

January 2020  
vol 17 ♦ no 4

**January 10, 2020  
Board of Directors  
Meeting**

7 a.m.  
Quora Education Center  
NE Metro 916  
Little Canada

**January 31, 2020  
Executive/Legislative  
Committee Meeting**

7:30 a.m.  
Room 304  
Anderson Center  
Bethel University  
Arden Hills

**February 7, 2020  
Legislative Preview**

7:30 a.m.  
Quora Education Center  
NE Metro 916  
Little Canada

**February 28, 2020  
Executive/Legislative  
Committee Meeting**

7:30 a.m.  
Room 304  
Anderson Center  
Bethel University  
Arden Hills

## AMSD's Mission

*To advocate for state education policy that enables metropolitan school districts to improve student learning.*



Association of  
Metropolitan School Districts

## Academies of Shakopee Helping Students Build Stronger Relationships and Prepare for Post-Secondary Success

**T**hrough real-world and authentic learning experiences, Shakopee Public Schools is preparing students for post-secondary success.



The Academies of Shakopee, at Shakopee High School, are small learning communities of students and teachers organized around areas of interest. The academies are based on a national model to prepare all students for college and/or an eventual career. Students have the opportunity to connect with others who have similar aspirations and with teachers who can make meaningful connections to their plans for the future.

In 9th grade, students enter the Freshman Academy. They spend time discovering their own unique interests and then choose a home academy for their sophomore through senior year. The Freshman Academy provides additional time to explore courses offered by our six academies: Arts &

Communication, Business & Entrepreneurship, Engineering & Manufacturing, Health Science, Human Services, and Science & Technology.

“I plan to attend a two-year community college, and then become a Realtor,” said Roman Garwood, a senior in the Business & Entrepreneurship Academy.

“The academies provide the opportunity to take business classes to help me prepare for my career path.”

Garwood is a member of the Academies of Shakopee Student Ambassador program. The ambassadors are a small group of 18 students who serve as advocates and student leaders in the academies and community. They provide tours to visitors, interact with our community, and share all of the wonderful experiences happening within the academies. Students participating in the ambassador program gain the following characteristics and skills: Confidence, professionalism, leadership, communication, inspiration, empowerment and passion.

“I’m learning key skills for life, which has been very helpful,” added Garwood. “For example, Personal Finance teaches me how to manage money and balance



Academies of Shakopee Student Ambassadors serve as advocates and student leaders in the academies and community.

*Continued on page 2*

## From the Chair

**H**appy New Year! Thank you to everyone who turned out on December 5 for the unveiling of *Expanding the Vision of Reimagine Minnesota: A Collective Education Roadmap for Action* — a report produced by University of Minnesota researchers. The event was sponsored by the Minneapolis Foundation in partnership with the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation, the Greater Twin Cities United Way, the University of Minnesota and AMSD. The report augments more than three years of work by a group of AMSD superintendents formed in 2016, to address racial disparities across K-12 education. You can read the report and view videos from the December 5 event here: [Reimagine MN](#). Let’s build on the momentum in 2020!

*Andrea Cuene, school board member, Wayzata Public Schools, is chair of AMSD.*

# Academies of Shakopee: Making Meaningful Connections

*Continued from page 1*

my checking account, all of which will come in handy as a Realtor.”

All Shakopee High School students take required core academic subjects, electives and specialized courses in their focus area to provide academic rigor. Teachers also incorporate real-world examples from a career area into academic and specialized courses to create relevance for students. Additionally, students move through their academy in high school with the same team of teachers and their fellow students, building stronger relationships.

A key to the Academies of Shakopee is building on the same foundation of ‘stronger relationships’ to connect with businesses and community partners. The most successful career academies across the country have strong relationships, involvement, and support from the business community. The following local businesses, referred to as Academy Champions, have made a commitment to give \$300,000 worth of time, talents and treasures: Apple Autos (Freshman Academy), St. Francis Regional Medical Center (Health Science), HomeTown Bank (Business & Entrepreneurship), Shutterfly (Engineering and Manufacturing), Scott County and the City of Shakopee (Human Services), Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community (Arts & Communications), and Entrust Datacard (Science & Technology).

