

August 2018
vol 15 ♦ no 10

St. Louis Park High School Provides Unique Leadership Training for Student-Athletes

August 10, 2018 Board of Directors Meeting

7 a.m.
Grand Hall,
TIES Conference Center
Saint Paul

August 17, 2018 Executive/Legislative Committee Meeting

7:30 a.m.
Lexington Room,
TIES Conference Center
Saint Paul

September 7, 2018 Board of Directors Meeting

7 a.m.
Grand Hall,
TIES Conference Center
Saint Paul

September 28, 2018 Executive/Legislative Committee Meeting

7:30 a.m.
Lexington Room,
TIES Conference Center
Saint Paul

AMSD's Mission

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



Association of
Metropolitan School Districts

There is culture change taking place in St. Louis Park High School Athletics thanks to a new initiative focused on equipping student-athletes with leadership skills. After receiving a cold call from St. Louis Park resident Kevin King, Athletic Director Andy Ewald saw an opportunity to create a unique leadership opportunity for captains of St. Louis Park High School's athletic programs.

King is the president of Premier Team Building Solutions, LLC – an agency that trains corporate executives, athletes, coaches, leaders and athletic teams in the areas of leadership, workplace and team culture, media and social media. Prior to starting the company, King spent more than 13 years on the faculty of various colleges and universities.

“When I moved to St. Louis Park, I reached out to Andy to gauge his interest to see if leadership training was being done in St. Louis Park Schools,” shared King.

What King and Ewald developed together is right now being called “Captains Leadership Training.” Each season, Ewald and King meet once a week for eight weeks before school with the captains of every varsity athletic team.

Captains are challenged with questions that start deeper conversations such as “What are your core values?”, “How experienced are you with managing conflict?”, “Why do you want to be a captain or leader?”, “What is the culture of your team like?”, and “What is your vision for your team?” They stress to the students that leadership is not about them – it's about creating an environment so that others can succeed. The captains spend time talking about the principles of good leadership and developing vocabulary so that they can articulate what good leadership is and looks like.

Ewald says that there has been 100 percent buy-in from not only the student-athletes, but from coaches as well. “Coaches have had unanimous support for this and are already seeing instant impact,” Ewald said. “There's a language that is being spoken now. The culture of their team has changed and captains are talking and interacting with their teammates in a more purposeful way.”

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St. Louis Park High School students meet with Athletic Director Andy Ewald, Leadership Consultant Kevin King, and Coach Breitenbucher to discuss the first year of the Captain's Leadership Training.

From the Chair

It has been an honor to serve as AMSD chair over the past year. I have enjoyed the opportunity to work with so many dedicated school board members, superintendents and staff to advocate for our common goals. The work we do together is critical to the future of our state and makes a difference for our students, our staffs and our communities.

With an important election on the horizon, I encourage AMSD members to engage with gubernatorial and local legislative candidates to educate them about the issues facing your school district and public education generally. The legwork you do now will pay dividends during the 2019 legislative session when state policymakers adopt the biennial budget. Your voice matters!

Enjoy the remaining weeks of summer and best wishes for a great start to the new school year!

Steve Adams, school board member from Hopkins Public Schools, is chair of AMSD.

St. Louis Park Student-Athletes Gain Leadership Skills

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“The students are engaged, they ask questions, and I’ve been happy to see them apply it,” King said. “I’ve also had complete support from coaches. They have given me access to their practices, games and postgame talks. They have not restricted me in any way as far as me interacting with their programs and that’s been exciting and rewarding.”

Dave Breitenbucher coaches girls tennis in the fall, boys basketball in the winter, and boys tennis in the spring at the High School. He says he has seen a number of positive changes on his teams.

“At first I wondered what the training was going to look like and if there was going to be conflict with what King was teaching and with what I was teaching, but it’s just been great,” Breitenbucher said. “I’ve seen a real willingness from my captains to go to the next level with leadership that I haven’t seen before. During the basketball season I saw a willingness of the captains to step in and help the coaches when there were issues. Something has definitely changed here.”

The conversations around leadership have also caused St. Louis Park coaches to rethink how they select captains for their teams. Ewald said that several years ago he attended a workshop where it was stated that 85 percent of athletic team captains are selected for the wrong reasons, including popularity, seniority and skill in a specific sport. “We want our head coaches to be more intentional and more purposeful and take more time with how we’re selecting these leaders (captains) for our programs,” Ewald said.



