

September 2024

Volume 21

Number 11

Empowering Future Educators

September 27, 2024 Executive/Legislative Committee Meeting

7:30 a.m. - 9 a.m.

Anderson Center

Bethel University

Arden Hills

October 4, 2024 Board of Directors Meeting

7 a.m. - 9 a.m.

Quora Education Center

NE Metro 916

Little Canada

October 25, 2024 Executive/Legislative Committee Meeting

7:30 a.m. - 9 a.m.

Anderson Center

Bethel University

Arden Hills

November 1, 2024 Board of Directors Meeting

7 a.m. - 9 a.m.

Quora Education Center

NE Metro 916

Little Canada

In a groundbreaking initiative, four Intermediate School Districts in Minnesota — 287, 288, 916 and 917 — are leading a transformative effort alongside Minnesota State University, Mankato to pioneer the state's inaugural Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program. This collaborative endeavor, under the umbrella of the Intermediate District Teacher Residency Apprenticeship Collaborative (ITRAC), marks a pivotal moment in addressing Minnesota's critical staffing needs within special education.



From left, Intermediate District 288 Supt. Dr. Jeff Horton, Intermediate District 916 Supt. Dr. Val Rae Boe, Intermediate District 287 Supt. Marcy Doud, and Intermediate District 917 Supt. Dr. Michael Favor address the inaugural cohort of apprentices and journeyworkers in the Intermediate District Teacher Residency Apprenticeship Collaborative (ITRAC), Minnesota's first registered teacher apprenticeship program, in Edina on Thursday, Aug. 22, 2024.

Continued on page 2

Twelve AMSD member school districts have important referendum questions on the ballot this fall. In addition, many AMSD member districts have school board elections. The [AMSD Election Guide](#) provides a comprehensive overview of education funding and explains why referendum revenue continues to be a key funding stream for school districts. The guide also provides sample questions to ask legislative candidates and links to see what's on your ballot and find information on the Minnesota Secretary of State's website about how to vote early by mail or in person. Please share the Election Guide with your colleagues and community members and encourage them to get engaged in the electoral process. Thank you for your leadership!

From the AMSD Chair, Laura Oksnevad, St. Anthony-New Brighton Board Member

The Impact of Minnesota's First Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program

Continued from page 1

"We are grateful for the collaboration between the Department of Labor and Industry, the MN Department of Education, and the four Minnesota Intermediate School Districts to provide the first Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program in Minnesota," said Marcy Doud, Intermediate District 287 Superintendent. "Together, we look forward to developing exceptional special education teachers for our students and families."

This program, which started in June 2024, targets Educational Support Professionals, providing them with Related Technical Instruction from Minnesota State University, Mankato and job-embedded learning under the mentorship of their district's experienced teachers known as Journeyworkers. This approach not only fulfills licensure requirements for Emotional-Behavioral Disorders (EBD) and Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) but also aligns with the [2023 Standards of Effective Practice](#)— a crucial step toward improving educational outcomes. "Northeast Metro 916 is proud to be part of this groundbreaking Apprenticeship Program collaboration. This innovative initiative will assist in developing a highly skilled workforce for our setting IV special education programs and deliver significant and positive outcomes for our students," said Dr. Val Rae Boe, Intermediate District 916 Superintendent.

"This program will help by being a better fit into my everyday life. Being able to have the coursework built into the work we do with the students will help lessen the stress the typical school work puts on working adults," said an Intermediate School District 287 apprentice.

The Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program, partly funded by the Special Education Pipeline grant and the One-Time Intermediate Apprenticeship funding from the last legislative session, addresses several key challenges facing Minnesota's education system today:

- Recruitment and Retention - By offering a structured pathway into teaching, the program helps fill critical vacancies in special education. This is particularly crucial as teacher shortages persist across the state.
- Diversity in the Workforce - Through targeted recruitment and support, the program aims to diversify the educator workforce, ensuring that classrooms reflect the communities they serve.
- Removing Barriers - The apprenticeship program aims to eliminate financial and systemic obstacles, thus expanding opportunities for individuals who previously considered teaching beyond their reach.
- Meeting Educational Standards - aligning the [2023 Standards of Effective Practice](#) ensures that apprentices graduate fully prepared to meet the needs of diverse learners from day one.



The inaugural cohort of apprentices in Minnesota's first registered teacher apprenticeship program.

"Minnesota State University, Mankato is honored to engage in this unique and transformative Apprenticeship partnership. We have collaborated to create this theory to immediate practice Special Education degree and licensure program that is going to have a positive impact for and with students up to 22 years old," said Teri Preisler, Acting Director of the Center for Educator Partnerships and Student Support for the MSU-Mankato College of Education.

Continued on page 3

Addressing the Complexities of Special Education

Continued from page 2

The collaboration between the four intermediate school districts, Minnesota State University, Mankato, and state agencies demonstrates a commitment to innovative education practices. By nurturing local talent and investing in their professional development, the program not only strengthens individual career paths but also enhances educational outcomes for students with special needs.



