



## Association of Metropolitan School Districts

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# REIMAGINE MINNESOTA

## Equity and Excellence in Education for All Students

- In March 2016, a group of metropolitan school district superintendents met to discuss the future of education in Minnesota. The superintendents agreed the state Constitution entitles all students, regardless of race, gender, or economic background, to attend a school that provides an equitable and excellent education that allows them to reach their full potential.
- In the backdrop of the discussions was the 2015 *Cruz-Guzman v. State of Minnesota* lawsuit. The suit alleges that Minnesota's system of education is not "adequate" under the state Constitution based on the segregation of students of color and students living in poverty in Minneapolis and Saint Paul schools. The plaintiffs are seeking remedies that could include busing, or the creation of a single metropolitan school district.
- Unwilling to wait for a lawsuit that could take several years, such as a similar lawsuit filed in 1995, the superintendents felt a sense of urgency—and collectively proposed a proactive education plan to create lasting equity and excellence for all students.
- The superintendents believed that educational leaders, collaborating with their students, parents, staff and communities, have the best understanding of the challenges and barriers that must be overcome.
- The superintendents asked the Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD) to form an ad-hoc committee to facilitate the development of the collective education plan. From January-May of 2017, AMSD conducted 12 community conversations throughout the metropolitan area. More than 3,000 students, parents, staff, business leaders, cultural leaders and community members attended the gatherings garnering more than 10,000 responses, suggestions and comments related to what could and should be done to ensure all students receive an equitable and excellent education.
- Following the community conversations, the superintendents convened teams of teachers, principals, curriculum experts and equity leaders to synthesize all of the data and input that had been gathered. The synthesis workshops led to the development of three overarching recommendations:

1. Effective, diverse stakeholders who use trusting relationships to create welcoming classrooms, schools and communities that meet the needs of all students and families.
  2. Personalized relevant education and youth development that guarantees access to rigorous learning and eliminating predictability based on race.
  3. Equitable resources (time, talent, funds) aligned to student needs that enable every school to “see all students” and “serve all students.”
- The final phase was to develop the specific strategies needed to achieve the goals. The superintendents assembled teams that collaboratively developed nine strategies (below), with extensive stakeholder input to employ consistent language, visions and goals for minimizing disparities and improving access, equity and opportunities for all students.
  - The collaborative nature of the vision demonstrates that multiple school districts can work together and identify strategies to improve access, equity and opportunities for all students.
  - *Reimagine Minnesota* recognizes each district is independent and has unique needs and challenges, and it is not a one-size-fits-all solution to address the identified challenges.
  - School leaders need to continue to work collaboratively and share ideas and best practices.
  - Educational leaders and educators need to challenge traditional approaches to education to ensure equity and excellence for all students.
  - Accomplishing this vision will require bold leadership from our state policy makers and resources not currently provided by the State.

## The Roadmap

# 9 KEY STRATEGIES

