

September 10, 2021

Board of Directors Meeting

7 a.m. - 9 a.m.
Quora Education Center
NE Metro 916
Little Canada

September 24, 2021

Executive/Legislative Committee Meeting

7:30 a.m. - 9 a.m.
Anderson Center
Bethel University
Arden Hills

October 1, 2021

Board of Directors Meeting

7 a.m. - 9 a.m.
Quora Education Center
NE Metro 916
Little Canada

October 29, 2021

Executive/Legislative Committee Meeting

7:30 a.m. - 9 a.m.
Anderson Center
Bethel University
Arden Hills

Saint Paul's Nutrition Services Eclipses 19 Million Meals Served Since March 2020



When Governor Tim Walz ordered Minnesota schools closed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in March of last year, Stacy Koppen knew she and her team were in for some very long days.

"The team realized the need to pivot from school-based nutrition to providing meals to families throughout the community,"

says Koppen, Director of Nutrition Services for Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS). "Our vision, to eliminate hunger and provide every child with hope through exceptional food, took on a scale that at the time no one could have imagined."

The result has been a total of more than 19 million meals being delivered and served to Saint Paul students and families in the last 17 months.

The COVID pandemic created an increase of food insecurity and a need for reliable and healthy meals. SPPS met their families where they are - at their home.

Responding to Needs

During the initial months of the pandemic, school buses were loaded with meal boxes each containing 14 meals; seven breakfast and seven lunches. Contents were rotated and expanded to include a greater variety of healthy food, including featured recipe kits for Enchiladas Coloradas, Red Lentils and Rice, Kickin' Chicken Stir Fry, Lebanese Seven Spice Chicken, Party Melts,

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I am very honored to have the opportunity to serve as the chair of AMSD for the 2021-22 school year and I look forward to working with so many amazing colleagues. While we all had hoped that the COVID-19 pandemic would be behind us by now, we will continue to work on our collective goal of ensuring that our students have the opportunities and resources they need to reach their full potential. The AMSD Legislative Committee will soon begin the work of drafting the 2022 legislative platform. Based on this month's research article, I'm sure addressing the cross-subsidies in the special education and English learner programs will once again be high priorities for AMSD members. Please share your legislative priorities with the members of the legislative committee as we build our platform over the next few months and best wishes for a successful start to the school year!

From the AMSD Chair, Kelsey Dawson Walton, Osseo Area Schools Board Member

SPPS Nutrition Services Team Recognized for Their Extraordinary Efforts

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Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs, Crispy Smashed Potatoes, Chicken Gyros, Southern Black-Eyed Peas and Thai Noodle Bowls. Jugs of milk were included with each meal delivery as well.

The district relied on approximately 275 bus drivers, accompanied by more than 300 paraprofessionals and Nutrition Services team members, to staff dozens of routes to deliver meals to students' homes each day. In addition, the district established curbside meal pickup points throughout the city to ensure no one went without food.

"Typically two-thirds of SPPS families qualify for free and reduced-price lunch. With the hardships caused by the pandemic, we know that number increased significantly," says Koppen. "While economic factors are likely one of the main reasons why families depend on schools for meals, there are other factors that have emerged. A family might have children with high risk conditions, be in isolation, or quarantine, or suffering from work disruptions which prevented them from being able to go to the grocery store."

Last summer, SPPS offered home delivery and curbside pickup. When in-person learning resumed earlier this year, meals were also served in classrooms, cafeterias and alternative dining spaces. Over time, and as COVID restrictions eased, these models became layered so that youth throughout Saint Paul were able to participate in school meals through home delivery, curbside pickup, or in-person dining.

Federal Funding Assistance

SPPS has used funding from the United States Department of Agriculture's Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) to provide meals during the pandemic. Typically, SPPS serves 3,000-6,000 meals each day during the summer. Last year that number rose to as many as 173,000 meals in a day.

"This trend demonstrates how much can be accomplished when the SFSP rules are modified in a manner that is flexible and works better for families," says Koppen. "Participation in the meal program we are seeing today is likely the result of these improved program rules, along with increased need in our communities."

Well Deserved Recognition

Koppen and her team were recently recognized for their extraordinary efforts. The Minnesota School Nutrition Association (MSNA) awarded its "E" Team Award to the SPPS Nutrition Services team "For going the 'Extra Mile' to serve the students and staff in their district." The MSNA Innovation Award was presented to Chef Ricardo Abbott for, among other things, "Being one of the first nutrition professionals in the state to consider a weekly, bundled meal concept to minimize virus exposure for both staff and families. He also worked with the district transportation director to gain support from bus drivers in delivering the meals."

