior to MSBA Summer Seminar

It does take a Village, in the Village

You know the cliché. It takes a village to raise a child. In this case, it took a village to improve Central Park, a recreational area in St. Anthony-New Brighton School District—the smallest geographical school district in the state. With significant support from the City of St. Anthony Village, the school district obtained a \$345,000 grant from Hennepin Youth Sports Program to enhance opportunities for its community members.



Jim Wehr, St. Anthony Baseball Association; Bill McReavy, resident; Mayor Jerry Faust, Hennepin County Commissioners Mark Stenglein and Peter McLaughlin, School Board Chair Barry Kinsey, and Gary Goldsmith, St. Anthony Sports Boosters Association President, celebrate the inaugural Hennepin Youth Sports Program project at St. Anthony Village's Central Park on May 17th, 2010.

Central Park, which is shared jointly by the city and school district, is St. Anthony

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From the Chair:

It is hard to find much positive to say about the results of the 2010 legislative session. The final budget agreement included codifying and increasing the aid payment delays implemented by Governor Pawlenty last year. Two-thirds of the budget shortfall was resolved by delaying payments to our schools. While it is far preferable to have these payment shifts written into law, the delays will cost school districts millions of dollars in interest costs forcing school boards and administrators to make additional budget cuts and lay off staff. The governor and legislators also failed to agree on a package of reform initiatives that could have made Minnesota eligible for up to \$175 million in Race to the Top funding.

In the end, legislators and the governor couldn't even agree on a greatly scaled back education policy bill that included several helpful provisions such as making it easier for school districts to bill medical assistance for services provided to special education students. Not only did the governor and legislators fail to provide any mandate relief, a new unfunded mandate was approved in the form of increased employer contribution rates to stabilize the TRA and PERA pension systems.

As we look ahead to the fall election, it is more important than ever that we elect candidates who understand the importance of a vibrant, high quality education system. It is critical that school board members, administrators, parents and concerned citizens engage gubernatorial and legislative candidates in serious discussions about education. To facilitate those discussions, AMSD will be producing a voter's guide to help citizens concerned about the future of our state make informed decisions. Look for more information in the coming weeks.

Jon Tynjala, school board member from Mounds View, is chair of AMSD.

AMSD's Mission

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



Association of
Metropolitan School Districts

“These entities are a model for local government units working together to keep facilities focused on youth athletics and providing St. Anthony Village students valuable open space and sports facilities.”

Eric Brever, grant writer and 1997 graduate of St. Anthony Village High School

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Village’s largest and most utilized community park for recreation and youth sports activities. Ten years ago, the city devised a comprehensive park plan and renovated Central Park. The plan included the installation of lights on all athletic fields in the park. At that time, the school district was unable to secure funding to install lights on fields located on its property. As demand for and use of the fields increased, the lack of lighting significantly limited the use to one game or practice each evening.



In 2009, the school district hosted over 600 practices on the fields in Central Park for its middle and high school teams. Even more, over 2000 youth participated on a St. Anthony Sports Boosters’ sponsored baseball, softball, football or soccer team and the majority of games and practices were located at Central Park. In order to enhance access to the fields and encourage additional youth recreation opportunities, St. Anthony-New Brighton School District applied for a Hennepin Youth Sports Program grant.

On December 15, 2009, Hennepin County Commissioners approved eighteen inaugural projects. Funding for the grants comes from the Twins ballpark sales tax; this revenue provides capital grants for youth and amateur sports facilities in Hennepin County. “These projects will create new recreational possibilities for hundreds of kids

in the area,” remarked Commissioner Mark Stenglein, who represents the second district.

Of the eighteen projects approved, St. Anthony-New Brighton School District received the largest grant. The purpose of St. Anthony’s grant was to increase athletic field access and use while addressing green space shortages and environmental and safety improvements. The grant process encouraged applicants to work cooperatively with non-profit youth organizations and required matching funds. In addition to letters of support, St. Anthony’s match was provided by the St. Anthony Sports Boosters, St. Anthony Baseball Association, St. Anthony Dugout Club and St. Anthony Huskies Diamond Club.