Academy Champions provide professional mentoring, student internships, and teacher externships. They are also involved in course development to help ensure relevant skills are being taught in our courses. Academy Champions also share industry knowledge, and donate industry-related equipment to our students, furthering authentic learning experiences.

Businesses and post-secondary partners can get involved with the Academies of Shakopee in many different ways. With students enrolled in academies, there is an immediate need to facilitate an ongoing, structured dialogue between industry and teaching professionals to help recruit and coordinate the broader business participation. The Academies of Shakopee Industry Councils serve all academies, and typically meet for 90 minutes, quarterly. The role of a business leader serving on an academy partnership council includes supporting the continuous improvement of academies, communicating the workforce needs and qualifications of that business or industry, advising the academy of significant trends or challenges, and recommending or assisting in the development of new academy courses.

Shakopee Public Schools also partners with Ford Next Generation Learning (NGL), a philanthropic non-profit arm of Ford Motor Company. Ford NGL has helped many districts over the past 20 years successfully transform their high schools through seminars, workshops, and professional development opportunities.



Shakopee High School teachers incorporate real-world examples from a career area into academic and specialized courses to create relevance for students.

“Our teachers and staff, in partnership with our community, are continuously looking for new opportunities to give our students the tools they need to succeed beyond high school,” said Jenny Ames, Community Partnerships Manager. “We are extremely thankful for every partnership that has been a part of our journey.”

Shakopee High School hosts a number of events throughout the year to connect our students with partners. In October, the high school hosted the 2nd Annual Career Expo. More than 80 local businesses and organizations participated.

“An essential element of the Academies of Shakopee is exposing students to the outside world and challenging them to think about what their future could look like,” said Elizabeth Duehr, Academy Coach.

More than one thousand students attended the event during the school day. It gave them the opportunity to interact with business partners, learn more about future careers in each academy, and the ability to practice their professional skills.

“In the past two years, we have been moved by the number of meaningful opportunities the academies have provided our students,” said Jeff Pawlicki, principal at Shakopee High School. “We are excited for the future and to see what our students accomplish.”

To learn more about the Academies of Shakopee, visit: [shakopee.k12.mn.us/academies](http://shakopee.k12.mn.us/academies)

*This month’s member spotlight was submitted by Ashley McCray, Communications Supervisor, Shakopee Public Schools.*

# AMSD Board Adopts 2020 Legislative Platform

The Association of Metropolitan School Districts Board of Directors adopted its 2020 legislative platform at its monthly meeting on December 13. The platform is the culmination of months of work including gathering input from school board members, superintendents and other school district staff from AMSD’s member school districts. The 2020 platform outlines five key areas that AMSD board members identified as priorities it would like legislators to address in the 2020 legislative session.