Koppen herself was named the Midwest Regional Director of the Year for 2021 for her efforts to create a zero hunger and zero waste initiative, cultivating a positive work environment, improving training programs, encouraging continued education for employees, and she brought a new level of quality customer service for students and school staff.

"This has been a true team effort, and it's taken the collective efforts of many people to help us fulfill our mission," says Koppen. "I couldn't be more proud of the SPPS Nutrition Services team!"

For more information, please visit www.spps.org/ns.

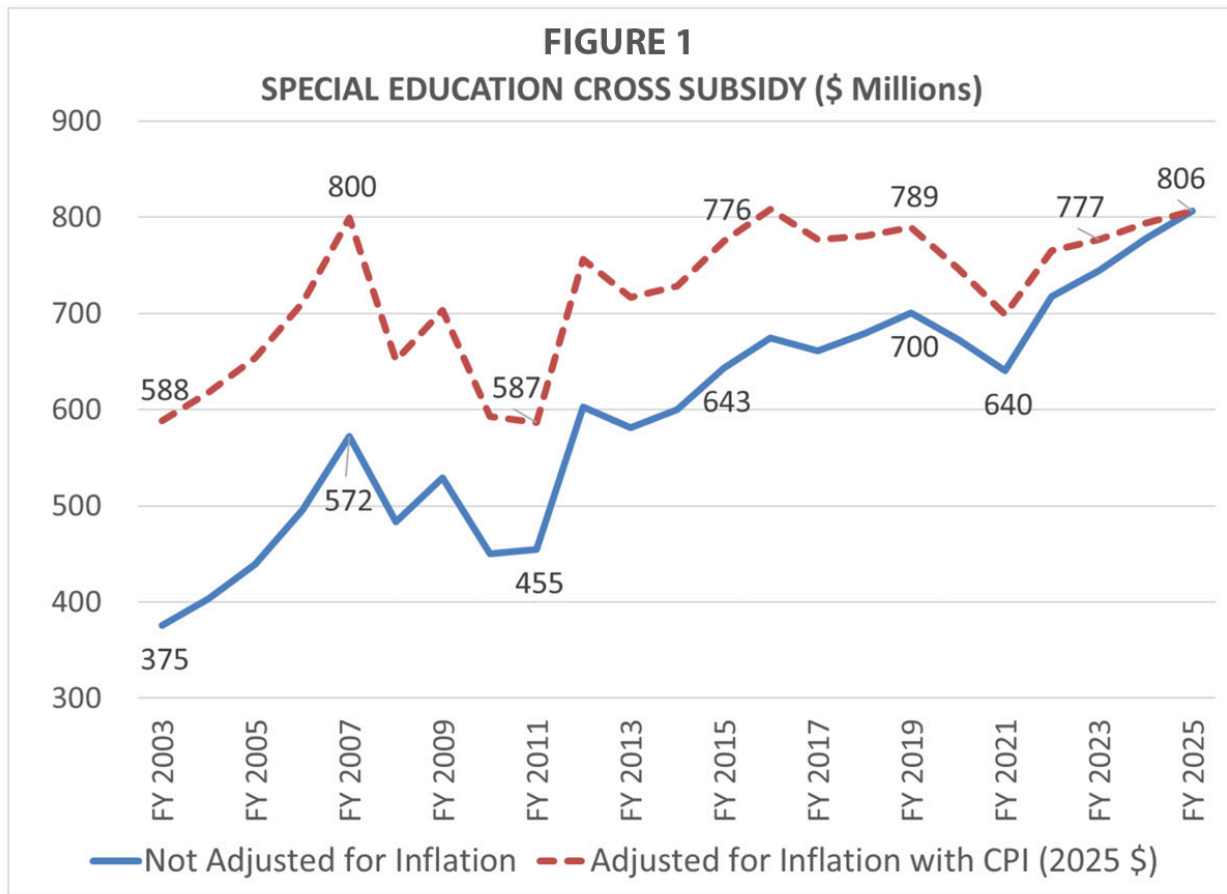


Article submitted by Kevin Burns, Director, Office of Communications, Saint Paul Public Schools.

Special Education Cross-Subsidy Projected to Grow Again After Temporary Decline

While the Omnibus E-12 Education Budget Bill approved in the June special session included the largest increase in the per pupil formula in 15 years - a 2.45 percent increase in FY 2022 and a 2 percent increase in FY 2023 - the shortfall in special education funding persists. The shortfall, also referred to as a cross-subsidy, reflects the difference between special education expenditures and corresponding revenue provided by the state and federal government to pay for special education services.

