

# CONNECT NS

News from the Association of Metropolitan School Districts

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Number 8

## NWSISD Keeps Community Collaboration at the Center

**May 17, 2024**  
**Executive/Legislative Committee Meeting**  
7:30 a.m. - 9 a.m.  
Anderson Center  
Bethel University  
Arden Hills

**May 24, 2024**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
7 a.m. - 9 a.m.  
Quora Education Center  
NE Metro 916  
Little Canada

**June 14, 2024**  
**Executive/Legislative Committee Meeting**  
7:30 a.m. - 9 a.m.  
Anderson Center  
Bethel University  
Arden Hills

**July 26, 2024**  
**Executive/Legislative Committee Meeting**  
7:30 a.m. - 9 a.m.  
Anderson Center  
Bethel University  
Arden Hills

In today's often polarized society, it is critical we, as educational institutions, provide spaces for varied perspectives to come together. "Shared experiences can break down barriers and help us find the beauty in those around us," education leader Kristin Bledsoe notes in her 2023 article *The Power of Shared Experiences*: we "strengthen relationships through shared experiences [and] we can build a better community."



As a consortium district, working across and within multiple school districts is at the heart of everything Northwest Suburban Integration School District (NWSISD) does. Anoka-Hennepin, Brooklyn Center Community, Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose, Fridley, ISD 728, Osseo Area, and Rockford Area are each unique in population: from urban to rural, from 38,000 students to 1,550. When individuals from across these districts come together, the perspectives and experiences shared are vast. There is power in that.

NWSISD aims to "build a better community." Since 2001, the NWSISD mission statement, "a global community learning and growing together," has guided their work. At its simplest, NWSISD provides three types of services that cross traditional district boundaries:

**Provide support for magnet sites/programs:** from managing student applications and transportation to implementing site/program reviews and cross-district collaborations.

**Provide opportunities for K-12 students:** from coordinating onsite

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With the 2024 legislative session quickly winding down, I want to thank AMSD board members for your advocacy efforts during the session. You have made a difference by making your voice heard on issues from the Read Act to Earned Sick and Safe Time! Please continue to advocate for our collective priorities in the final days of the session. The research article in this month's newsletter provides an update on the status of the omnibus education policy and supplemental budget bills and you can find numerous resources on the [AMSD website](http://www.amsd.org) to aid your advocacy efforts. Also, a reminder that members of the MDE team will provide a comprehensive overview of the education-related legislation adopted in the 2024 session at the May 24 AMSD Board of Directors meeting. Again, thank you for your advocacy for our students and our schools!

**From the AMSD Chair, Marcus Hill, West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan Board Member**

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# A Global Community Learning and Growing Together

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mentorship programs and career/college visits to hosting leadership conferences and team-building opportunities.

**Provide opportunities for staff:** from curating and coordinating access to multicultural artifacts, texts, and activities to facilitating cross-district collaboration and professional development opportunities.

But the NWSISD team doesn't lean only on staff and students from member districts to create rich learning experiences. In *Cultivating Genius*, Gholdy Muhammad shares that historically "to keep knowledge to oneself was seen as a selfish act, and each person therefore was responsible to elevate others through education in the immediate and larger community."

That is why, although each of these three types of services create space for individuals to "learn and grow together," NWSISD seeks to do more — to create space and opportunities for the "larger community" to "elevate others" — to lean on the leaders, volunteers, and voices in the wider community that exists beyond schoolhouse doors.

NWSISD has worked with more than three dozen collaborators and community groups this school year alone, both within and beyond the boundaries of member districts. Leaning on skills of others, utilizing resources outside K-12 walls, and inviting in voices that often go unheard has ensured a richness of perspectives and opportunities for member districts. For instance:

**Skills of Others:** The staff of Culture Barbershop loan their skills to NWSISD students once per month. Students travel to their shop where local barbers become mentors; students open up as they sit in chairs getting fades tightened and locks trimmed. Similarly, at the Scout BSA Basecamp, students develop collaboration skills and take on leadership opportunities as skilled rock climbers and archers teach them techniques to be both supportive of each other and independent.



