

AMSD Calendar

May 7, 2010

**Board of Directors
7:00 AM—9:00 AM**

Guest Speakers:
Sen. Kathy Saltzman
Rep. Carlos Mariani
3rd Floor Cafeteria,
TIES Building, St. Paul

May 14, 2010

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

May 28, 2010

**Board of Directors
7:00 AM—9:00 AM**
3rd Floor Cafeteria,
TIES Building, St. Paul

June 18, 2010

**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**

White Bear's New Neighborhood

Students in the White Bear Lake Area School District are learning first-hand what it means to be a member of a global society.

During the last month, the District has hosted three delegations from abroad and sent one student group overseas. Visitors have included a team of administrators from the Hangzhou Foreign Languages School in China and a delegation of educators and business leaders from Southern India. High school students and faculty members from a partner school in France also visited, traveling to Minnesota with White Bear Lake Area High School foreign languages students who were returning from their visit to the French school.

This recent flurry of activity stems from a longer tradition of embracing an international outlook. Last fall, the District hosted a Russian delegation of special education school



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From the Chair:

With just two weeks remaining in the 2010 legislative session there are still critical issues to resolve that will greatly impact our public schools. The actions the governor and legislators take in these remaining days will effect our schools for years to come. Proposals advanced thus far would make minimal cuts to education. Even under these best case scenario proposals, a recent survey showed that metro school districts will be making over \$150 million in budget reduction and laying off in excess of 1,600 staff next year. The prospects for significant mandate relief appear to be slim and thus far, legislators have not identified a way to pay for the increased employer contributions that would be required under the pension sustainability legislation.

It is imperative that AMSD board members and concerned citizens stay in touch with their local legislators, legislative leaders and the governor during the remaining days of the session. We must urge our state policymakers to stabilize education funding by avoiding cuts to the classroom, codifying the education payment shifts implemented through unallotment, granting school boards the ability to renew an existing operating referendum, and identifying a way to pay for the pension sustainability proposal. Last, but certainly not least, legislators and the governor once again have an opportunity to lay out a positive vision for Minnesota by enacting the New Minnesota Miracle funding reform proposal and phasing it in over time. Please take a few minutes to contact your local legislators-- it makes a difference for our students!

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

International experiences provide larger context for students to grow and learn

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administrators. In the fall of 2008, members of a German partner school traveled to Minnesota and spent time with our students. High school students in the White Bear German program also traveled to Germany last summer as part of the exchange.

Our international experiences remind us of the larger context in which our students grow and learn. There is much more to education than test scores, including academic skills, creative expression and attention to good citizenship. In conversations with visiting leaders, we hear praise for the teacher-student relationships formed in our classrooms, for the vast array of opportunities through which our students learn, and for the district's focus on instilling a sense of service to others.

These leaders are eager to learn from us.

The Hangzhou Foreign Languages School delegation traveled to our corner of the world to celebrate a newly-formed partnership for teacher and cultural exchanges with our district. Our visiting teacher from China, Cao Li, is serving residencies in each of our elementary schools and is a resource in our secondary schools through the end of the school year.

Cao Li was interviewed last week by the Star Tribune. A full copy of her interview can be found [here](#).

Based on her experience with our White Bear Lake Area students, Cao Li observed, "You set realistic goals for kids and you emphasize creativity and realizing student potential. You cultivate other ways of thinking rather than having students memorize things." She continued, saying, "You also have students do community work so they can learn social responsibility. In China, we just focus on academic studies."

Service within a global context is prevalent at all areas throughout the district. When disaster struck Haiti during the winter months, students district-wide spearheaded efforts to raise money and raise awareness. These efforts were facilitated in addition to other international service projects in which students have traditionally participated such as H2O for Life, through which the White Bear Lake Area High School Ambassador student organization supports a school in Uganda that is in need of drinking water and sanitation.

While students at all our schools are learning within a global context, the worldwide lens through which elementary students at the district's Parkview/Centerpoint (to be named Matoska International as of July 1, 2010) is particularly strong. The school is expected to complete the steps in the International Baccalaureate candidate process next fall with the goal of becoming the first school in the Northeast Metro area certified by the International Baccalaureate organization.



International partnerships open doors to our students for many opportunities that are not tested by the MCA exams or other assessment measures. Through the international connections we have forged, and continue to forge, students gain advanced foreign language development, a more in-depth understanding of other cultures, and an appreciation for the world beyond the borders of our district. These crucial interpersonal and communication skills are necessary to help our students thrive in a changing and international world.

