



Association of Metropolitan School Districts

# LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

2024

## Build on the Momentum

The AMSD Board of Directors acknowledges and appreciates the significant education investments approved in the 2023 legislative session.

Linking the formula to inflation and reducing the shortfalls in the special education and English learner programs provides a foundation for restoring Minnesota's historic commitment to education.

At the same time, historic inflation, staffing shortages, and new programs and requirements adopted in the 2023 session have created budget challenges for school districts. AMSD urges state policymakers to



refrain from enacting any new mandates and address the priorities outlined in this platform in the 2024 session.

## ABOUT AMSD

The Association of Metropolitan School Districts represents 47 K-12 school districts and six intermediate / cooperative districts. AMSD member school districts enroll more than one-half of all public school students in Minnesota, with the mission to lead the transformation of public education. AMSD stands ready to assist state policymakers by providing current research and data to help them make informed decisions.

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## Association of Metropolitan School Districts

# FUND NEW REQUIREMENTS AND INFLATIONARY COSTS

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Stable funding sufficient to cover inflationary cost increases and mandated programs is essential to ensuring equitable academic outcomes for students. AMSD urges the Governor and Legislators to provide funding for the new programs adopted in the 2023 legislative session including Paid Family Medical Leave, Earned Sick and Safe Time, The READ Act, and Unemployment Insurance. Specifically, the Governor and Legislature should:

- Increase the basic formula allowance by an additional 2 percent for FY 25;
- Increase Local Optional Revenue to \$920 per pupil to recover ground lost to inflation and link it to the basic formula;
- Establish an ongoing funding stream for unemployment insurance and Paid Family Medical Leave costs;
- Fully fund the implementation of the READ Act and adjust the timelines to ensure successful implementation;
- Make compensatory hold harmless funding permanent; and
- Increase equalization of levies, particularly the operating referendum, to reduce taxpayer and education funding disparities.

## ENHANCE SCHOOL SAFETY

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To ensure safe and secure learning environments for students and staff, the Governor and Legislature should:

- Remove the per pupil limit in the Long-Term Facilities Maintenance Revenue program and expand allowable uses of revenue to include security modifications to buildings, remodeling, and additions to existing space;
- Increase the Safe Schools levy from \$36 to \$108 per pupil; and
- Clarify language related to the use of physical restraints to ensure the safety of students and staff.

## PRIORITIZE STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING THROUGH ENHANCED LOCAL CONTROL

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Locally elected school boards are in the best position to work with their staff, students, parents, and communities to address local needs and challenges. One size fits all mandates stifle innovation and creativity and consume staff time and resources. Accordingly, the Governor and Legislature should:

- Repeal the requirement that school boards negotiate e-learning days and student-to-staff ratios;
- Increase student-centered learning opportunities by creating alternative pathways to graduation and allowing students to earn credit for learning wherever it occurs;
- Reduce special education paperwork requirements to allow teachers to spend more time with students; and
- Use the flexibility allowed under the ESSA to reduce the number of required standardized tests so school districts can offer assessments that more accurately measure growth, proficiency, and college or career readiness.

## ADDRESS THE EDUCATOR WORKFORCE SHORTAGE

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

- Enhance support for programs like Grow Your Own and apprenticeships;
- Extend the short-call substitute teaching pilot project to four years and eliminate the required minimum salary; and
- Maintain multiple pathways to teacher licensure.

## CONTACT AMSD

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