



Association of Metropolitan School Districts

1667 Snelling Ave. N., St. Paul, MN 55108 • 651-999-7325 • fax 651-999-7328 • www.amsd.org

AMSD Legislative Priorities 2017

Minnesota's future prosperity and ability to compete in the global economy is directly tied to our success in helping each student reach their full potential and graduate from high school prepared for college and career. The AMSD Board of Directors has identified a series of recommendations to close the achievement gap and ensure equitable academic outcomes – high levels of achievement – for all students. State policymakers should adopt a spending target of **at least** \$705 million for E-12 education to invest in the priorities listed below.

Education Funding Priorities

- Increase the per pupil basic formula by **at least** 2.5 percent per year to keep pace with inflation;
- Reduce the State share of the special education cross-subsidy by 25 percent;
- Increase funding for the English learner program to close the funding shortfall;
- Expand programs and incentives to attract, develop and retain teachers, particularly teachers of color and teachers in shortage areas;
- Provide funding to cover any mandated increase in employer pension contributions; and
- Increase access to school-based, pre-kindergarten programs.

Omnibus Tax Bill Priorities

Property tax levies play a critical role in funding education programs and facilities. These levies have widely varying impacts on local property taxpayers depending on the property wealth of the school district. The Governor and Legislature should support taxpayers and **public** schools by:

- Increasing state equalization of the operating referendum and debt service levies to increase education funding and taxpayer equity; and
- Opposing taxpayer subsidies of private education through vouchers, tax credits or scholarships.

Education Policy Priorities

Major education reforms have been enacted in recent years including the World's Best Workforce, the Achievement and Integration for Minnesota program and the federal Every Student Succeeds Act. Administrators and teachers need time and flexibility to implement these programs before new initiatives are adopted. State policymakers can best support school administrators and staff by:

- Refraining from enacting any new mandates and repealing existing unfunded mandates;
- Expanding the innovation zone law to allow school districts to try new instructional models, personalize student learning and increase collaboration with post-secondary institutions and businesses; and
- Streamlining and simplifying the teacher licensure process and providing multiple pathways to licensure.

Approved by AMSD Board of Directors, March 3, 2017