It is through these global experiences that our students are learning first-hand that "our new neighborhood," is one that does not stop at a lake or a river, but encompasses the whole of our world.

For more information about White Bear Lake Area Schools' international initiatives, please contact Superintendent Michael Lovett (651-407-7563,

superintendent@wbl.whitebear.k12.mn.us) or Communications Coordinator Marisa Vette (651-407-7569, mavett@wbl.whitebear.k12.mn.us).

This month's member spotlight was submitted by Marissa Vette, Communications Coordinator for White Bear Lake Area Schools.



Minnesota's Commitment to Education Continues to Slip

Education Week recently released its *Quality Counts* edition which provides a report card on American public education. Each state is graded in a variety of areas including standards, assessments, the teaching profession and school finance. In the area of school finance, states are graded on eight different indicators based on actual data collected from each state. Minnesota's school finance scores and grades for the past three years are shown in the chart below:

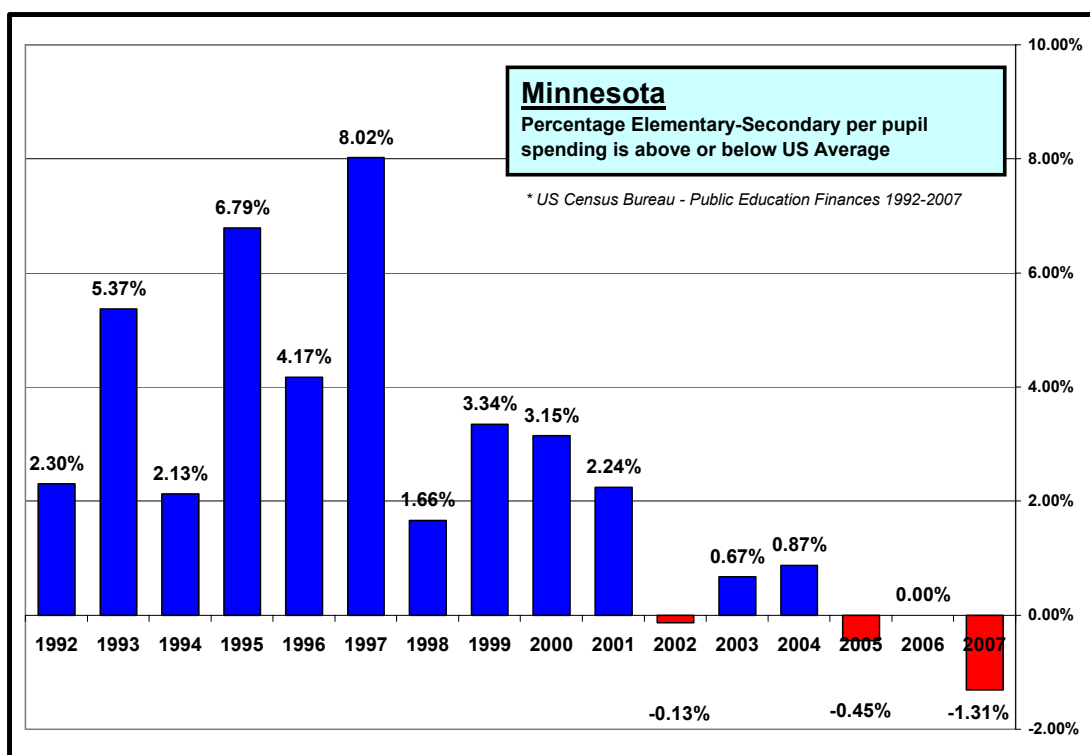
Education Week - Quality Counts (2010)

-- Minnesota --			
School Finance	Score	Grade	Percent of students in districts with per pupil expenditures at or above US Average
2008	78.7	C+	41.9%
2009	77.4	C+	40.0%
2010	75.6	C	35.4%

As the chart above shows, Minnesota's score has declined each year for the past three years. One of the major contributors to this decline is Minnesota's drop in per pupil expenditures relative to the US Average. The percent of students in Minnesota school districts receiving at least the US average has fallen from 41.9% to 35.4%. In other words, only about one-third of Minnesota's students receive more than the U.S. average per pupil expenditure. It is important to note that each state's spending figures have been adjusted to account for regional cost differences.

The analysis also uses data from the U.S. Census Bureau's annual *Public School Finances* report. The most recent report was released in November of 2009 providing information current through 2007. The report provides a wealth of K-12 education revenue and expenditure comparisons. These data provide a broader context and perspective to Minnesota's budget struggles.