Leadership Consultant Kevin King meets with student athlete captains.

and resources to undertake an initiative like this that positively impacts our athletic teams and gives students an opportunity to learn critical life skills.”

“It’s easy to say I want to see all of our programs win state championships. The competitive aspect is part of it, but I think what’s more important is our student athletes are developing as young men and women,” Ewald said.

“I think a lot of schools would like to do something like this, but just haven’t been able to figure out the logistics of it,” King said. “What we are doing here shows that it can be done, that it is being done, and that St. Louis Park is really on the cutting edge of forward thinking as it relates to leadership.”

This month’s member spotlight was submitted by Sara Thompson, director of communications and community relations, St. Louis Park Public Schools.

“We’re learning really basic life skills such as listening, communication, patience, and opening yourself up and finding vulnerabilities.”

-Maddie Lund, class of 2018 captain, tennis & lacrosse

Class of 2018 Seniors Maddie Lund and Jonny Sorenson were both multi-sport athletes and captains. Lund played tennis and lacrosse, while Sorenson was quarterback of the football team that made the school’s first state tournament appearance last fall, and also played hockey and baseball.

“I think he (King) connects with us because he’s a down to earth guy and he really wants us to improve, not only as captains of our athletic teams, but using these qualities in life and becoming better people,” Sorenson said.

The initiative’s value extends beyond athletics; it also falls in line with key parts of the district’s mission which strives to “prepare all students to contribute to society; offer high quality opportunities for lifelong learning; provide multiple pathways to excellence; and challenge all learners to meet high standards.”

“We’re learning really basic life skills such as listening, communication, patience, and opening yourself up and finding vulnerabilities,” Lund said. “Whether it’s with starting a family, building a career, or continuing with athletics later in life, all of these skills we are learning are really important with anything you do.”

High School Principal Scott Meyers commends Ewald for starting this initiative.

“Athletic directors like Andy already have a full plate to ensure that our athletic programs run smoothly,” Meyers said. “I really applaud him for finding the time

“Whether it’s with starting a family, building a career, or continuing with athletics later in life, all of these skills we are learning are really important with anything you do.”

-Maddie Lund, class of 2018 captain, tennis & lacrosse

Special Education Enrollment, Costs Continue to Rise—and Shift

Senate on E-12 Policy Committee held hearing July 24 on special education enrollment and spending trends

Special education enrollment has steadily increased across Minnesota since 2003 — from nearly 116,000 students to more than 142,000 in FY2018 — and now accounts for more than 16 percent of the state’s student population.

In that same timeframe, the average special education expenditure per student has increased from \$9,200 in 2003 to more than \$14,000 in 2017.

Those figures were among the highlights from a July 24 Committee on [E-12 Policy](#) hearing on special education enrollment and spending trends, with presentations from Jody Hauer of the [Office of the Legislative Auditor](#), and Dr. Tom Melcher, director of the [Program Finance Division at the Minnesota Department of Education](#).

