



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 2018

AMSD urges the Governor, House and Senate to use the state budget surplus to address several critical issues including the special education funding shortfall, enhancing school safety and stabilizing state pension funds. AMSD member school districts face a cumulative budget gap of more than \$100 million for the 2018-19 school year driven in large part by the growing special education cross-subsidy. State policymakers can mitigate projected staff layoffs and program cuts by addressing the priorities below.

Education Funding Priorities

Special Education - Increase special education funding to slow the growth in the special education cross-subsidy. Create a legislative working group to review special education delivery and costs and develop a plan to eliminate the state share of the cross-subsidy.

School Safety – Increase and equalize the Safe Schools Levy for school districts and intermediate school districts and expand the allowable uses of Safe Schools Revenue and Long-Term Facilities Maintenance Revenue to enhance school safety and security.

Pension Stability – Pass the Omnibus Pension Bill that was approved unanimously by the bi-partisan and bi-cameral Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement.

One-Time Funding – Support the Governor’s proposal to provide emergency, one-time funding of \$126 per pupil to help school districts address budget challenges.

Constitutional Amendment – Oppose HF 4437/SF 3837, a proposed constitutional amendment that would redirect state general sales tax revenue to state and local road systems. This would significantly reduce the resources available to educate the students of Minnesota at a time when the state is already severely underfunding special education and other education programs.

Education Policy Priorities

At a time when school districts are facing budget challenges and working to implement the federal *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), the Governor and Legislators should refrain from enacting any new unfunded mandates. In addition, AMSD **opposes**:

Summative Rating System (House Proposal) – School districts are working with the MN Department of Education (MDE) to implement the ESSA which establishes a comprehensive accountability system based on multiple indicators. Legislators should allow MDE to continue to work with education stakeholders to implement the new system.

Mandated Academic Balance Policy (Senate Proposal) - The Minnesota Human Rights Act, the Teachers Code of Ethics and MN Rules related to Effective Practice for Teachers prohibit discrimination based on political or religious beliefs and requires teachers to develop and use curricula that encourage students

to understand, analyze, interpret, and apply ideas from varied perspectives. Locally-elected school boards are in the best position to work with their students, staff and communities to ensure safe learning environments that respect the rights of all students.

Omnibus Tax Bill Priorities

It is critical that the final tax bill positions Minnesota to meet its constitutional obligation to provide a general and uniform system of public schools. Toward that end, AMSD opposes:

- Taxpayer subsidies of private education through tax credits or deductions. (Senate Proposal)
- Automatic triggers that would reduce state general fund revenue before the state has met its constitutional obligation to fund our public schools. (Senate Proposal)
- Mandating confusing and complicated language on school referendum ballots. (House Proposal)
- Mandating all school elections to be held on General Election Day. (House Proposal)