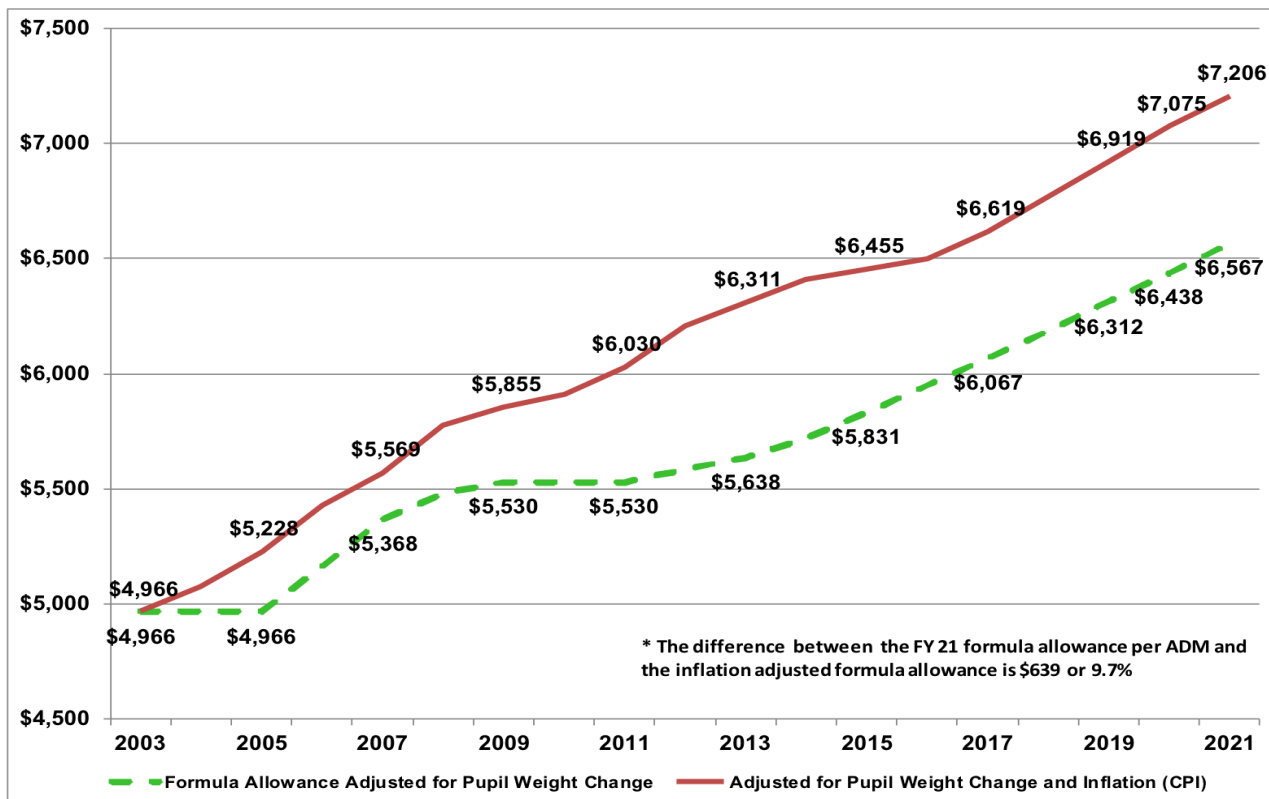
While AMSD members recognize the 2020 session is not officially a “budget year,” members do believe it is critical that state policymakers understand that Minnesota’s education funding system is not providing adequate, equitable or reliable resources for our students. And while 2020 may not be a traditional “budget session,” the recently released state budget forecast indicates that there may be an opportunity for state policymakers to make some strategic investments and address some of the significant shortfalls in important education programs.

The priorities outlined in the AMSD platform include:

**Stabilizing Education Funding.** Stabilizing education funding has always been a key priority for AMSD and its districts. The 2019 education bill included a two percent per year formula increase. Months before the 2019 omnibus education bill passed, a survey of AMSD districts showed that they projected a combined \$52 million shortfall in the current school year under a two percent formula increase. This results from a common misperception among state policymakers that a two percent formula increase translates to a two percent increase in total revenue for school districts. That is not the case. While the basic formula is the most important funding stream for school districts, there are several other funding streams tied to specific programs. Some of these, such as special education and English learner funding, are severely underfunded, which forces school districts to subsidize these programs with general education revenue.

The 2020 Platform urges lawmakers to link the basic formula to inflation to provide a stable and consistent funding stream that allows school boards and administrators to engage in long-range planning. As the chart below shows, the formula would be \$639 per pupil higher today if it had simply kept pace with inflation since 2003. The platform further urges lawmakers to allow locally-elected school boards to renew an existing operating referendum at the same level; and increase special education and English learner funding to reduce the shortfalls in these important programs.

**General Education Formula Allowance, 2003-2021**  
Adjusted for Pupil Weight Change and Inflation (CPI)



Source: MDE August 2019 Inflation Estimates



Association of Metropolitan School Districts



Continued on page 4

# Platform Prioritizes Safe and Modern School Facilities

*Continued from page 3*

**Ensuring Safe and Modern School Facilities.** Safe and modern school facilities are a high priority for AMSD districts. These needs were evident through communication directly from students in the 2019 Minnesota Student Survey: The survey showed more Minnesota students than ever — 23 percent — reported having long-term mental health, behavioral, or emotional problems. The 2020 Platform looks to address these needs by increasing the Safe Schools levy and state aid to allow school districts and intermediate school districts to hire additional support staff to address the mental health needs of our students. The platform also urges lawmakers to remove the per-pupil limit and expand the allowable uses of Long-Term Facilities Revenue to allow school districts and intermediate school districts to enhance safety through security modifications, remodeling and additions to existing buildings.

