

August 2022  
Volume 19  
Number 10

## Twin Lakes Elementary Earns National Blue Ribbon School Award

**August 26, 2022**  
**Executive/Legislative Committee Meeting**  
7:30 a.m. - 9 a.m.  
Anderson Center  
Bethel University  
Arden Hills

**September 9, 2022**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
7 a.m. - 9 a.m.  
Quora Education Center  
NE Metro 916  
Little Canada

**September 30, 2022**  
**Executive/Legislative Committee Meeting**  
7:30 a.m. - 9 a.m.  
Anderson Center  
Bethel University  
Arden Hills

**October 7, 2022**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
7 a.m. - 9 a.m.  
Quora Education Center  
NE Metro 916  
Little Canada

U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona announced in the fall of 2021 that Twin Lakes Elementary School in Elk River had been named a 2021 National Blue Ribbon School. Twin Lakes is one of only three Minnesota elementary schools earning this prestigious, nationwide recognition.



"This is a testament to the work you do, to the dedication of our families, students and staff and to the incredible community that is Twin Lakes Elementary," said Assistant Superintendent William Campbell. "With Parker Elementary earning the Blue Ribbon recognition in 2016, ISD 728 has had two schools honored in just five years. This is an incredible achievement."

Schools are nominated for the award by the state department of education, and then the school completes a comprehensive application for consideration.

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Happy Primary Election Day! There are many important races that will determine the final candidates on general election ballots across the state. If you haven't already done so, I encourage you to vote today. This month's research article highlights AMSD's Election Guide and stresses the importance of engaging in the electoral process and asking thoughtful questions of candidates to gauge their support for public education.

I am very honored to have the opportunity to serve as the chair of AMSD for the 2022-23 school year and I look forward to working with amazing colleagues across our member districts. The AMSD Legislative Committee will soon begin the work of drafting the 2022 legislative platform. Please share your district's legislative priorities with the members of the legislative committee as we build our platform over the next few months so we can be an aligned, powerful voice at the capitol in the months to come. Best wishes for a successful start to the school year to you, your staff and your students!

***From the AMSD Chair, Crystal Brakke, Richfield Public Schools Board Member***

# Twin Lakes Embodies District's Mission and Core Values

Continued from page 1

"We are excited and proud of the Twin Lakes staff, our students and our families for making this recognition possible," said Superintendent Dr. Daniel Bittman. "Twin Lakes embodies our mission and our core values each and every day. After navigating through what we have been facing since 2020 and the pandemic — this is such a wonderful honor. We are very thankful to the Secretary and the U.S. Department of Education for this award."

School Representatives represented Twin Lakes Elementary at a two-day award ceremony in Washington, D.C. in November to celebrate their hard-won achievement.

Additionally, to celebrate the achievement, Twin Lakes held a special program day in June of 2022. School District staff joined members of the Twin Lakes team, as well as family members and friends for a special day that included a parade, music, fun on the school campus and, of course, some blue-hued treats.



*"This is just a very special place," said Principal Dan Collins of the award-winning school. "I'm proud to have been here since we started, and we've been through so much together. Growing, navigating the pandemic - we've always found a way to have that Otter Pride and just a great community here."*

The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes public and private elementary, middle, and high schools based on their overall academic excellence or their progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups. Every year the U.S. Department of Education seeks out and celebrates great American schools, schools demonstrating that all students can achieve to high levels.

"Over the past several years, Twin Lakes Elementary has been a shining example of our mission," said Holly Thompson, ISD 728 Board Chair. "The effort to make Twin Lakes a special community for our students and families — a place where we inspire and empower our kids — has been noticed locally with our district year-end awards. It has been noticed on a state level, with recognition from the Minnesota Department of Education as a Reward School. And now, the rest of the Country knows what we know — Twin Lakes Elementary is a very special place and a National Blue Ribbon Award School."

Exemplary High Performing Schools are among their state's highest performing schools as measured by state assessments or nationally normed tests. Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing Schools are among their state's highest performing schools in closing achievement gaps between a school's subgroups and all students over the past five years.

A Minnesota Reward School, Twin Lakes Elementary falls into the second category — Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing School. The elementary school ranks in the top 20% in the state in reading and in the Top 10% in math, based on the results of the 2019 Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments and Minnesota Test of Academic Skills.

Additional Minnesota winners this year (school/district) were Barnesville Elementary (Barnesville), McKinley Elementary in Ham Lake (Anoka-Hennepin), Minnetonka West Middle School in Chanhassen (Minnetonka), Roosevelt Middle School in Blaine (Anoka-Hennepin) and St. Croix Preparatory Academy (St. Croix Prep).