**Utilizing Resources:** North Hennepin Community College has a beautiful space NWSISD often uses for large events; it creates space for districts to come together on neutral ground. Plus, it provides firsthand opportunities for individuals to experience a community college campus. Likewise, University of St. Thomas collaborates with NWSISD in June each year, housing a summer camp where future freshmen from member districts come together to find joy in learning, develop skills to help navigate high school, and forge relationships with staff who they'll often work with come fall.

**Inviting in Voices:** Each month NWSISD hosts an Interdistrict Partnership; educators from across member districts come together to learn, often through the power of story. This past fall, staff toured various Indigenous sacred sites in the Twin Cities area with *Iyekiyapiwin* Darlene St. Clair as the guide: her stories building understanding and awareness. Likewise, throughout the year students have many chances to speak with volunteers from a wide range of career areas at the career fairs and conferences NWSISD hosts. Students listen to each of their unique stories as they themselves consider what they might choose to do after graduation.

If you would like to learn more about how NWSISD strives to be "a global community learning and growing together," consider exploring/subscribing the bi-monthly newsletter, [7 Thoughts](#) or just [reaching out](#) to one of the team.

*This month's member feature was submitted by Heather Lyke, Executive Director, NWSISD.*

# Omnibus Education Bills Near the Finish Line

With less than two weeks to go before the end of the legislative session, the Omnibus Education Policy Bill Conference Committee has reconciled the House and Senate bills, [SF3567/HF3782](#). As of this writing, the conference committee has not yet adopted the report. Among the provisions adopted by the committee:

- Replaces the term “World’s Best Workforce” with “Comprehensive Achievement and Civic Readiness” in state statute.
- School districts are required to adopt a policy on students’ possession and use of cell phones in schools by March 15, 2025. Requires the principals’ associations to collaborate to make best practices available to schools on strategies to minimize the impact of cell phones on student behavior, mental health, and academic attainment.
- Establishes a new section of law titled Access to Library Materials and Rights Protected. The bill prohibits a public library, including a school district library or media center, from banning, removing, or otherwise restricting access to a book or other material based solely on its viewpoint or the message, ideas or opinions it conveys. The bill requires a governing board of a public library, including a school board, to adopt a policy that establishes procedures for selection of, challenges to, and reconsideration of library materials. The policy must establish that the procedures for selection and reconsideration will be administered by a licensed library media specialist, an individual with a master’s degree in library science or library and information services, or a professional librarian or a person trained in library collection management. The bill does not limit the rights of a parent, guardian, or an adult student under the parental curriculum review statute.
- Makes several modifications to the Read Act including:
  - Expands the allowable uses of Literacy Incentive Aid and extends the deadline for completing the required evidence-based training for teachers and staff by one year.
  - Requires districts to screen students, kindergarten through third grade, three times each school year.
  - Lowers the required hours of instruction by 5 ½ hours for the 24-25 school year only, for students in an elementary school for a district that enters into an agreement with the exclusive representative of the teachers that requires teachers to receive at least 5 ½ hours of approved evidence-based training.
  - Starting in the 2026-27 school year, to provide a Tier 2 literacy intervention, a paraprofessional or other unlicensed person, including a volunteer, must be supervised by a licensed teacher that has completed training in evidence-based reading instruction approved by MDE.
  - Requires MDE to partner with CAREI to make a list of 15 evidence-based intervention models available to districts as they are approved starting Nov. 1, 2025. MDE must ensure the models are reviewed by a contracted third party for culturally responsive guidance and materials and make those findings available to districts once the review process is complete.
  - Requires MDE and CAREI to conduct a final curriculum review of previously submitted curriculum by March 3, 2025, to review curriculum that is available to districts at no cost.
- Delays the start of the requirement that students complete a course in government and citizenship in Grade 11 or 12 to the 2025-26 school year.
- Allows several school districts whose local newspaper closed to post their official proceedings on their district website instead of publishing them in the newspaper, for two years.