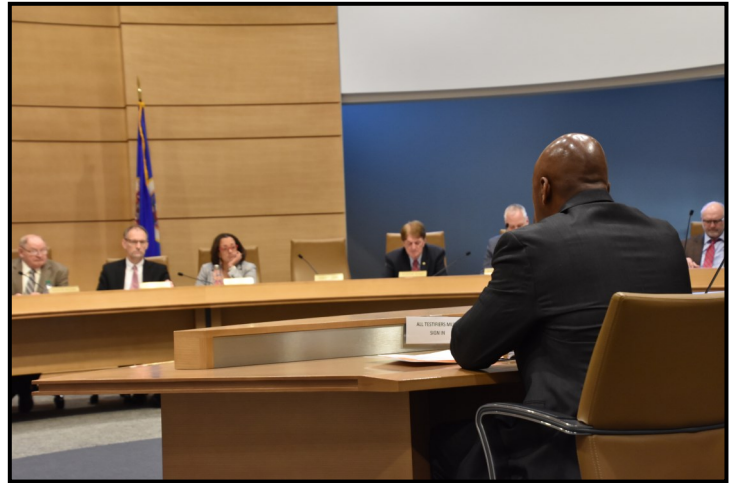
**Increase and Diversify the Educator Workforce.** Research shows that diversifying the teacher workforce is critical to eliminating the achievement gaps between students of color and white students. Yet, the 2019 Minnesota Teacher Supply and Demand Report shows that just over 4 percent of the teacher workforce is comprised of teachers of color while the percentage of students of color in Minnesota is over 33 percent.

Through its work with Reimagine Minnesota, as well as other education groups dedicated to increasing the numbers of teachers of color, AMSD continues to work to increase and diversify the educator workforce. The 2020 Platform promotes expanding programs and incentives to attract, develop and retain teachers, particularly teachers of color and teachers in shortage areas; and maintain multiple pathways to licensure in the tiered licensing system.

**Reduce Mandates and Enhance Local Control.** As every district leader knows: mandates from the state and federal level all come with costs, whether through the need for additional staffing or something as basic as additional paperwork and documentation. Mandates have been regularly imposed on school districts without the allocation of resources to carry them out. Each school district faces unique needs which depend on a variety of factors including demographics, geography and district size. AMSD believes locally-elected school boards are in the best position to work with their staff, students, parents and communities to address local needs and challenges.

The 2020 Platform urges legislators to oppose any new unfunded mandates and reduce existing unfunded mandates; reduce special education paperwork requirements to allow teachers to spend more time with students; allow referendum notices to be mailed before the start of early voting; expand the Innovation Zone law to include more school districts and expand flexibility to encourage initiatives such as allowing a school district to replace the high school MCA exams with a nationally recognized college entrance exam if approved by the United States Department of Education; and repeal the requirement that a percentage of compensatory revenue be spent on extended time programming.

**Enhance Taxpayer Equity.** Property tax levies play a critical role in funding education programs and facilities. However, these levies have widely varying impacts on local property taxpayers depending on the property wealth of the school district. In an effort to enhance taxpayer equity, the AMSD 2020 Platform urges lawmakers to increase equalization of the operating referendum, local optional, and debt service levies to reduce taxpayer and education funding disparities; and oppose taxpayer subsidies of non-public education through vouchers, tax credits or scholarships.



Supt. Carlton Jenkins of Robbinsdale Area Schools testifying to the Senate E-12 Finance and Policy Committee during the 2019 Minnesota Legislature.

- [Link: View the AMSD 2020 Legislative platform](#)
- [Link: View AMSD Position Papers](#)
- [Link: View the AMSD 2020 Legislative Session webpage](#)