



Association of Metropolitan School Districts

LEGISLATIVE SESSION REVIEW

2024

The 2024 legislative session concluded shortly before midnight on Sunday, May 19 amidst partisan rancor over a combined omnibus tax and supplemental funding bill. The Omnibus Education Finance and Policy Bills had cleared the House and Senate prior to the last day with modest investments focused on the Read Act.

Two of AMSD's top legislative priorities for the 2024 session, additional funding and flexibility to ensure a successful implementation of the Read Act, were included in the Omnibus Education Finance and Policy Bills. Importantly, the deadline to complete the required staff training was extended by one year which will help ensure a successful implementation.

The Education Finance Bill includes \$43 million in supplemental funding for FY25 with \$18.046 million of that total ongoing funding. The bulk of the one-time funding is targeted toward the Read Act. The ongoing funding is for increasing the number of VPK slots from 7,160 participants to 12,360, and continuing funding for the compensatory pilot project program which was inadvertently sunset in the 2023 bill.

More than \$31 million in one-time funding is allocated to school districts, cooperative districts, and charter schools to compensate teachers for completing the required training under the Read Act. In addition to the new supplemental funding, \$35 million that was approved in the 2023 session for curriculum was modified to allow school districts to use the funding



on any of the allowable uses under literacy incentive aid to implement the Read Act.

Another AMSD priority, extending the hold harmless for compensatory funding beyond FY27, was also included in the Omnibus Education Finance Bill. This provides important stability to the compensatory funding program.

A long-standing priority for AMSD members has been to address the teacher shortage and increase the diversity of the educator workforce. The Omnibus Education Finance bill included investments toward that end.

The Education Finance Bill appropriated \$6.543 million for a Student Teaching Stipend Pilot Program, for eight teacher preparation programs to provide stipends to student teachers

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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SESSION CONCLUDES WITH MODEST SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

placed in Minnesota schools during the School Year (SY) 24-25. The Legislature also allotted a little more than \$1 million to a Special Education Apprenticeship Program for \$250,000 grants to Intermediate School Districts 287, 288, 916, and 917 for special education registered apprenticeship program costs. An additional \$1 million was allocated in FY25 for the Office of Higher Education (OHE) Aspiring Teachers of Color Scholarship Program.

Two AMSD priorities did not make it across the finish line this session, but received significant attention and discussion. AMSD proposed legislation, HF 4117/SF 4184, that would have amended local optional revenue (LOR) to address several priorities. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Matt Norris and Sen. Heather Gustafson, would have increased LOR from \$724 to \$920 per pupil to recover ground lost to inflation, linked LOR to the basic formula, increased LOR and referendum equalization, and allowed school districts to recover costs related to unemployment insurance and the Paid Family Medical Leave program.

While the legislation did not advance this year, AMSD members provided compelling testimony before the House and Senate Education Finance Committees and raised awareness about the importance of addressing these issues next year.

Another priority issue, increasing flexibility with instructional hour requirements to allow school districts to establish personalized, competency-based learning opportunities for students, was addressed in HF 3363/SF 4188. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Mary Frances Clardy and Sen. Heather Gustafson, was not included in the final omnibus bill but AMSD members provided compelling testimony and built momentum for the 2025 session.

Following last year's legislative session, which saw expansive new requirements and expectations for school districts, AMSD urged legislators and the Governor to refrain from enacting new mandates in the 2024 session.

AMSD members made it clear they need time and space to ensure successful implementation of the new programs.

While the new expectations adopted in the 2024 session are relatively modest, there are several new requirements including:

- **School Cell Phone Policies.** School districts must adopt a School Cell Phone Policy by March 15, 2025. The Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA) and the Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP) must collaborate to develop best practices.
- **Paraprofessionals.** For the 2024-25 school year only, the required number of hours of training for paraprofessionals is reduced from eight to six. Consultation with the union representative for paraprofessionals is also required before planning required training, and districts are also required to pay for test materials and fees for paraprofessionals employed during the SY23-24.
- **Health Standards.** Health standards will be shifted from being locally developed to statewide academic standards, with local standards remaining in place until statewide health standards are ready to be implemented in the classrooms.
- **Mental Health.** Starting in SY26-27, school districts and charter schools must provide mental health instruction. In addition, districts must excuse absences for appointments conducted via telehealth, and provide access to space for a student to receive mental health care through telehealth..
- **Access to Library Materials and Rights Protected.** Public library governing boards must not ban, remove, or otherwise restrict access to a book or other material based solely on its viewpoint or the messages, ideas, or opinions. Librarians may not be terminated or discriminated against for complying with this statute. Library governing boards must adopt a policy that establishes procedures for selection of, challenges to, and reconsideration of library materials.
- **Language Access.** School districts are required to develop a board-approved language access plan. This policy will be publicly discussed and adopted at a school board meeting and can fit the needs and access for the community. This plan must also be reviewed every two years and updated as appropriate.
- **Post-Secondary Enrollment (PSEO).** Requires school districts to adopt the same policy for weighted grade point average for PSEO credits as earned through concurrent enrollment coursework.
- **Coach Contracts.** Requires that school boards must provide a written notice to a coach whose contract the school declines to renew for the following school year no more than 60 days after the end of regular season activity.