An apprentice writes down how they want their apprenticeship to reflect teamwork, one of the Elevate Teaching characteristics.

"I believe this program is important because it helps paras move into a more stable role for the students. Also helps teachers learn new ways of thinking and implementing their ideals in a safe learning environment," said a Intermediate School District 288 apprentice.

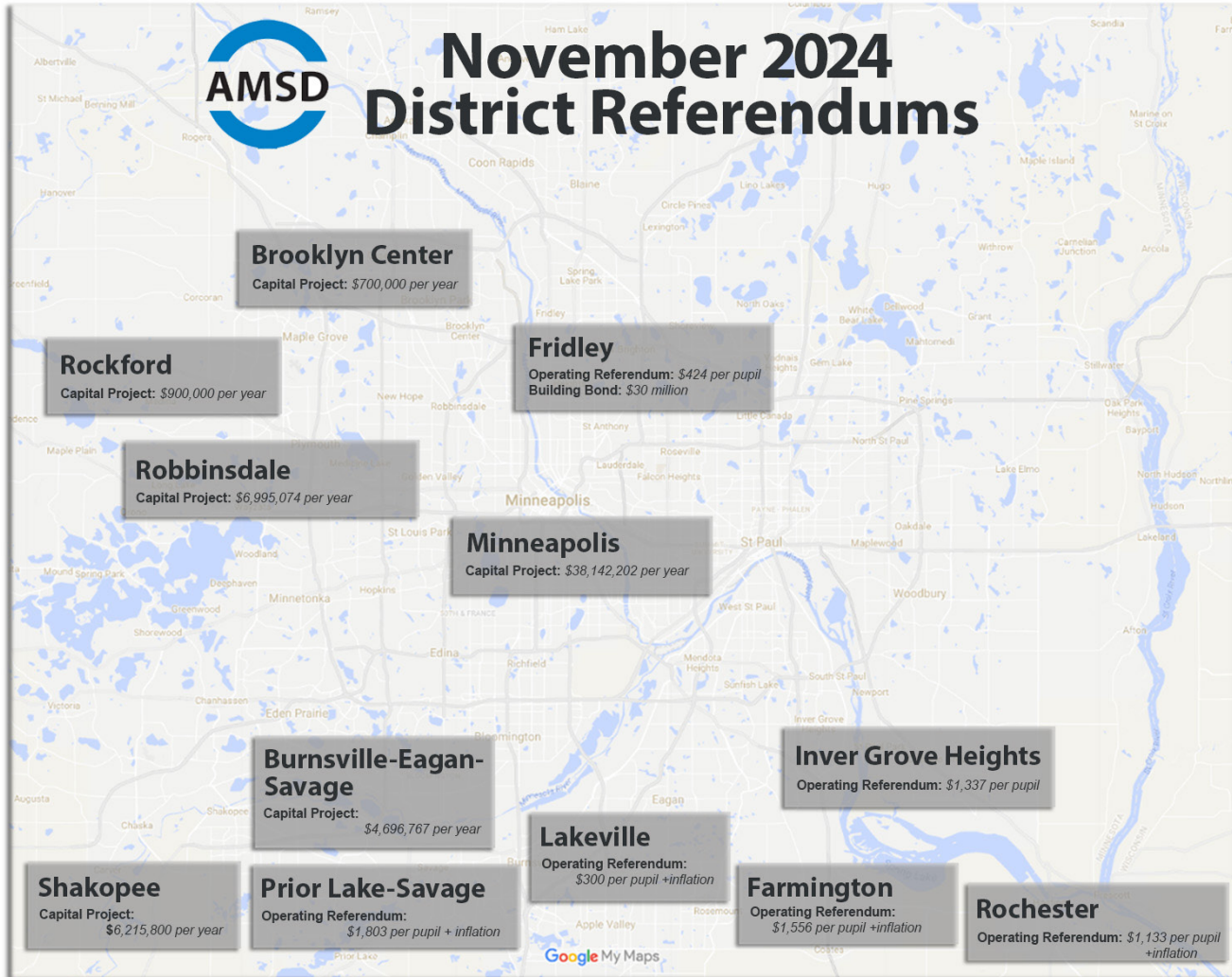
The program is sponsored by [BrightWorks](#).

"We are excited and honored to serve in the Sponsorship role for the first Teacher Apprenticeship program in the state of Minnesota," said Gina Boots, BrightWorks spokesperson. "Educational Service Agencies (ESAs) have a proven record of implementing state-wide initiatives on behalf of the districts we serve. We are fully committed to ensuring a successful implementation of ITRAC, as well as continued development on making this a sustainable model that can be a viable option across the state."

The ITRAC Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program represents a significant step forward in addressing the complexities of special education. Learn more about each of the intermediate school districts by visiting the [Intermediate District 287](#), [Intermediate District 288](#), [Intermediate District 916](#), and [Intermediate District 917](#) websites.

