

CONNECTIONS



News from the Association of Metropolitan School Districts

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Volume 21
Number 5

A Compelling Vision: More Than Just Words for Shakopee Public Schools

February 23, 2024 Executive/Legislative Committee Meeting

7:30 a.m. - 9 a.m.
Anderson Center
Bethel University
Arden Hills

March 1, 2024 Board of Directors Meeting

7 a.m. - 9 a.m.
Quora Education Center
NE Metro 916
Little Canada

March 5, 2024 AMSD Day at the Capitol

8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
[LINK: View Day at the
Capitol flyer](#)

March 22, 2024 Executive/Legislative Committee Meeting

7:30 a.m. - 9 a.m.
Anderson Center
Bethel University
Arden Hills

The Assistant Superintendent of Shakopee Public Schools, Jim Miklausich, often says, "People know what you value by how you spend your time." In Shakopee, we've been working diligently to take immediate action on critical priorities while simultaneously building and improving systemic structures that directly support our district's Vision & Priorities, and the refined version of that, which is our Compelling Vision.

Compelling Vision

It is our moral imperative to change until all of our systems measurably work for each and every student.

Our focus must be on ensuring **each member of our organization** maintains **high expectations** and provides **unwavering support** for each of our student learners.

It is our responsibility to make sure each and every student receives **quality core instruction** and develops **agency** when it comes to their own learning.

Each and Every Student

Two of the phrases Superintendent Mike Redmond regularly uses are:

*Our goal is to help each and every student reach their fullest potential in life.
Every kid (in our district) is my kid.*

In our school district located southwest of the Twin Cities, with just shy of 8,000 students, whose families speak nearly 80 different languages, we often use an adaptation of business writer Ken Blanchard's inverted pyramid to show our dominant systemic structure. (See graphic on page 2.)

At the core of public education, and specifically our team (all of the employees working in our district), is an unwavering dedication to providing high quality services to each student, their families and the greater community. Hopefully,

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It was inspiring to welcome nearly 200 AMSD members and legislators for the 2024 AMSD Session Preview last week. We were honored to welcome Education Commissioner Willie Jett to the event and are grateful for his ongoing commitment to public education. I'd also like to thank Sen. Steve Cwodzinski, Sen. Julia Coleman, Rep. Peggy Bennett, and Rep. Josiah Hill for serving on a panel and sharing an overview of what they anticipate for the 2024 session. I encourage AMSD members to stay engaged throughout the session and to attend the [Day at the Capitol](#) on March 5. Your advocacy makes a difference!

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

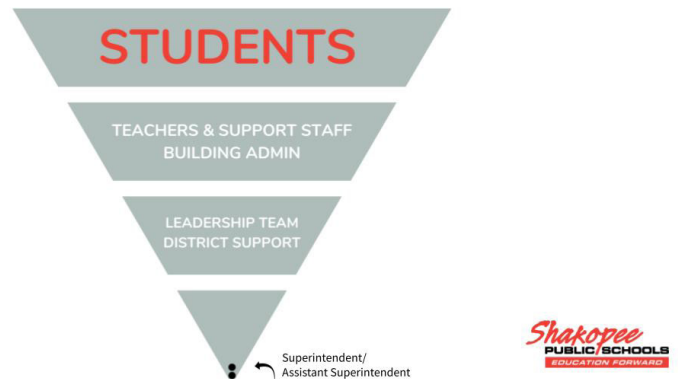


In Shakopee Schools: Every Kid is My Kid

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the reader has picked up the use of the word *each* when describing students. There are a couple reasons why the word 'each' student is used instead of referring to *all* students. The first is that when people use the phrase 'all students' they tend to feel pretty good if they reach a high number, or nearly all the students, even though they haven't reached their professed goal. Efforts should not be considered a success until 'each and every' student is reached, and we should not be satisfied with a result that falls short of 'all students'. Flipping this around just a bit, if a district reaches 'each and every' student, they will definitely have reached 'all' students.

STRUCTURE



Every Kid is My Kid

There are a number of reasons for using the phrase Every Kid is My Kid. Some of the reasons directly relate to equity in the sense we want each and every kid, and their families, to be able to navigate every aspect of the school system with the same level of understanding, access, and opportunity as the most well connected insider. When working to serve each child, holding high expectations while providing incredibly caring support, it is important to see them through the eyes of a parent, guardian or other similar loving adult who would sacrifice much in order to see their child reach the child's greatest potential.

