



Association of Metropolitan School Districts

Board of Directors Meeting
Friday, March 5, 2021, 7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.
Conducted via Zoom

I. Welcome

Chair Curtis Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:34 a.m. and welcomed everyone. Several introductions were made.

II. Routine Business

Approval of Minutes of February 5 Meeting

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the February 5 meeting. The motion was approved.

III. Legislative Committee Report

Approval of AMSD 2021 Legislative Priorities

Chair Johnson reported that the AMSD Legislative Committee has approved the proposed 2021 Legislative Priorities. It has been AMSD's practice to approve a revised and streamlined version of the legislative platform a few months into the session. Chair Johnson recognized Zach Dorholt, School Board Member, St. Cloud Area School District 742, to offer an amendment to the proposed priorities document. Dorholt proposed revising the third bullet in the Stability section to read:

At a minimum, increase special education funding to a level sufficient to prevent the cross-subsidy from growing in the next biennium and develop and implement a plan to close the cross-subsidy in 5 years.

Executive Director Croonquist thanked Board Member Dorholt for the amendment and noted that it was consistent with AMSD's history of advocating for the Legislature to develop a plan to eliminate the cross-subsidy. Following some additional discussion among board members, a motion was made and seconded to approve the amended AMSD 2021 Legislative Priorities document. The motion was approved.

IV. Guest Speaker

Chair Johnson introduced and welcomed Rep. Ruth Richardson, Chair of the House Education Policy Committee. Rep. Richardson shared that the committee's priorities for the legislative session have been helping students and schools recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and closing Minnesota's racial disparities. Chair Richardson also provided a summary of the legislation the committee has heard during the session thus far. Rep. Richardson answered several questions from AMSD board members. Chair

Johnson and Executive Director Croonquist thanked Rep. Richardson for her presentation and for answering questions from AMSD board members.

V. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Croonquist reported that things are moving fast at the Capitol with the first committee deadline next week, March 12. The legislature will take a recess the last week of March. Croonquist reported that the February Budget Forecast projected a \$1.6 billion surplus, which is largely due to the federal pandemic relief. The majority of the projected surplus is due to one-time savings or adjustments with an ongoing balance of just \$260 million which does not include anticipated inflation.

Croonquist encouraged board members to review the statewide budget survey results summary which was conducted by MASBO in cooperation with AMSD and other education organizations. The survey results show that districts throughout the state are facing budget challenges. Croonquist also referred board members to the recent letter sent by AMSD, along with several other education groups, to Education Committee Chairs and Minority Leads urging the passage of a COVID-19 recovery package. The letter urges legislators to address declining enrollment, summer programming, a streamlined licensure process for short-call substitute and authority for school districts to offer a distance learning option for the 2021-22 school year prior to the spring recess that begins on March 26. Croonquist urged board members to follow up with their local legislators to advocate for the COVID-19 recovery package.

VI. Guest Speakers

Chair Johnson invited Executive Director Croonquist to introduce the next guest speakers. Croonquist welcomed and introduced Dr. Karyn Lewis, Senior Research Scientist, and Dr. Nate Jensen, Director of the Center for School and Student Progress from NWEA. Dr. Lewis shared a presentation summarizing NWEA's initial findings on students' reading and math achievement and growth during the COVID-19 pandemic. Following the presentation, Dr. Lewis and Dr. Jensen engaged in a dialogue with AMSD board members and answered a number of questions.

VII. Adjourn

Chair Johnson thanked everyone for their attendance. There being no further business, Chair Johnson adjourned the meeting at 8:56 a.m.