

# AMSD Position on Local Control

**T**he Association of Metropolitan School Districts believes that the Governor and Legislature should reverse the trend of centralized control of public education by broadening the levy and decision-making authority of locally elected school boards.

## BACKGROUND

Local control and citizen input are key components of our nation's democratic system. Decentralized governance improves responsiveness to local concerns, stimulates innovation and participation, and increases the accountability of locally elected officials.

AMSD believes that locally elected school boards should have the ability to respond to local needs and community expectations. In recent decades, the power of locally elected school boards has diminished as federal and state governments have imposed unprecedented mandates over K-12 education. The trend of centralizing control has reduced the ability of locally elected school boards to respond to the needs of their communities. Mandates have been continually imposed on school districts without the corresponding allocation of resources to carry them out. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) have had the biggest impact on school districts but the list of mandates is seemingly endless. Other examples include:

- Mandate that the school year cannot start before Labor Day.
- Imposition of state tests
- Imposition of state graduation requirements
- Staff development set aside requirements
- State control of employer/ employee bargaining
- Bidding law restrictions
- Transportation restrictions
- State controlled athletic rules

- Allocation of revenue by school building
- Requirement that the state approve health and safety plans
- Requirement that the state approve use of integration revenue
- State controlled superintendent contract language

Every school district faces unique needs which depend on a variety of factors, including, demographics, geography, and district size. Locally elected school boards are best positioned to identify and respond to the varying needs of their districts. The Governor and Legislature should empower school boards to respond to the concerns and desires of their communities by granting them levy authority in the areas of: transportation, technology, and additional authority to address deferred maintenance issues.



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