January 2019
vol 16 ◆ no 4

January 25, 2019
Executive/Legislative Committee Meeting
7:30 a.m.
Room 304
Anderson Center
2 Pine Tree Drive
Arden Hills

February 1, 2019
Board of Directors Meeting
7 a.m.
Quora Education Center
NE Metro 916
Little Canada
https://goo.gl/maps/EG2bcsS9zuK2

February 22, 2019
Executive/Legislative Committee Meeting
7:30 a.m.
Room 304
Anderson Center
2 Pine Tree Drive
Arden Hills

NEW AMSD OFFICE LOCATION
Effective December 17
2 Pine Tree Drive
Suite 380
Arden Hills, MN 55112
612-430-7750

AMSD’s Mission
To advocate for state education policy that enables metropolitan school districts to improve student learning.

From the Chair
Happy New Year! It was incredibly energizing to have over 150 superintendents, school board members, district staff and other public education supporters in attendance at AMSD’s annual legislative session preview on January 4. Thanks to the nearly 40 legislators and legislative staff who attended the preview. Also, a special thanks to Commissioner of Education Mary Cathryn Ricker, our superintendent speakers who outlined the AMSD legislative priorities and the legislative panel of Representative Jim Davnie, Representative Sondra Erickson, Senator Carla Nelson and Senator Chuck Wiger who shared their thoughts and goals for the 2019 session. It was heartening to hear our legislators speak about the importance of investing in education. I encourage AMSD members to stay engaged throughout the session. Together, our advocacy will benefit teaching and learning for all of our students!

Stephanie Levine, school board member from West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan, is chair of AMSD.

www.amsd.org

2019 AMSD Legislative Preview Brings Legislators and Education Leaders Together

More than 120 education leaders - superintendents, school board members and district staff - and more than 30 state legislators turned out for the annual AMSD Legislative Preview on Jan. 4 at the Quora Education Center (Intermediate School District 916), to learn about the upcoming 2019 legislative session which began Jan. 8.

The annual AMSD event, which this year included remarks from the incoming Commissioner of Education Mary Cathryn Ricker, precedes each session. The event brings together metro area legislators and education leaders to discuss important education issues and provides legislators the opportunity to hear a presentation of the AMSD platform as they prepare for the upcoming session.

The preview also allows member districts to communicate with legislators how the platform issues affect their districts directly.

AMSD unveiled its 2019 Legislative Platform, “Ensuring an Equitable and Excellent Education,” in December 2018, based on surveys with the nearly 50 AMSD member school districts. Districts agreed the five key areas to address in the 2019 session include:

- School funding stabilization
- School safety
- Closing opportunity gaps
- Addressing taxpayer equity
- Enhancing local control

All five points are explained in detail in the platform.

Continued on page 2
In addition to sharing the platform, several AMSD superintendents provided context at the preview to show how their districts are directly impacted by state policies.

Supt. David Law of Anoka-Hennepin Schools, for example, presented about the importance of racial equity work with regard to closing opportunity gaps for students — and how by recruiting and retaining teachers of color, Anoka-Hennepin has seen direct impacts on student performance.

Law also emphasized the importance of — and state obligation for — education funding.

Law noted that a funding increase of even 3 percent on the basic formula for education in 2019 — and indexing it to inflation — would still leave his district in the red by more than $300,000 in the coming year.

Rising costs were a theme echoed by Supt. Carlton Jenkins of Robbinsdale, who emphasized that the special education cross-subsidy (the amount by which special education expenditures exceed revenue provided by the state and federal governments), if unaddressed, could force his district to divert more than $15 million of general fund dollars to subsidize special education.

Superintendents Connie Hayes of Intermediate School District 916 and Teri Staloch of Prior Lake-Savage also spoke to the group about student mental health challenges, school safety, and the importance of property taxpayer equity based on wealth disparities between districts.

“The chronic underfunding of special education services stresses the budgets of school districts across the state,” Jenkins said.

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Legislative Impact

- If we continue with the same funding patterns, Robbinsdale Area Schools will have to divert $15.5 million from the general fund to subsidize unfunded special education costs. The chronic underfunding of special education services stresses the budgets of school districts across the state. Additionally, it places districts which are property-rich and income-poor in a position reducing services to fully see, support and serve all children, staff and families.

- **Recommendation:** Help us position Minnesota in providing the highest quality for all children by increasing special education funding.

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“These disparities should be addressed in the Omnibus Tax Bill,” Staloch said.
The preview wrapped with a legislative panel that featured Reps. Jim Davnie (DFL-Minneapolis) and Sondra Erickson (R-Princeton), and Sens. Carla Nelson (R-Rochester) and Chuck Wiger (DFL-Maplewood).

Davnie is the chair of the House Education Finance Committee, and Erickson is the ranking minority member of the House Education Policy Committee. Nelson is the chair of the Senate Committee on E-12 Finance and Policy, and Wiger is the ranking minority member for the DFL.

- [Link: View a PDF of the 2019 AMSD Legislative Platform]

- [Link: View a PDF of the Superintendent Presentations at the Legislative Preview]

- [Link: View a full photo gallery of images from the Jan. 4, 2019 Legislative Preview]

AMSD Presents Friend of Public Education Award

AMSD Executive Director Scott Croonquist presented Rep. Tim O’Driscoll with the AMSD Friend of Education Award at a recent meeting of the St. Cloud School Board. Pictured from left to right are school board members Bruce Mohs, Bruce Hentges, Rep. Tim O’Driscoll, Supt. Willie Jett, AMSD Executive Director Scott Croonquist, school board members Al Dahlgren, Shannon Haws, Jeff Pollreis and Jerry Von Korff.