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# Read Act is Focus of Supplemental Budget Bill

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- Requires school boards to provide written notice to a coach, whose contract the school board declines to renew for the following school year, no more than 60 days after the end of the regular season for the activity as established by the high school league. The notice requirement does not apply if the school board declines to renew the contract based on the coach's misconduct or failure to perform duties or the district's financial limitations.
- Allows a district to conduct an assessment for developmental adapted physical education as a stand-alone evaluation without conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the student.
- Establishes a working group on special education licensure reciprocity.
- Requires districts to provide students space to receive mental health care through telehealth appointments.

## Senate and House Omnibus Education Finance Bills

The Omnibus Supplemental Education Finance Bills have now cleared the floor of the House and Senate and are headed for conference committee. Key issues included in the House and Senate bills include:

### Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten

The House and Senate bills increase the number of VPK slots in FY25 from 7,160 participants to 12,360.

### Read Act

The House and Senate provisions are similar with a few differences.

- Both bills modify the distribution of the \$35 million appropriation for curriculum and intervention materials included in last year's bill. Under the new language, the funds are distributed to districts, charter schools, and cooperatives at the greater of \$2,000 or \$39.91 times the number of students served and can be used to implement the requirements of the Read Act.
- The House appropriates \$31.375 million, and the Senate appropriates \$25.3 million for school districts, charter schools, and cooperatives to facilitate the required staff training through stipends for staff who complete the training outside of the workday, or to pay substitute teachers if the training is provided during the contract day. Remaining funds could be spent on other allowable uses under the Read Act.

### Student Attendance

House: Appropriates \$3.3 million in FY25 only for a pilot program for nine school districts to demonstrate and model ways to improve student attendance.

Senate: Appropriates \$5 million in FY25 only for a student connections pilot program and directs MDE to accept applications from school districts, charter schools, intermediate district and cooperative units.



*Students testifying before the Senate Education Finance Committee during the 2024 legislative session.*

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# Compensatory Revenue Stabilized, Pilot Programs Focus on Student Attendance

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## **Teachers**

House: Appropriates \$6.8 million in FY25 only for a student-teacher pilot for seven identified higher education institutions.

Senate: Appropriates \$1 million in FY25 only for Collaborative Urban & Greater MN Teachers of Color grants and \$5 million for mentoring, induction, and retention incentive program grants for teachers of color.

## **Food Service Fund — Expanded Uses**

Both bills authorize a school district with a three-year surplus in its school food service fund to charge the costs of lunchroom furniture (tables and chairs) to its food service fund instead of recording the costs as general fund expenditures.

## **Compensatory Revenue**

Both bills extend the statewide compensatory revenue hold harmless beyond FY27.

## **Statewide Health Standards**

Both bills establish statewide health standards, instead of locally adopted standards, but maintains local standards until the end of the 26-27 school year or when statewide rules implementing state standards go into effect, whichever is later.

## **Crisis Management**

Senate:

- Requires the commissioner to develop a model cardiac emergency response plan.
  - Reduces the number of school lock down drills from five to three.
  - Requires districts and charter schools to conduct one cardiac emergency response drill annually. Clarifies that an active shooter drill is equivalent to a school lock down drill.
  - Requires a school district or charter school to develop a cardiac emergency response plan.
  - Requires that AEDs be available for use within proximity of school-sponsored events.
- Appropriates \$1 million to reimburse school districts for these costs.

House: No comparable provision is included in the House bill.

Below you can find links to the House and Senate bills, summaries, and fiscal changes.

- [HF5237](#)
  - [House Research Summary](#)
  - [Change Items in House Bill](#)
- [SF5252](#)
  - [Senate Research Summary](#)
  - [Change Items in Senate Bill](#)