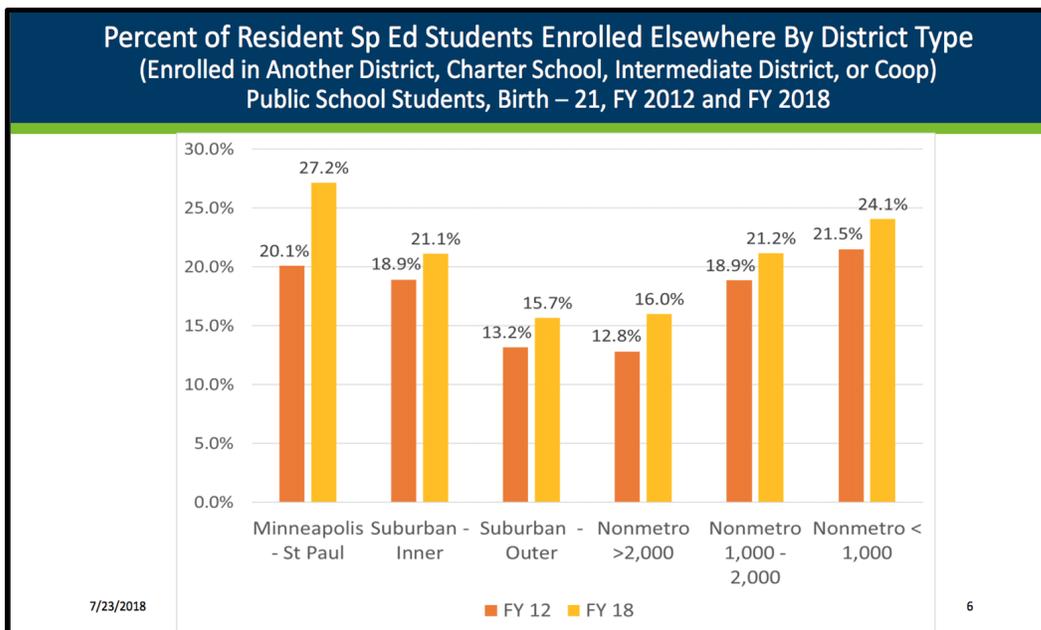
The cost increases, and the growth in numbers, are no surprise to members of AMSD, of course. It’s why special education funding has been among AMSD’s most significant legislative priorities for several years.

But for AMSD members, that growth isn’t the only statewide trend worth noting.

The enrollment is also shifting.

That is, the number of special education students enrolling outside of their home districts is also showing an upward trend, with parents across Minnesota more frequently taking their children out of their home districts for special education.

Statewide, an estimated 20 percent of special education students are served outside their home districts with 57 percent of those students enrolling in neighboring districts, 27 percent enrolling in a charter school and 16 percent being served in an intermediate or cooperative district. In the metro, the percentage of total enrollment now outside their home district for special education in Minneapolis and Saint Paul is at 6 percent — an upward trend that is seen in all district types. Suburban and non-metro districts have seen enrollments out of their home districts grow between 2 to 4 percent.



Source: [Program Finance Division Minnesota Department of Education](#)

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AMSD Members: Anoka-Hennepin School District, Bloomington Public Schools, Brooklyn Center Community Schools, Burnsville-Eagan-Savage School District 191, Columbia Heights Public Schools, Eastern Carver County Schools, Eden Prairie Schools, Edina Public Schools, Elk River Area School District, Equity Alliance MN (Associate Member), Farmington Area Public Schools, Fridley Public Schools, Hopkins Public Schools, Intermediate School District 287, Intermediate School District 917 (Associate Member), Inver Grove Heights Schools, Lakeville Area Public Schools, Mahtomedi Public Schools, Metro ECSU (Associate Member), Minneapolis Public Schools, Minnetonka Public Schools, Mounds View Public Schools, North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale School District, Northeast Metro Intermediate School District 916, Northwest Suburban Integration District (Associate Member), Orono Schools, Osseo Area Schools, Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools, Richfield Public Schools, Robbinsdale Area Schools, Rochester Public Schools; Rockford Area Schools, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public Schools, Roseville Area Schools, Shakopee Public Schools, South St. Paul Public Schools, South Washington County Schools, SouthWest Metro Intermediate District, Spring Lake Park Schools, St. Anthony-New Brighton Independent School District, St. Cloud Area Schools, St. Louis Park Public Schools, St. Paul Public Schools, Stillwater Area Public Schools, Wayzata Public Schools, West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan Area Schools, Westonka, and White Bear Lake Area Schools.

