

Background on AMSD Friend of Public Education Award

The AMSD Friend of Public Education Award was initiated in 2001. The award was originally established to recognize state legislators who made outstanding contributions in support of public education generally, and AMSD's legislative priorities in particular. It was also seen as a way to build relationships with state policymakers.

The initial plan was to recognize one senator and one house member from each majority caucus. However, the award has evolved over the years. In 2003, in addition to recognizing two legislators, the award was presented to three parents who had made significant contributions to public education. Parent leaders were recognized again in 2006. In 2004, the legislative committee decided to forego recognizing a legislator following a difficult legislative session. Instead, Art Rolnick and John Gunyou were recognized for their research and advocacy on behalf of early childhood education and public education generally.

The legislative committee has discussed the idea of recognizing one legislator from each caucus following each legislative session to ensure bi-partisan recognition. After deliberation, the committee decided it was more important to recognize the legislators who made the most significant contributions to public education and to AMSD's priorities, than to ensure bi-partisan recognition.

In 2016, Congressman John Kline and Senator Al Franken were recognized for their respective roles in passing the Every Student Succeeds Act. (ESSA) This marked the first time congressional representatives were recognized.

Past Winners of AMSD's Friend of Public Education Award

2001	Rep. Alice Seagren Sen. Steve Kelley	
2002	Rep. Ron Abrams Sen. Larry Pogemiller	
2003	Rep. Barb Sykora Sen. Ann Rest	Eunice Slager Ellen Young Pam Costain
2004	John Gunyou Art Rolnick	
2005	Rep. Doug Meslow Sen. Linda Scheid	
2006	Rep. Erik Paulsen Sen. Chuck Wiger	Ward Eames Mary Cecconi

2007	Rep. Mindy Greiling Sen. Terri Bonoff	
2008	Rep. John Benson Rep. Carol McFarlane Sen. Kathy Saltzman	
2009	Rep. Jim Davnie Rep. Mindy Greiling Rep. Kim Norton Sen. Sandy Rummel	
2010	Rep. Jerry Newton	
2011	Governor Mark Dayton Sen. Gen Olson Rep. Connie Doepke	
2012	Rep. Carol McFarlane Rep. Denise Dittrich	
2013	Rep. Carlos Mariani Rep. Ann Lenczewski Rep. John Benson	Rep. Jim Davnie Sen. Patricia Torres Ray Sen. Ann Rest
2014	Rep. Paul Marquart Sen. Chuck Wiger Sen. Greg Clausen Sen. Eric Pratt	
2015	Governor Mark Dayton Rep. Jenifer Loon Sen. Chuck Wiger	
2016	Senator Al Franken Congressman John Kline	
2017	Rep. Jenifer Loon Sen. Carla Nelson Gov. Mark Dayton (lifetime achievement)	Rep. Sondra Erickson Sen. Eric Pratt
2018	Sen. Sandy Pappas Rep. Tim O'Driscoll	Sen. Julie Rosen
2019	Dr. Tom Melcher	
2020	Dr. Nicola Alexander Dr. Michael Rodriguez	
2021	Paula Forbes	