



## **Association of Metropolitan School Districts**

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### **AMSD Legislative Priorities 2023**

The unprecedented state budget surplus offers state policymakers a historic opportunity to strengthen and stabilize Minnesota's education funding system. The AMSD Board of Directors urges the Governor and Legislators to address the following priorities to help Minnesota reclaim its place as a national leader in education.

#### **Strengthen and Stabilize Funding**

For too many years, state policymakers have failed to fund the core funding formula and the special education and English learner programs. This has resulted in continuing financial challenges for school districts and a reliance on voter approved referendums to fund basic education programming. To stabilize the funding system, the Governor and Legislature should:

- Increase the basic formula by 5 percent per year for the next two years and then index the formula to inflation;
- At a minimum, increase special education and English learner funding to reduce the cross-subsidies in those programs by 50 percent;
- Increase local optional revenue by \$116 per pupil, increase equalization, and link it to the formula;
- Allow locally elected school boards to renew an existing operating referendum following a public hearing and opportunity for public testimony; and
- Refrain from enacting new mandates.

#### **Enhance School Safety and Increase Mental Health Support**

To address the mental health needs of our students and ensure safe learning environments for students and staff, the Governor and Legislature should:

- Increase safe schools revenue from \$36 to \$108 per pupil through state aid and an equalized levy to allow school districts to hire additional support staff; and
- Remove the per pupil limit in the Long-Term Facilities Maintenance Revenue program and expand allowable uses of revenue to all school districts and intermediate districts to enhance safety through security modifications to buildings, including remodeling and additions to existing space.

## **Close Opportunity Gaps and Spur Innovation**

To close opportunity gaps and accelerate growth for students of color and other historically underserved students, the Governor and Legislature should:

- Make funding for the Voluntary Pre-K program permanent and increase access to school-based pre-kindergarten programs;
- Provide funding to train staff in evidence-based reading instruction and consolidate literacy reporting requirements into a single report;
- Allow school districts to implement a competency-based education model in lieu of seat time requirements to allow for personalized learning opportunities; and
- Modernize the online learning law to expand opportunities for students.

## **Diversify the Educator Workforce and Address Shortage Areas**

To diversify the educator workforce and address staff shortages, the Governor and Legislature should:

- Create incentives and alternative pathways to attract, develop, and retain teachers, particularly teachers of color and teachers in shortage areas;
- Streamline the process to obtain a short-call substitute teaching license;
- Maintain multiple pathways to teacher licensure; and
- Invest in rigorous teacher induction and mentoring programs.