



Association of Metropolitan School Districts

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

AMSD Position on Mandate Reduction and Local Control

The Association of Metropolitan School Districts supports repealing unnecessarily restrictive mandates that increase administrative expenses and limit locally elected school boards ability to address the unique needs of their students and community. AMSD also supports broadening the levy and decision-making authority of locally elected school boards, including allowing school boards to renew existing operating referendums by a majority vote of the board.

AMSD BELIEVES

- Federal and state mandates should have a clearly articulated purpose, which is revisited regularly to check for relevance and alignment with other policy goals.
- Policy makers should provide the funding necessary to comply with mandates.
- Locally elected school boards should have a levy authority comparable with other local governments.

BACKGROUND

Local control and citizen input are key components of our democratic system. Decentralized governance improves responsiveness to local concerns, stimulates innovation and participation, and increases accountability. Mandates have been regularly imposed on school districts without the allocation of resources to carry them out. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the World's Best Workforce (WBWF) have had the biggest impact on school districts but the list of mandates is long.

Each school district faces unique needs which depend on a variety of factors

including demographics, geography and district size. Locally-elected school boards are in the best position to work with their staff, students, parents and communities to address local needs and challenges. One size fits all mandates stifle innovation and creativity and consume staff time and resources. To enhance local control and reduce mandates, the Governor and Legislature should:

- Refrain from enacting any new unfunded mandates and reduce existing mandates and burdensome paperwork requirements;
- Align the continuing contract law to the teacher tenure law to allow school boards and administrators more flexibility in retaining their most effective staff;
- Allow locally-elected school boards to adopt the school calendar that best meets the needs of their students and community;
- Repeal the requirement that school districts publish minutes and budget information in the newspaper and instead allow districts to publish this information on their web site with a notice in the newspaper citing where the information can be found;
- Repeal the requirement that school districts create a local assessment committee;
- Repeal the requirement that school districts establish site teams to develop and implement strategies on improving instruction and curriculum.