According to the recently released FY 2020 Special Education Cross Subsidies Report to the Legislature (and, as the chart in Figure 1 shows): the special education cross-subsidy in Minnesota has long presented a major budget challenge for school districts - going back well before the Legislature began tracking these costs in 1998.



Source: MDE Special Education Cross-Subsidy Report FY20

Last year alone, the cost of providing special education services exceeded the funding the state and federal governments provided to school districts by \$673 million. AMSD districts - which account for more than 60 percent of the total statewide cross-subsidy - saw a combined shortfall of more than \$457 million in FY 2020.

School districts of all sizes, large and small, are impacted by the growing special education cross-subsidy. Columbia Heights, for example - with an enrollment of just more than 3,100 students last year - experienced a cross-subsidy of more than \$1,153 per-weighted-pupil, compared to the statewide average of \$782. Bloomington, Burnsville-Eagan-Savage, Farmington, Minneapolis, North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale, Osseo, Richfield, Robbinsdale, South St. Paul, St. Cloud, Saint Paul and White Bear Lake also had cross-subsidies of more than \$1,000 per-weighted-pupil.

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Shortfall in English Learner Funding Impacts AMSD School Districts

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State policymakers have acknowledged the challenges related to insufficient special education funding. In its 2019 Omnibus E-12 Bill, the Minnesota Legislature established cross-subsidy reduction aid to begin addressing the underfunding of special education. In fact, the new cross-subsidy report shows that the total cross-subsidy declined slightly in FY 2020 and is projected to decline slightly in FY 2021, although the 2021 decline might also be partly related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenge of providing special education services during that time.

At the start of the 2021 legislative session, the Minnesota Department of Education projected that \$70 million was needed just to prevent the cross-subsidy from growing. However, the 2021 Omnibus E-12 Education Bill provided just \$10.425 million in one-time funding in FY 2022 for cross-subsidy reduction aid. Consequently, it is no surprise that the cross-subsidy is projected to increase again in FY 2022 to \$717.9 million and to \$744.8 million in FY 2023.

Compounding the challenge for school districts is that cross-subsidies are not unique to special education.

Special Education Cross-Subsidies 2020-2025

dollars in millions

Cross-Subsidies:	FY 2018 Final	FY 2019 Final	FY 2020 Final	FY 2021 Estimate	FY 2022 Estimate	FY 2023 Estimate	FY 2024 Estimate	FY 2025 Estimate
Adjusted Net Cross-Subsidy *	\$678.9	\$700.5	\$673.2	\$640.3	\$717.9	\$744.8	\$777.7	\$806.2
Change from Prior Year	\$18.1	\$21.5	\$(27.2)	\$(32.9)	\$77.6	\$26.8	\$33.0	\$28.5
Percent Change from Prior Year	2.7%	3.2%	-3.9%	-4.9%	12.1%	3.7%	4.4%	3.7%

*The Adjusted Net Cross-Subsidy is the portion of special education expenditures not covered by categorical special education revenue, plus the portion of general education revenue that reasonably follows the student to the special education program as revenue for special education.

Source: MDE Special Education Cross-Subsidy Report FY20

English learner education, for example, accounts for its own cross-subsidy with expenditures significantly exceeding funding. AMSD districts reported a combined funding shortfall for English learner services of more than \$92.5 million in FY 2019 and more than \$99 million in FY 2020. Statewide, the FY 2020 English learner cross-subsidy was more than \$117 million in FY 2020.

Similar to the effort to address the special education cross-subsidy in 2019, state policymakers established English Learner Cross-Subsidy Reduction Aid in the 2021 Omnibus E-12 Education Bill and provided \$2 million per year for fiscal years 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025. This will provide some modest relief over the next four years, but it is important that the Legislature sustain this funding into the future. As the latest special education cross-subsidy report shows, it is critical that state policymakers provide consistent funding to alleviate the significant shortfalls in the special education and English learner programs.

LINK: View the full FY 2020 Cross-Subsidies Report to the Legislature:
<https://www.amsd.org/doc/fy2020xsubs/>

TABLE: View the FY 2020 AMSD District Cross-Subsidies:
<https://www.amsd.org/doc/fy2020amsd-xsubs/>

TABLE: View the FY 2019 and FY 2020 AMSD English Learner Cross-Subsidies:
<https://www.amsd.org/doc/fy2019-20amsd-elsubs/>