



## **Association of Metropolitan School Districts**

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### **AMSD Legislative Priorities 2015**

It is critical that state policymakers build on the momentum from the last biennium if Minnesota is to create the World's Best Workforce. A strong and vibrant public education system is the key to closing our achievement gaps and helping each and every student graduate from high school prepared for college and career.

To achieve these goals, state policymakers should adopt a spending target of **at least** \$625 million for E-12 education to invest in the priorities listed below.

#### **Priorities to Strengthen and Stabilize Education Funding**

- Increase the per pupil basic formula by **at least** 3 percent per year and link future increases to inflation to stabilize the education funding system.
- Phase-in the recommendations of the School Facilities Financing Working Group to allow locally elected school boards to provide safe and secure learning environments for students and staff.
- Invest additional resources in special education to reduce the \$600 million special education cross-subsidy.
- Increase and differentiate the cap on local optional revenue to account for regional cost differences.

#### **Priorities to Close the Achievement Gap**

- Increase the investment in School Readiness programs to allow school districts to expand pre-K programs for 3 and 4 year olds.
- Increase funding to allow additional school districts to join the alternative teacher professional pay system (Q Comp) and better align it with the teacher development and evaluation program. Provide funding for non-Q Comp districts to implement and administer the teacher development and evaluation requirements.
- Expand eligibility for English Language Learner (ELL) funding to 7 years.
- Allow greater flexibility with compensatory revenue to address local needs and challenges.

#### **Policy Priorities**

- Refrain from enacting any new, unfunded mandates and either fund or repeal existing unfunded mandates.
- Oppose private school vouchers or tax credits for private school tuition.
- Reform the teacher tenure/continuing contract law so unrequested leaves of absence are based on multiple criteria such as licensure area, effectiveness and seniority.
- Direct the Board of Teaching to develop reciprocity agreements and streamline the teacher licensure process for out of state applicants.