



ASSOCIATION OF METROPOLITAN
SCHOOL DISTRICTS

1667 Snelling Avenue N.
St. Paul, MN 55108
Phone (651) 999-7325
Fax (651) 999-7328

News Release

Contact: Scott Croonquist
AMSD Executive Director
Phone: (651) 999-7326

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 5, 2012

Senator Gen Olson and Representative Connie Doepke receive Association of Metropolitan School Districts 2011 Friend of Education Award.

ST. PAUL - The Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD) will award Senator Gen Olson and Representative Connie Doepke with their 2011 Friend of Education Award at 7pm on Thursday, January 5, 2012 at the Minnetonka School Board meeting (Community Room at the District Service Center, 5621 County Road 101, Minnetonka, MN 55345). The AMSD Friend of Education Award is given to Minnesota leaders who exhibit strength in education leadership, advocacy and support of AMSD legislative platform initiatives.

Senator Gen Olson was selected for the AMSD Friend of Education award because of her history of working in a bipartisan and cooperative manner on education initiatives. In 2011, Olson became chair of the Senate Education Committee and demonstrated a thoughtful approach to talking issues and working cooperatively with members of both parties on several initiatives. Senator Olson has worked tirelessly on literacy initiatives over the years and this session focused on a innovative literacy funding proposal that will provide new funding for all school districts. In addition to her literacy work, Olson was an advocate for several AMSD

initiatives including being the chief author of the alternative teacher licensure bill and coauthoring bills such as full service zones and the safe schools maintenance of effort repeal. As the chair of the Senate Education Committee, Senator Olson carried the omnibus education bill which carried several AMSD initiatives including the safe schools maintenance of effort repeal, January 15 contract deadline repeal, prone restraint under certain conditions, third party billing reform, capital project levy renewal ballot language simplification and fund transfer flexibility.

Representative Connie Doepke was selected for the AMSD Friend of Education award because of her advocacy for public education and her strong support of key AMSD's legislative priorities. Rep. Doepke worked both publicly and behind the scenes to advance AMSD priorities. Representative Doepke served 8 years on the Wayzata school board and has a keen interest and background in metro school issues. Not only does she have a reputation for seeking out input from her own local school officials, but she also actively sought out AMSD's position on key legislation. During the 2011 session, she was the chief author of several AMSD priorities including safe schools maintenance of effort repeal and the simplification of the required ballot language for renewal of a capital project levy. In addition, she co-authored the education policy omnibus bill, which included several education mandate relief provisions, fund transfer flexibility and the alternative pathways to licensure bill.

“Senator Olson has been a strong leader as the Chair of the Senate Education Committee. We are thankful for her thoughtful leadership and commitment to public education and AMSD initiatives,” said AMSD Executive Director Scott Croonquist.

“Representative Doepke has been a strong advocate for metropolitan districts at the Capitol. She is a hard-working, collaborative leader that works in a bipartisan manner and always seeks AMSD input on pending legislation,” said Pam Langseth, chairperson for the AMSD board of directors and a member of the Minnetonka school board.

Governor Mark Dayton also received the 2011 AMSD Friend of Education Award and was honored on December 2, 2011 at the AMSD Board of Directors meeting.

About AMSD

In existence since 1974, AMSD represents 36 K-12 school districts, three intermediate school districts, three integration districts, and forty-seven percent of the state’s students. While AMSD’s primary task is to lobby at the state level for the needs of metropolitan school districts, it also is a highly respected source of information for member districts, legislators, the media, and parent advocacy groups on issues ranging from funding to curriculum to policy.

For more information, please visit amsd.org