

CONNECTIONS

News from the Association of Metropolitan School Districts

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Volume 22
Number 6

Reimagining Rdale: A Bold Vision for the Future of Robbinsdale Area Schools

March 24, 2025
AMSD Day at the Capitol

8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
[LINK: View Details for Day at the Capitol](#)

March 28, 2025
Executive/Legislative Committee Meeting

7:30 a.m. - 9 a.m.
Anderson Center
Bethel University
Arden Hills

April 11, 2025
Board of Directors Meeting

7 a.m. - 9 a.m.
Quora Education Center
NE Metro 916
Little Canada

April 25, 2025
Executive/Legislative Committee Meeting

7:30 a.m. - 9 a.m.
Anderson Center
Bethel University
Arden Hills

When Dr. Teri Staloch stepped into her role as superintendent in July 2024, she arrived with a relentless commitment to transforming Robbinsdale Area Schools (Rdale) for the better. She launched the 2024-25 school year with the theme "Rediscover Rdale" as a way for staff and the community to rally around the potential that exists in the district to offer every student an exceptional education — one that met their needs and prepared them for a bright future.

By November of 2024, however, a stark financial reality came into focus: Rdale faced a \$21 million shortfall in its \$200 million budget. This meant making difficult short-term decisions to stabilize district finances. But Dr. Staloch was clear: financial challenges would not stop the district from its long-term planning for an innovative and student-centered future. So two processes would move forward side by side. The district launched a plan to address immediate budget challenges while simultaneously embarking on *Reimagine Rdale: Vision 2030* — a community-driven engagement process to co-create the schools that students want, need, and deserve.

"Robbinsdale Area Schools is filled with brilliant students, dedicated educators, and a community that values education," said Dr. Staloch. "AND we know that we can and must do better. There is untapped potential here — potential to create a district that is not just good, but truly excellent. Through *Reimagine Rdale*, we are setting the stage for a brighter, more inclusive, innovative, and joyful future for every learner."

A vision built on community engagement

At the heart of *Reimagine Rdale: Vision 2030* is a commitment to authentic engagement, listening and collaboration. The process is driven by the belief that those closest to the district—students, families, staff, and community members—are the best people to inform its future. To make that vision a reality, the district has launched extensive engagement efforts. A comprehensive community survey, which opened in January 2025, is gathering

Continued on page 2

The recently released February State Budget and Economic Forecast outlined a challenging fiscal environment as legislators work to adopt a biennial budget that will establish the level of funding for our schools for the next two years. Despite the projected budget shortfall, we need to remind state policymakers that our school districts are heavily dependent on the state with state aid accounting for 64 percent of school funding. Please join me for the [AMSD Day at the Capitol](#) on Monday, March 24 to advocate for our students. Your voice matters!

From the AMSD Chair, Laura Oksnevad, St. Anthony-New Brighton Board Member

A Commitment to Authentic Engagement, Listening and Collaboration

Continued from page 1

input on key questions, including: What does an excellent, world-class education look like?

Beyond the survey, the district is hosting a wide range of engagement events to reach every corner of the community. Eight district-wide community meetings — including virtual options — ensure broad participation. Four affinity group meetings provide dedicated spaces for Indigenous, Pan African, Somali, and Latino community members to share their perspectives. Staff meetings are taking place at every school and site, and in order to elevate the voices of students, grade-level meetings are being held at every secondary school as well as multiple focus groups with students at all elementary, middle and high schools. To further extend outreach, the district is also hosting pop-up engagements at local businesses and libraries.

"This is our chance to dream big together," said Dr. Staloch. "Our students want, need, and deserve the very best, and encouraging and empowering multiple perspectives will help us create a future where every learner has the opportunities, resources, and inspiration to thrive."

The Vision 2030 Team

A key driver of this process is the *Reimagine Rdale: Vision 2030 Team*, a 46-member group designed to reflect the diversity of the district. Meeting monthly from January through August 2025, this team is conducting a deep study of Rdale's academic programming, student outcomes, operations, finances, enrollment, facilities, and challenges — along with the results of the survey and community engagement efforts. Their work will culminate in a set of recommendations for the school board in September 2025, shaping the district's direction for years to come.

"This group is simply incredible," Dr. Staloch said. "The energy, the commitment, and the depth of experience its members have is truly inspiring. We have assembled a team that not only represents our district but is deeply invested in its success. I am confident that the work we do together will have a lasting impact."



Dr. Teri Staloch listens as a student shares their thoughts during the Feb. 26 Reimagine Rdale Community Meeting at Robbinsdale Middle School. The student was responding to a question about what Robbinsdale Area Schools does well and should maintain. This meeting was specifically designed to engage the district's Somali community.

