



## **Association of Metropolitan School Districts**

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### **AMSD Legislative Priorities 2019**

Minnesota's future prosperity is directly tied to our ability to successfully close our racial and economic opportunity and achievement gaps while accelerating achievement for all students. The AMSD Board of Directors has identified the priorities listed below to close opportunity gaps and ensure equitable academic outcomes – high levels of achievement – for all students.

#### **Education Funding Priorities**

- Increase the basic formula by 3 percent per year for the next two years, and index the formula to inflation in the following years;
- Reduce the State share of the special education cross-subsidy by at least 50 percent over the next four years;
- Increase the Safe Schools Levy and remove the per-pupil limit and expand the allowable uses of Long-Term Facilities Maintenance Revenue to allow school districts and intermediate school districts to enhance safety for students, staff and the public.
- 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; 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:

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

#### **Education Policy Priorities**

One size fits all mandates stifle innovation and creativity. Locally-elected school boards are in the best position to work with their students, staff, parents and communities to address local needs and challenges. AMSD urges the Governor and Legislators to:

- Allow locally-elected school boards to renew an existing referendum by a vote of the school board;
- Refrain from enacting any new mandates and repeal existing unfunded mandates and burdensome paperwork requirements; and
- Allow locally-elected school boards to establish the school calendar that best meets the needs of their students and families.