

Association of Metropolitan School Districts

2021 Legislative Platform Outline

DRAFT

Stabilize Funding

- Increase the basic formula allowance by X percent per year and index the formula to inflation;
- Increase special education funding by an amount sufficient to eliminate the state portion of the cross-subsidy;
- Provide funding to hold school districts harmless from declining enrollment and other impacts related to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Allow locally-elected school boards to renew an existing operating or capital projects referendum.

Close the Achievement Gap

- Increase funding for the English learner program to eliminate the cross-subsidy;
- Create incentives and alternatives to attract, develop and retain teachers, particularly teachers of color and teachers in shortage areas;
- Maintain multiple pathways to licensure in the tiered licensing system;
- Increase access to school-based pre-kindergarten programs and fully fund all required program components;
- Ensure all students have access to reliable internet service and devices to engage in distance learning.

Ensure Safe Schools

- 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;
- Increase funding and expand the allowable uses of Long-Term Facilities Maintenance Revenue to allow school districts and intermediate school districts to enhance safety through security modifications to buildings, including remodeling and additions to existing space.

Enhance Taxpayer Equity

- Increase equalization of the operating referendum, local optional and debt service levies to reduce taxpayer and education funding disparities;
- Oppose taxpayer subsidies of private education through vouchers, tax credits or scholarships.

Enhance Local Control and Reduce Mandates

- Oppose any new unfunded mandates;
- Establish a pilot project to allow approved school districts to replace the high school MCA exams with a nationally-recognized college entrance exam;
- Expanding the innovation zone law to allow school districts to try new instructional models, personalize student learning and increase collaboration with post-secondary institutions, nonprofit organizations and businesses;
- Repeal the requirement that school districts publish minutes and budget information in the newspaper and instead allow this information to be posted on the district website;
- Allow locally-elected school boards to establish the calendar that best meets the needs of their students, staff and community.