Aiming for excellence

The goal of *Reimagine Rdale: Vision 2030* is simple yet ambitious — to reimagine what education can be as we transform current systems, ensure educational equity and create a district of academic and operational excellence, where each student is honored for their identity, feels a sense of belonging and is empowered to lean into their brilliance as they are supported to reach their unique potential.

While immediate financial challenges remain, Robbinsdale Area Schools is not just reacting to the present — it is planning for a thriving future. With the dedication of the Vision 2030 Team, support of the School Board, the participation of all segments of the community, and a commitment to innovation by all stakeholders, Rdale is taking bold steps to transform systems to ensure that every student receives the education they deserve. Learn more about *Reimagine Rdale: Vision 2030* at rdale.org/vision2030.

This month's member feature was submitted by Derrick Williams, Interim Director of Communications, Robbinsdale Area Schools.

AMSD Board Adopts 2025 Legislative Priorities

An extraordinary 2025 legislative session must end with the adoption of a new biennial budget.

The AMSD Board of Directors has approved its legislative priorities for the 2025 legislative session — a refined version of the AMSD platform that was adopted in December prior to the start of the legislative session. The updated priorities reflect some of the legislative proposals put forward in the 2025 session as well as the daunting budget challenges facing AMSD member school districts.

The challenges are in the wake of historic inflation causing escalating operational and labor costs. In addition, significant resources have been needed to implement expansive new programs and requirements adopted during the last biennium.

Adding to the challenging fiscal environment, the Office of Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) recently [adjusted the state's budget outlook downward](#), amid economic and fiscal uncertainty. The FY26-27 projected balance is now \$456 million — \$160 million lower than prior estimates — and the projected FY28-29 general fund shortfall is now \$5.995 billion, \$852 million worse than November estimates.

Against that backdrop, AMSD members remain committed to advocating on behalf of their students. A preliminary survey of AMSD budget directors last fall showed that member districts were estimating more than \$200 million in collective budget shortfalls for FY26 — and that was assuming an inflationary increase to the formula. AMSD is currently conducting a follow-up survey following the announcement by MDE Commissioner Willie Jeff that the funding formula will increase by 2.74 percent for the 2025-26 school year. The survey is also gathering information to ascertain the potential impact of Gov. Walz's proposed budget.

As lawmakers begin the work of developing the biennial budget, AMSD will continue to advocate for additional resources, no new mandates, and more flexibility and local control.

Among the 2025 legislative priorities:

- Increase the basic formula by 3 percent over current law for FY26;
 - Fully fund the mandates adopted during the last biennium including establishing a permanent funding stream for the Unemployment Insurance and Paid Leave programs, and refraining from enacting any new mandates in the 2025 session;
 - Increase Local Optional Revenue (LOR) to \$974 per pupil effective for FY27 and link it to the formula;
 - Hold districts harmless from a reduction in compensatory revenue and stabilize the formula by calculating eligibility on the basis of both direct certification and the application for education benefits;
 - Allow locally elected school boards to adopt the school calendar and election cycle that best meets the needs of their students, staff and community; and
 - Provide flexibility with instructional hour requirements to allow school districts to expand personalized and experiential learning opportunities for students such as asynchronous learning, internships, and project-based learning.
- [LINK: View a full list of the 2025 AMSD Legislative Priorities](#)

AMSD Day at the Capitol Monday, March 24

AMSD members are invited to join their colleagues for a day of advocacy at the annual AMSD Day at the Capitol event on Monday, March 24.

AMSD is again partnering this year with MASA Region 9. Please RSVP no later than Tuesday, March 18, to AMSD Office Manager Kimberly Jansa at kjansa@amsd.org if you plan to join us.

Members are also encouraged to [call your local legislators ASAP to schedule appointments](#) as their calendars fill up weeks in advance.

Highlights of the day will include:

- **8:30-10 a.m: Updates from AMSD Staff and Legislators** in the L'Etoile du Nord Vault Room B15, located in the basement of the State Capitol. (Coffee and donuts provided).
 - The event will include legislators from the House and Senate Education Finance Committees.

Attendees can also watch floor sessions and attend hearings between meetings with their local legislators:

- 11 a.m. — Senate Floor Session.
- 12:30-2:30 p.m. — Senate Education Policy Committee, Room 1200, Senate Building.
- 3:30 p.m. — House Floor Session.

(*Note that the Capitol building does not open until 8 a.m. Enter through the main door.)

- [LINK: Learn more how to advocate for these priorities through AMSD](#)
- [LINK: Contact your state legislator by school district through AMSD.org](#)
- [LINK: Bill Tracker: View the latest education-related legislation being proposed at the Minnesota Capitol](#)