This month's member feature was submitted by staff from Intermediate District 287, Intermediate District 288, Intermediate District 916, and Intermediate District 917.

Twelve AMSD Districts on the November Ballot with Referendums



Twelve AMSD school districts will have 13 referendum questions on the ballot on Nov. 5 — a significant number that speaks to the financial challenges Minnesota school districts face even after the funding increases approved in the 2023 legislative session.

This year's ballot questions include operating referendum requests, capital project levy renewals or increases, and a bond question. [A chart on the AMSD website](#) outlines the AMSD member district referendum questions and includes a link to the school district website where detailed information about the referendum questions can be found. Voters are encouraged to contact their local school officials if they have questions about their school district's referendum.

Why referendums are necessary

While the education bill approved in the 2023 legislative session provided a significant overall funding increase and made important progress toward reducing funding shortfalls in the special education and English learner programs, education funding in Minnesota continues to be a State and local partnership.

The most important source of financial support for school districts comes through the General Education Program. There are several components to the General Education Program with the vast

Continued on page 5

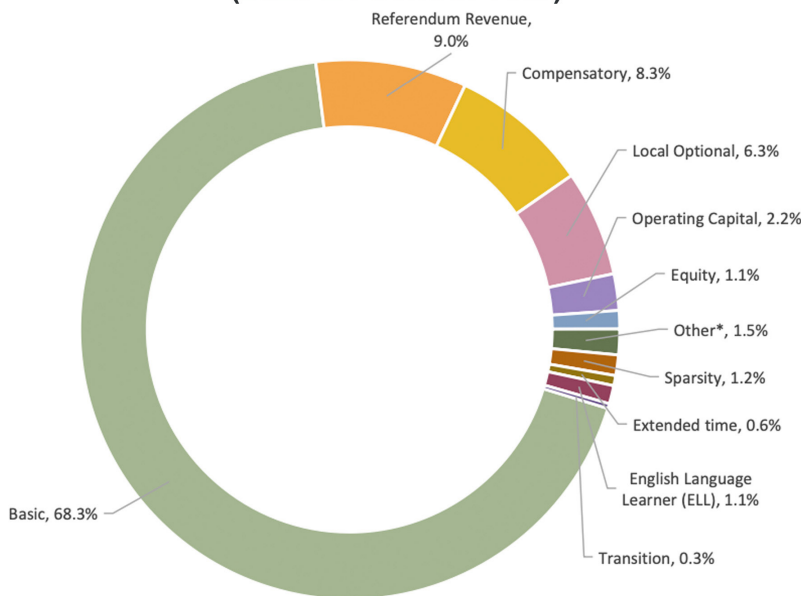
Referendums Provide Critical Resources for Schools

Continued from page 4

majority provided by basic revenue — often referred to as the basic formula. Basic revenue accounts for about 70 percent of general education revenue and is used to pay for employee salaries and benefits, supply costs and other operational costs. While overall education revenue has exceeded inflation since 2003, the basic formula has lagged far behind the rate of inflation. In fact, the basic formula would be \$1,364 per pupil higher today if it has kept pace with inflation since 2003.

The federal government provides a modest share of education funding, and the remaining comes from local property taxes. As illustrated in the graph below, two key local levies, voter approved referendum revenue (9 percent) and local optional revenue (6.3 percent), provide nearly 16 percent of general education revenue. Local optional revenue, like the basic formula, has lost considerable ground to inflation since it went into effect in 2014. If it had simply kept pace with inflation since 2014, it would be \$182 per pupil higher today.

FY2024 General Education Program Components (2023-24 School Year)



*Other includes Declining Enrollment, Small Schools, Gifted & Talented, PSEO, and various other Adjustments.

Source: Minnesota House of Representatives Fiscal Analysis Department, November 2023

A large share of the overall state funding increase provided in 2023 was targeted to specific programs such as universal meals, the READ Act, summer unemployment insurance, professional development, and specific job classifications.

The result is that even with the funding increases approved the last two legislative sessions, districts are struggling to cover inflationary costs and contract settlements with employee groups.

Six of the AMSD districts going to voters this fall are seeking Capital Projects referendums, which are most commonly used to ensure safe and secure school buildings and to provide the technology students need to succeed in our

digital economy. The State does not provide a dedicated funding stream for technology, leaving school districts dependent on local capital project levies.

Major building projects are also funded primarily at the local level. The State provides limited funding for deferred maintenance and equipment purchases but new construction, additions to existing buildings, and major renovations are generally financed by the sale of bonds following the approval of a bond referendum by the voters.

By law each district going out for referendums of any type are required to provide detailed information about the referendums and projects, as well as provide an estimate of costs and the impact on homeowners in the district. The ballot language for the 2024 election is available on the [MN Secretary of State's website](#). Voters can access their sample ballots by entering their address and zip code. Voters are also encouraged to visit their school district website for more specific details and information about their proposed referendums.