“St. Anthony Village is one of our inaugural Hennepin County youth sports recipients. I’m glad Hennepin County could step to the plate and help provide additional money for libraries and youth sports. . . St. Anthony has a lot compacted into that small area. The additional lights and bleachers add a great deal of capacity to those heavily used fields,” explained Commissioner Stenglein.

At the ribbon cutting ceremony on May 17, elected officials and representatives from local youth sports organizations celebrated the completion of the project. Superintendent Dr. Rod Thompson described the event, “As I stood on the field with students, Hennepin County commissioners, Minnesota State representatives, Mayor Faust, City Council and School Board members, it became really clear to me the enormous magnitude of this project. I was very humbled to be part of a community in which our project was one of the inaugural Hennepin County grants. The first pitch was symbolic as our project was the first to be completed. I am very grateful to be part of the village and school district.”

This month’s member spotlight was submitted by Wendy Webster, Director of Community Services and Communications for the St. Anthony-New Brighton School District.



Session Ends With No Education Bill

The 2010 legislative session will be better remembered for what wasn't accomplished than for what was accomplished. After months of hearings and debate, the 2010 session was adjourned without the governor and legislators passing an omnibus education bill. The lack of an education bill that contained proposed reform initiatives, such as developing an alternative pathway for teacher licensure, led Governor Pawlenty to announce that the state would not submit a new application for the federal Race to the Top grant program.

Minnesota would have been eligible for a federal grant of up to \$175 million with a successful application. More importantly, many AMSD board members felt the proposed reform initiatives would have helped Minnesota make progress toward closing the achievement gap and helping all students succeed.

Several other important funding reform initiatives fell by the wayside when the governor and legislators failed to agree on an education bill. Specifically, the House Omnibus Education Bill included the New Minnesota Miracle and language allowing locally elected school boards to renew an existing referendum. These provisions would have greatly modernized our education funding system and provided stability during the current economic crisis.

In the end, only a handful of provisions impacting education were passed including:

Shifts

- The aid payment shifts implemented by Governor Pawlenty last year through the unallotment process were written into law. The shift is set at 73% -- 27% for FY 2010 and 70% -- 30% for FY 2011.
- The levy recognition shift was codified at 48.6% for FY 2011 and later.

State Borrowing

- Changes were made to make school payment delays optional. The previous statute required the state to delay payments to school districts before engaging in short-term borrowing.
- Additionally, the amount of a school district's fund balance that is protected was raised to \$700 per resident pupil unit.

Physical Education Standards

- Added physical education to the list of state standards effective for all students beginning in the 2012-13 school year. Establishes the National Association of Sport and Physical Education standards as the statewide physical education standards.

Pension Bill

- The omnibus pension bill that was signed by the Governor addresses serious solvency issues raised by the major public pension funds. Contribution rates were increased for all funds and limits placed on post-retirement adjustments. The employer contribution rate for PERA will increase by .25% effective January 1, 2011. The chart to the right shows the timeline for the increased TRA contribution rates.

2010 Legislation: Chapter 359 - Omnibus Pension Bill -- TRA				
	Employee		Employer	
	Basic	Coordinated	Basic	Coordinated
Current	9.0%	5.5%	9.5%	5.5%
FY 2012	9.5%	6.0%	10.0%	6.0%
FY 2013	10.0%	6.5%	10.5%	6.5%
FY 2014	10.5%	7.0%	11.0%	7.0%
After FY 2014	11.0%	7.5%	11.5%	7.5%

As AMSD board chair Jon Tynjala outlined in a recent Star Tribune commentary, education was not held harmless during the 2010 legislative session. You can read his commentary [here](#).

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, Northeast Metro Intermediate School District 916 (Associate Member), North St. Paul/Maplewood/Oakdale, 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.