

Intermediate District Considerations

- Intermediate Districts are only established following legislative authorization.

Minnesota Statute § 136D.01: *"Intermediate District" means a district with a cooperative program which has been [established pursuant to legislative authorization] ... offering integrated services for secondary, postsecondary, and adult students in the areas of vocational education, special education, and other authorized services.*

- There are currently three Intermediate Districts.
 - Intermediate District 287 (Serving the Northwest Metro including primarily Hennepin and Anoka Counties)
 - Intermediate District 916 (Serving the Northeast Metro including primarily Ramsey and Washington Counties)
 - Intermediate District 917 (Serving the Southeast Metro including primarily Dakota County)
- The only quadrant of the Twin Cities Metropolitan area not served by an Intermediate District is the Southwest Metro.
 - This is largely due to timing.
 - The three Intermediate Districts were formed in the late 1960's and 1970's. At the time, the southwestern metropolitan area (Carver and Scott Counties) was much smaller than the other metropolitan counties in terms overall population of the number of students served by public school districts.
 - Two Cooperatives (the Carver-Scott Educational Cooperative and the Minnesota River Valley Special Education Cooperative) were formed to serve this area which at the time more closely resembled rural Minnesota than a metropolitan/suburban area.
- Intermediate Districts provide more opportunities for students.
 - Intermediate Districts can provide all services available through Cooperatives.
 - Cooperatives can provide many services offered by Intermediate Districts, but not necessarily all services. For example, Intermediate Districts often provide post-secondary options especially in the area of technical education.
- Intermediate Districts offer more funding options to member districts.
 - Intermediate Districts and Cooperatives can both Lease Levy.
 - Intermediate Districts may also access Safe Schools Levy and Health and Safety Levy dollars that are not available to Cooperatives.
 - NOTE: SouthWest Metro bylaws require a unanimous vote of all member districts prior to accessing any local levy dollars. A single district can veto any levy sought by SouthWest Metro.
- The cost of programming in an Intermediate District and a Cooperative are exactly the same.
 - There are no new or additional costs imposed by an Intermediate District for services or programs.
 - But, there are more possible sources of state funds to pay for the services provided.
 - The result is either reduction in program costs or expansion of available services (at no new cost) or both.

- Intermediate Districts often offer better connections to and opportunities for Post-Secondary options.
 - For example, the authorizing Statutes for Intermediate District 287 and Intermediate District 917 even go so far as to explicitly reference Joint Technical Colleges. (See Minn. Stat. § 136D.21 and .81 respectively.)

Steps and Timing

- A bill was authored during the 2015 Legislative Session authorizing the establishment of an Intermediate District to serve the Southwest Metro area. Upon passage by the Legislature and signature from Governor Dayton, the named districts are now allowed to consider formation of an Intermediate District.

Minnesota Statute § 136D.41 LISTED DISTRICTS MAY FORM INTERMEDIATE DISTRICT.

Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, two or more of the Independent School Districts Nos. 108, 110, 111, and 112 of Carver County, Independent School Districts Nos. 716, 717, 719, 720, and 721 of Scott County, and Independent School District No. 2905 of Le Sueur County, whether or not contiguous, may enter into agreements to accomplish jointly and cooperatively the acquisition, betterment, construction, maintenance, and operation of facilities for, and instruction in, special education, career and technical education, adult basic education, and alternative education. Each school district that becomes a party to such an agreement is a "participating school district" for purposes of sections 136D.41 to 136D.49. The agreement may provide for the exercise of these powers by a joint school board created as set forth in sections 136D.41 to 136D.49.

- SouthWest Metro Educational Cooperative Districts are now allowed to take individual Board action to either form and join the newly authorized Intermediate District or not.
 - Joining requires local School Board action.
- Target date to open a newly formed Intermediate District would be July 1, 2016.

Summary

The formation of an Intermediate District for the Southwest Metropolitan area would:

1. Retain all current programs and opportunities for students,
2. Possibly expand opportunities for students, especially in the area of post-secondary education,
3. Not add any new or additional costs, and
4. Increase possible revenue sources thereby allowing current costs to member districts to be reduced¹.

¹ While an Intermediate District has the ability to access additional levy dollars, this may only be done pursuant to bylaws with the unanimous consent of all member school districts. Therefore, any one district has veto authority over any increases to local levies.