

AMSD Position on Mandate Reduction

The Association of Metropolitan School Districts supports eliminating unnecessarily restrictive mandates that increase administrative expenses and limit the ability of local school districts to make decisions based on student needs.

AMSD BELIEVES

- Federal and state mandates must have a clearly articulated purpose, which is revisited regularly to check for relevance and alignment with other policy goals.
- Policy makers in Congress and in the Legislature must provide the funding necessary to comply with mandates.

BACKGROUND

Minnesota school districts operate with mandates related to financial management, curriculum, and reporting.

Financial management mandates which create unnecessary complexity and uncertainty include:

- Maintenance of 18 reserve funds ranging in purpose from parental involvement to gifted and talented programs.
- Approval process for health and safety projects, which has grown increasingly detailed for both school boards and the Department of Education audiences.
- Pay equity analysis
- The January 15 deadline and financial penalty for not reaching a teacher contract settlement creates an uneven playing field in the bargaining process and penalizes students.

Curriculum mandates have created problems when under- or unfunded or arbitrarily restrictive.

Two key examples are:

- Federal and state mandates to provide comprehensive special education services, without the funding necessary to do so. Statewide, districts will be forced to shift \$518 million from other core programs to special education this year to satisfy these unfunded mandates.
- The prohibition of starting the school year before Labor Day is arbitrary and does not allow local school boards to respond to community needs and expectations.

Reporting mandates that have proven redundant and time-consuming, and no longer have any evident use include:

- Report on allocation of revenue to each school building in district

- Structural balance reporting
- Superintendents' annual report on projected expenditures and student passage rates
- Redundant reporting among the UFARS, EDRS, EMAP, MARSS and STARS systems

The Governor and Legislature should work to reduce these burdensome mandates to allow educators more time to focus increasing student achievement.



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