Association of Metropolitan School Districts

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Board of Directors Meeting
Friday, September 5, 2025, 7:30 – 9 a.m.
Quora Education Center, 70 West County B2, Little Canada, MN
Hybrid Meeting – In person and via Zoom

Members Present: Fifty-one members attended the meeting in person and 66 participated virtually.

I. Welcome and Introductions

AMSD Chair Jim DeMay called the meeting to order at 7:32 a.m. DeMay welcomed everyone in person and online.

II. Routine Business

A. Approval of Minutes of August 1 Meeting

Chair DeMay asked members to review the minutes from the August 1 meeting. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes. The minutes were approved.

III. Executive Director's Report

Chair DeMay invited Executive Director Scott Croonquist to give his report. Croonquist shared that there are three special elections coming up and the results will determine control of the House and Senate in the 2026 legislative session. The special election to fill the seat of late Speaker Emerita Melissa Hortman is September 16. Croonquist noted the other two elections will be held on November 4 – to fill the seats of the late Sen. Bruce Anderson and Sen. Nicole Mitchell. These elections could be followed by another special election if a current House member is elected to an open Senate seat. Croonquist also noted that Rep. Kaohly Her is running for mayor of Saint Paul which could also trigger a special election that would have to take place before the beginning of the session.

Croonquist reported that following the tragic mass shooting at Annunciation Catholic Church and School, Gov. Walz has indicated he will call a special session on gun control measures. There is currently no agreement on a special session agenda with legislative leaders.

Croonquist reminded board members that last session's education bill created four different working groups/task forces. The Compensatory Revenue Working Group held its initial meeting earlier this week. Croonquist thanked Supt. Zena Stenvik & Supt. Kent Pekel for serving on the task force. The Blue-Ribbon Commission on Special Education will have 18 members which have not yet been named. This group is charged with identifying $250 million in special education reductions. The Seclusion Working Group had an organizational meeting in mid-August. The Developmental Delay Age Limit Working Group just named its members and will hold its first meeting on September 16.

Croonquist shared that the results from the annual referendum survey are detailed in the September issue of Connections which is available on our website. There are 15 AMSD districts with 21 questions on the Nov. 4 ballot.

Croonquist noted that the annual AMSD/BrightWorks conference is coming up on November 11 with international education expert Dylan Wiliam as our keynote speaker. In addition, Dr. Mengchen Su and Dr. Alyssa Parr from the University of Minnesota will present their research findings on student mental health in Minnesota. Croonquist reminded board members that we are accepting proposals for breakout sessions and encouraged districts to consider sharing their work at the conference.

Croonquist reported that the legislative platform survey results are on the website. This is the initial step in creating the 2026 platform. Croonquist explained that the legislative committee reviewed the results at its last meeting and will work on a draft that will be brought to the November board meeting for review. The final draft will need to be approved at the December board of directors meeting. Croonquist noted that 2026 session is a policy year, and it is not clear if there will be any supplemental funding. School safety will likely be an important part of the legislative agenda. Croonquist reviewed some of the survey results and asked that any comments or feedback be shared with him.

IV. Guest Speaker

Chair DeMay introduced Peter Leatherman of The Morris Leatherman Company. Leatherman shared a fascinating overview of their recent public opinion survey which was conducted in the last two weeks of August. The survey sample size was 800 people statewide, with a confidence interval of plus or minus 3.5 percent. Following the presentation, Leatherman answered questions from board members.

V. What Perpich Can Do For You

Chair DeMay introduced Perpich Center for Arts Education Executive Director Allegra Smisek. Smisek provided board members an overview of Perpich highlighting some of the free professional development programs and support available to school districts.

VI. Adjourn

Chair DeMay reminded board members of upcoming meetings and adjourned the meeting at 9:07 a.m.