The chart to the right shows an analysis of Minnesota's Elementary-Secondary per pupil spending relative to the US Average.



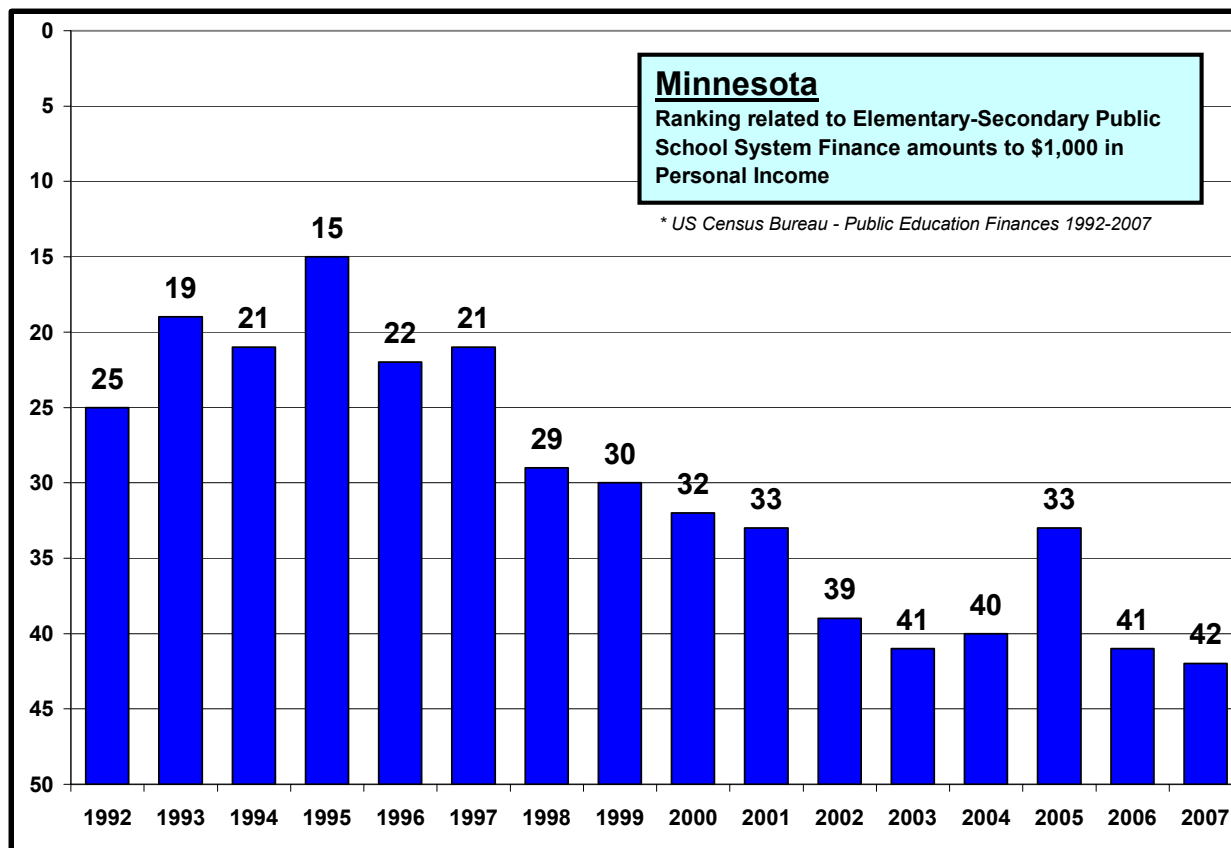
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Commitment to Education Continues to Wane

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During the 1990's Minnesota consistently had higher per pupil expenditures than the national average reaching a peak of 8% above the national average in 1997. Since the turn of the century, however, Minnesota's position has slipped dramatically. In 2007, the most recent year for which data is available, Minnesota spent 1.3% less per pupil than the U.S. average.

Another measure of each state's commitment to education is comparing each state's elementary/secondary spending per \$1,000 in personal income. As the chart below shows, Minnesota has dropped from a high in 1995 of 15th in the nation to 42nd in 2007. Again, in the 1990's Minnesota was above the U.S. average, while in the 2000's we have fallen significantly below.



Minnesota was once seen as a national leader in its commitment to public education. That commitment paid handsome dividends as businesses relocated to Minnesota to take advantage of the highly educated workforce. The data clearly show how that commitment has diminished significantly. It is up to state policymakers to reverse the recent trend and restore Minnesota's historic commitment to our schools and students.

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.