Vision & Priorities with Performance Measurement

Too often in education, we spend large amounts of time on designing a strategic plan and high-level goals, and way too little time on the actions and measures to make the outcomes in the plan a reality. Nearly everything we do in education has a positive effect on student learning. Knowing this reality, it becomes imperative to do more of the most impactful things more often.

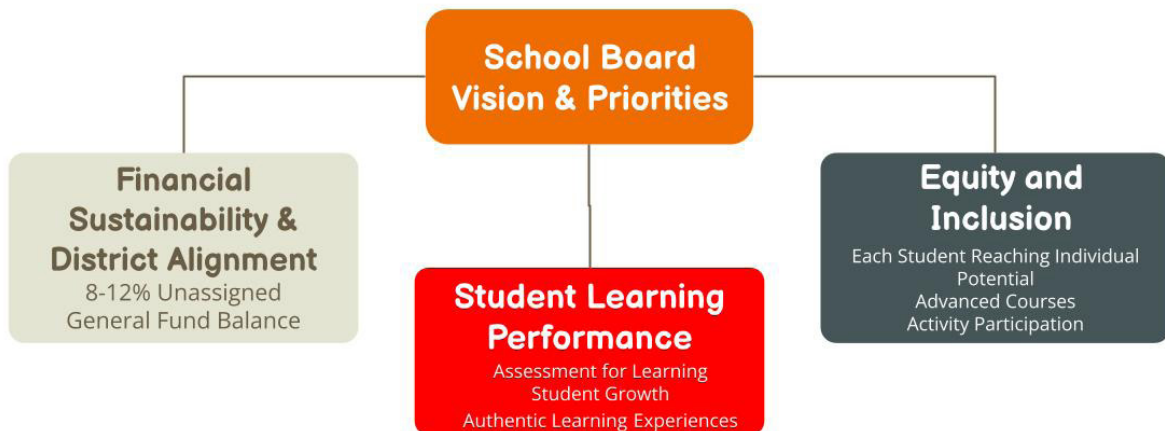
In Shakopee, the School Board has set the tone with their commitment to the district's *Vision & Priorities*, which is an intentional and actionable list that is a subset of our strategic plan. In an attempt to 'boil down' Shakopee's *Vision & Priorities* to its key components so they can be constant companions in efforts to continue to learn, grow and improve as a district, Shakopee created the previously mentioned *Compelling Vision* that is included in every staff and leadership meeting, and serves as a guiding force in all actions.

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Shakopee Schools: Working for Each and Every Student

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SCHOOL BOARD FOCUS



The School Board also directed district leadership to create a set of Performance Measures* that tie directly back to the key components of the district's Vision & Priorities. Due to the space constraints of this article, it is impossible to delve deeply into how this tightly connected monitoring system is designed to work but all elements are extremely intentional.

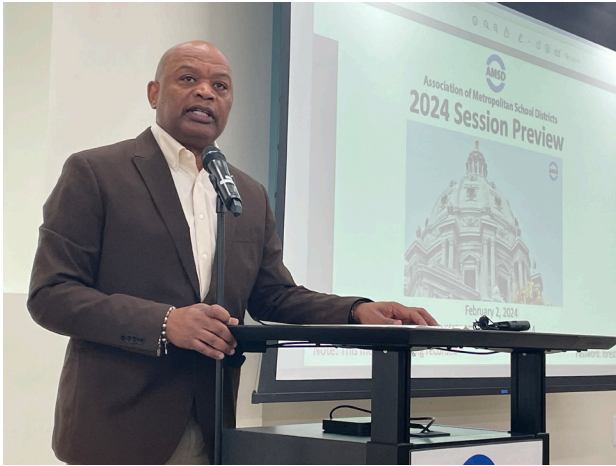
Continuous Change

While Shakopee is incredibly proud of the various happenings in our district — the nine year journey to reach the policy goal for an unassigned fund balance, building deep systems for making equity and inclusion part of the fabric of everything we do, improving student learning outcomes of each and every student, empowering student voice, continuous talent engagement, and many others ... ultimately, any advancements can be attributed to an unyielding desire to continue to **change until all of our systems measurably work for each and every student**. We encourage all public school districts to define and communicate their “why” — a Compelling Vision — and use it as a compass to create meaningful and impactful change.

**If you'd like to learn more about Shakopee's Vision & Priorities, or more about the Performance Measures (which was presented at MSBA's 2024 Annual Conference), please reach out to the authors of this article: Tiffany (tolson@shakopee.k12.mn.us) or Mike (mredmond@shakopee.k12.mn.us).*

This month's member feature was submitted by Tiffany Olson, Director of Communications and Strategic Development, and Mike Redmond, Ed.D., Superintendent, Shakopee Public Schools.