Trend: Special Education Students Enrolled Outside Home Districts On Rise

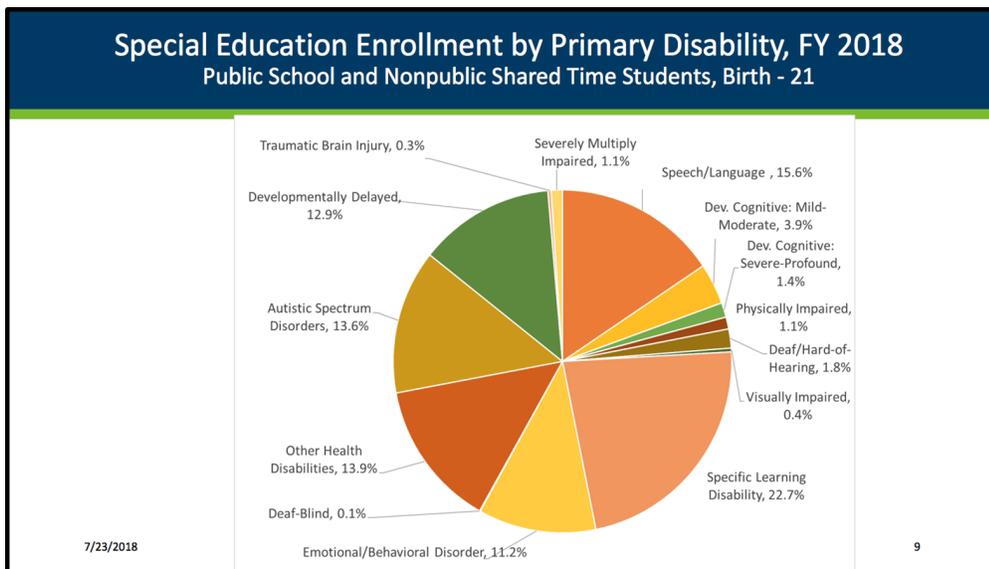
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While data doesn't provide the reasons *why* parents are leaving their home districts, much of this trend can likely be traced to the provision of services. Improvements in special needs diagnoses, for example, often allow parents to target the best resources for their children — basically allowing them shop around for the best services.

Data shows that students categorized with “Specific Learning Disabilities” account for the greatest percentage of students across Minnesota: nearly 23 percent — more than 32,000 students in 2017.

Among specific diagnoses, students with Autism showed the greatest increase overall, seeing a 555 percent increase between 2000-2011 — and a jump from 15,378 students reported in 2011 to 19,386 in 2017.

Data shows most special education enrollments peak at or around age 10, with needs for services often decreasing as children become older or more independent. The greatest growth in special education has come in the age group of 6-year-olds, with an enrollment increase of nearly 1,500 between 2012-2018.



Source: [Program Finance Division Minnesota Department of Education](#)

The number of students of color enrolled in special education increased by 75 percent between 1999-2011 — which is noteworthy given that the number of students of color in general education increased in that same timeframe by only 44 percent. (The Program Finance Division presentation did not include updated numbers for 2012-2018).

As for the shift of higher special education enrollments outside of home districts, the trend does not appear to be slowing.

Partly as the result of more students enrolling outside of their home districts, Minneapolis and Saint Paul specifically have also seen their overall special education enrollment decrease. Special education enrollment has decreased in these metro districts by approximately 1,000 students (from 18 percent to 16 percent of student population) between 2012-2018, but has increased in the inner and outer suburbs by approximately 5,000 students (from 13 percent to 14 percent).

Still, costs for Minneapolis-Saint Paul will likely continue upward, Melcher said. The volume of students in the metro will still require more specialists in both districts, which almost always come at a higher cost. Districts such as Minneapolis and Saint Paul are spending more than \$17,000 per student on average.

Special Education Salary Breakdown by Personnel Type by District Type State and Federal Funds FY 2017

District Type	Teacher	Admin	Oth Licensed	Nonlicensed
Minneapolis - St Paul	41%	2%	36%	21%
Suburban - Inner	43%	4%	33%	21%
Suburban - Outer	42%	4%	31%	23%
Nonmetro >2,000	43%	2%	27%	28%
Nonmetro 1,000 - 2,000	43%	1%	24%	32%
Nonmetro < 1,000	43%	1%	23%	33%
Charter	29%	4%	27%	40%

7/23/2018

Source: [Program Finance Division Minnesota Department of Education](#)

Staffing data also indicate students in Minneapolis and Saint Paul receive more specialized services than students in smaller districts, who often receive assistance from lower-cost nonlicensed personnel or paraprofessionals (an indication of more general care and less specialized services).

Moving forward, members of the Committee on E-12 Policy asked for additional details, namely whether Minnesota — which has many special education mandates that exceed federal requirements — could better align with federal requirements to contain costs.

The Committee meets again Aug. 21 at 9 a.m., with specific focus on the funding formula, the reimbursement impact on the cross subsidy, and a 50-state comparison of state funding for students with disabilities.

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