



## **Association of Metropolitan School Districts**

2 Pine Tree Drive, Suite 380, Arden Hills, MN 55112 • 612-430-7806 • [www.amsd.org](http://www.amsd.org)

### **AMSD 2020 Legislative Priorities**

Our schools are the center of our communities and it is critical that the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 system continues to operate to meet the academic, as well as social and emotional, needs of our students during these incredibly challenging times. School board members, administrators, teachers and staff in AMSD member school districts have worked tirelessly to meet the needs of our students and communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. They have been proud to support the work of our dedicated health care professionals, emergency responders and other essential workers by providing care for their children. They have served tens of thousands of meals to our students during this challenging time for families. At the same time, our teachers and staff are delivering distance learning to continue to deliver instruction to our students in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12.

AMSD members greatly appreciate the assistance provided thus far by state and federal policymakers. To ensure that school districts can continue to carry out the directives in the Governor's executive orders, it is important that the issues below are addressed:

- Provide a funding stream to allow school districts to provide meals and child care. School districts are using resources in their Community Education and Nutrition Services funds to carry out the directives in the Governor's executive orders. At the same time, these two funds have been severely impacted by lost fee revenues. For example, 85 percent of the funding for community education comes from fees for programs such as before and after-school child care, school readiness, ECFE, youth after school programs, adult basic education, and adult enrichment programming. These fees have come to a stop and districts have had to refund payments that were already received. Most school districts used available fund balances to carry out the original executive orders. Further relying on fund balances to provide meals and child care will lead to many school districts running deficits, laying off staff and reducing programming;
- Allow the Commissioner of Education to recalculate special education per pupil transportation revenue for school districts to ensure that the total statewide special education pupil transportation does not fall below the amount estimated for the 2019-20 school year;
- Allows the Commissioner to recalculate career and technical revenue, nonpublic pupil transportation aid, inter-district desegregation transportation aid and adult basic education aid to ensure that revenue does not fall below the amount estimated for the 2019-20 school year based on the February 2020 forecast.

# AMSD 2020 Legislative Priorities

Over the coming weeks, AMSD urges the Governor and Legislature to approve measures that gained bipartisan support early in the session including:

- Increase the Safe Schools Levy and/or state aid to allow school districts and intermediate school districts to hire additional support staff to address the growing mental health needs of our students. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, our students were facing growing mental health needs and that has compounded during the current crisis;
- Expand the time frame for the required operating referendum notice to be delivered to taxpayers from 30 to 45 days prior to the election to align with the start of early voting;
- Restore the sales tax exemption for fund-raising sales by or for a nonprofit group;
- Allow school districts to conduct a functional behavior assessment (FBA) as a stand-alone evaluation without conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the student;
- Allow PELSB to issue a preliminary license to an applicant while the background check is pending if the applicant can demonstrate that they meet other license eligibility requirements and the hiring authority has completed a background check.

These are unprecedented times. To allow our school leaders and staff to focus on meeting the needs of students and families through the pandemic, we strongly urge state policymakers to refrain from enacting any new unfunded mandates.