2024 AMSD Session Preview Brings Legislators and Education Leaders Together



Minnesota Department of Education Commissioner Willie Jett spoke at the AMSD 2024 Legislative Preview.

On Friday, Feb. 2, more than 150 AMSD members — superintendents, school board members and district staff — welcomed more than two dozen state legislators and Minnesota Department of Education Commissioner Willie Jett to AMSD’s annual Legislative Session Preview. The preview provides an opportunity for legislators to hear the priorities of AMSD member school districts and discuss important education issues. AMSD member school districts collectively serve more than half of the public-school students in Minnesota.

Two AMSD superintendents — Dr. Laurie Putnam of St. Cloud Area School District 742 and Dr. Jason Berg of the Farmington Area School District — joined AMSD Chair Marcus Hill of District 197 / Mendota Heights-West St. Paul-Eagan in highlighting AMSD’s [2024 AMSD Legislative Platform](#).

All three presenters thanked legislators for the significant investments approved in the 2023 session. They especially expressed gratitude for the important progress made to add stability to the funding system including linking the formula to inflation, allowing school boards to renew an operating referendum, and reducing the shortfalls in the special education and English learner programs. At the same time, they noted that historic inflation, staffing shortages, and new programs and requirements adopted in the 2023 session continue to squeeze school districts’ budgets.

Chair Hill offered the analogy of how balancing a household budget is not significantly different than meeting a district budget’s bottom line — and how increased expenses and the loss of revenue — such as the end of federal pandemic relief funding — has left many school districts facing significant challenges. While the federal funding is coming to an end, there is still tremendous work to do to help students recover from the pandemic.

All three presenters stressed the importance of continuing to stabilize the education funding system by:

- Establishing reliable and ongoing funding for the new programs and requirements approved in the 2023 session;
- Restoring the purchasing power of local optional revenue and linking it to the formula;
- Making compensatory hold-harmless funding permanent; and
- Restoring inherent managerial rights.



AMSD Chair Marcus Hill of District 197 / Mendota Heights-West St. Paul-Eagan outlined the challenges of balancing school district budgets even with increases in education funding.



AMSD superintendents Dr. Laurie Putnam of St. Cloud Area School District 742 and Dr. Jason Berg of the Farmington Area School District urged legislators to consider inflationary cost pressures and new programs and requirements for school districts.

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Inflation and New Requirements Continue to Challenge School District Budgets

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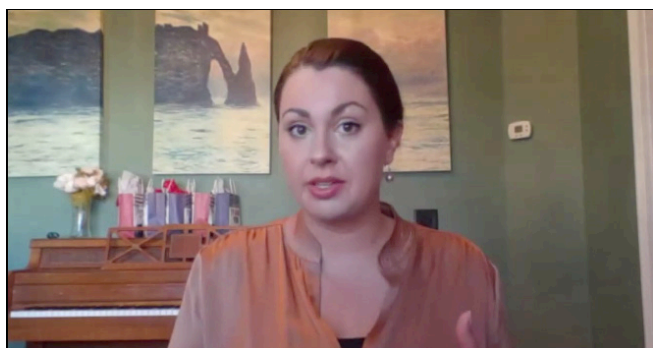
Superintendents Putnam and Berg echoed Chair Hill's themes, each sharing a local perspective — and the challenges of balancing a budget while also facing nonnegotiable costs such as utilities, transportation, and contractual obligations.



Rep. Josiah Hill (DFL-Stillwater)



Rep. Peggy Bennett (R-Albert Lea)



Sen. Julia Coleman (R-Waconia)



*Sen. Steve Cwodzinski
(DFL-Eden Prairie)*

The preview concluded with a legislative panel discussion that featured four leaders from the House and Senate Education Policy Committees — Rep. Josiah Hill (DFL-Stillwater), Rep. Peggy Bennett (R-Albert Lea), Sen. Julia Coleman (R-Waconia) and Sen. Steve Cwodzinski (DFL-Eden Prairie). The four legislators outlined some of their education priorities for the 2024 session and previewed a few of the issues they expect to come before them during the session.

- [2024 AMSD Legislative Platform](#)
- [Presentation: AMSD 2024 Legislative Session Preview](#)
- [2024 Education Facts](#)
- [LINK: View a recording of the Preview](#)

From left, Rep. Bianca Virnig (DFL-Mendota Heights), Rep. Mary Frances Clardy (DFL-Inver Grove Heights), Roseville School Board Member Curtis Johnson and Bloomington School Board Member Nelly Korman at the AMSD 2024 Legislative Preview.