*This month's member feature was submitted by Mike Schoemer, Communications Specialist, ISD 728.*

# AMSD Releases 2022 Election Guide

With 40 state legislators retiring in 2022, and another 20 running for a different office, the 2023 Minnesota State Legislature will look dramatically different. The decennial redistricting of legislative boundaries was a big factor in the high number of retirements and legislators seeking another office as several incumbents were paired together.

- [LINK: View the Legislative Retirements compiled by the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library](#)

All of the state's constitutional officers, congressional representatives, and all 201 state legislative seats are on the ballot. Those elected will determine the funding level for public education, as well as significant education policy issues in the 2023 session.

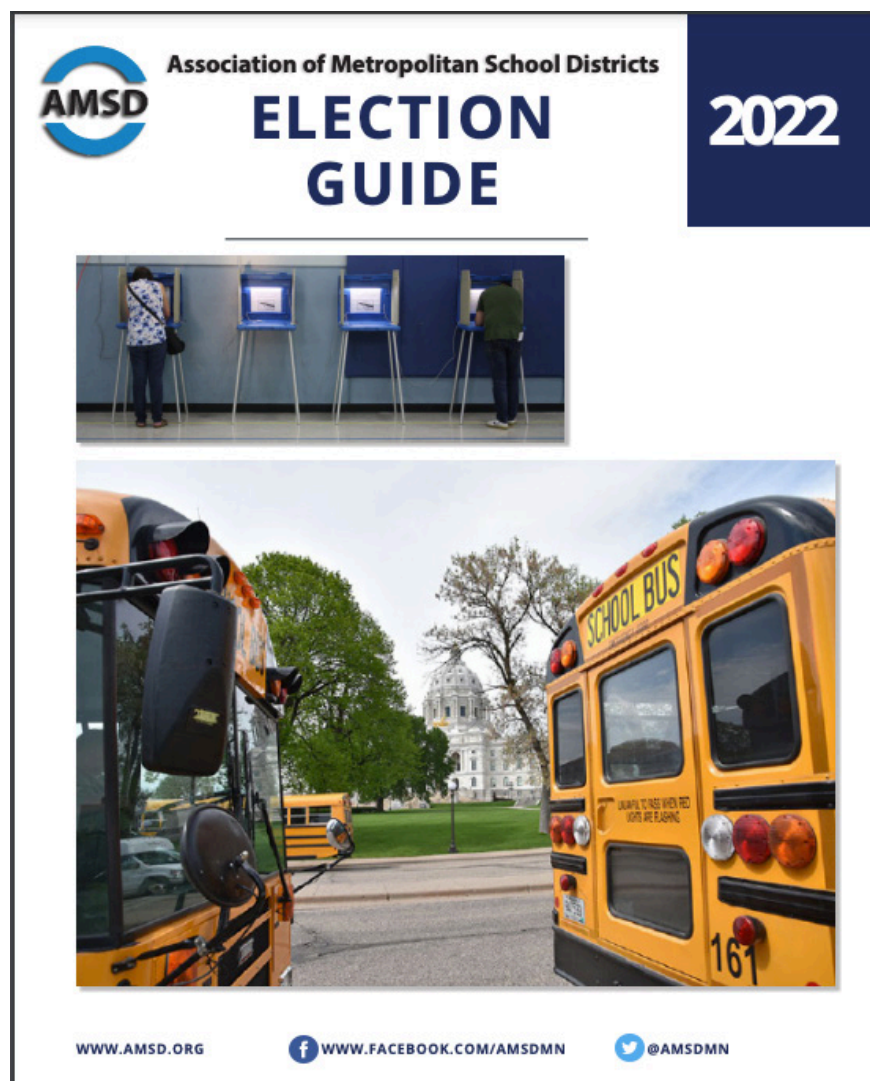
The Primary Election on Aug. 9 will determine which candidates from each party will appear on the Nov. 8 General Election ballot.

As in years past, AMSD has compiled an Election Guide to provide supporters of public schools — from school board members to parents, families, candidates, and members of the public — with research, data and education funding trends, as well as key questions that voters can ask candidates seeking office.

The guide summarizes legislative action over the past two sessions, as well as provides information to evaluate legislative candidates' positions on education issues and offers sample questions to pose to candidates to find out where they stand on important issues and policies.

Topics include education funding, school property taxes, vouchers, and other proposals to subsidize nonpublic schools, as well as guidance on how to engage with legislative candidates. A specific funding issue highlighted in the guide is the "Special Education Cross-Subsidy," which occurs when school districts are forced to use money meant for regular classroom instruction to pay for mandated special education costs that are not funded by the state and federal government.

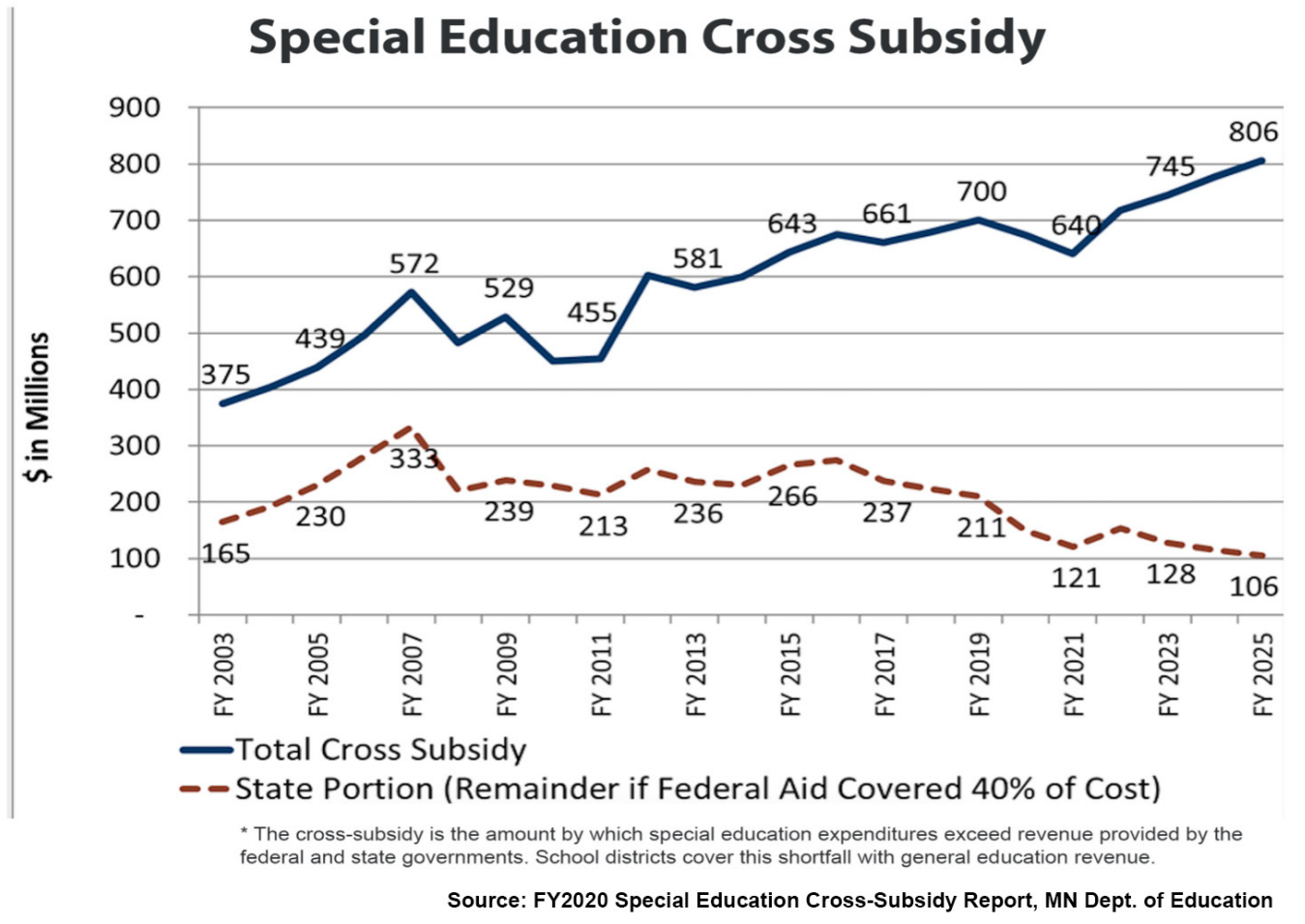
In FY2020, the cost of providing special education services exceeded the funding the state and federal governments provided to school districts by \$673 million. AMSD districts — which account for more than 60 percent of the total statewide cross-subsidy — saw a combined shortfall of more than \$457 million in FY2020.



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# Election Offers Opportunity to Engage Candidates

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The special education cross-subsidy was a key issue during the 2022 legislative session, with AMSD and several of the state’s leading education organizations calling on the Governor and legislators to use a portion of the historic state budget surplus to close this growing funding gap. While legislators from both parties acknowledged the state is not meeting its obligation to fund special education, the Legislature ultimately did not pass any supplemental funding to address this urgent need.

The guide also includes links to AMSD position papers and other legislative resources and research that AMSD uses throughout the session to advocate for our school districts and inform legislators.

As it stands, public school enrollment in Minnesota for 2021-22 was 870,506 students, with more than 460,000 of those students attending AMSD schools. AMSD currently represents 46 greater metropolitan area and regional center school districts, and six intermediate/ cooperative districts — collectively enrolling well more than half of all public school students in Minnesota.

- [LINK: View the AMSD 2022 Election Guide](#)