

2019

LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

SOUTHWEST METRO INTERMEDIATE DISTRICT 288



2019

LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

DARREN KERMES

Superintendent, SouthWest Metro Intermediate District 288
dkermes@swmetro.k12.mn.us

RYAN LAAGER

Superintendent, Belle Plaine Public Schools
rlaager@belleplaine.k12.mn.us

SCOTT THIELMAN

Superintendent, Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose Schools
sthielman@bhmschools.org

BRIAN CORLETT

Superintendent, Central Public Schools
bcorlett@central.k12.mn.us

CLINT CHRISTOPHER

Superintendent, Eastern Carver County Schools
christopherc@district112.org

MATT HELGERSON

Superintendent, Jordan Public Schools
mhelgerson@isd717.org

TIM DITTBERNER

Superintendent, New Prague Area Schools
tdittber@isd721.org

TERI STALOCH

Superintendent, Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools
tstaloch@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us

MIKE REDMOND

Superintendent, Shakopee Public Schools
mredmond@shakopee.k12.mn.us

TERI PREISLER

Superintendent, Tri-City United Public Schools
tpreisler@tcu2905.us

PATRICK DEVINE

Superintendent, Waconia Public Schools
pdevine@isd110.org

RON WILKE

Superintendent, Watertown-Mayer Public Schools
ron.wilke@wm.k12.mn.us

TRACY O'BRIEN

Board Member, Belle Plaine Public Schools
tobrien@belleplaine.k12.mn.us

DAVE WILSON

Board Member, Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose Schools
dwilson@bhmschools.org

RICHARD SCHUG

Board Member, Central Public Schools
richard.schug@ufcmn.com

RON MEYER

Board Member, Eastern Carver County Schools
meyerron@district112.org

DEB PAULY

Board Member, Jordan Public Schools
dpauly@isd717.org

DENNIS HAVLICEK

Board Member, New Prague Area Schools
dennyhav@isd721.org

MARY FRANTZ

Board Member, Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools
mfrantz@priorlake-savage.k12.mn.us

ANGELA TUCKER

Board Member, Shakopee Public Schools
atucker@shakopee.k12.mn.us

DALE BUSS

Board Member, Tri-City United Public Schools
dbuss@tcu2905.us

JOHN WEINAND

Board Member, Waconia Public Schools
jweinand@eminnetonka.com

JULIE SWEENEY

Board Member, Watertown-Mayer Public Schools
julie.sweeney@wm.k12.mn.us

2019 LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL

EMERGENCY DRILLS

BE IT RESOLVED THAT SOUTHWEST METRO INTERMEDIATE DISTRICT URGES THE LEGISLATURE TO

Revise Minnesota Statute at Minn. Stat. § 121A.035, Subd. 2 and Minn. Stat. § 299F.30, Subd. 2 to allow local school boards and school leaders to work with emergency responders to develop emergency drills that allow professional educators discretion in responding to a fire alarm rather than immediately forcing students to exit their classroom and building when a fire alarm is sounded. Sadly and tragically, those who mean harm to children have used the fire alarm as a means of forcing students out of the building where they are more easily shot or harmed in other ways. This antiquated Statute must be updated to address the realities faced by schools today.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE

- » During the 2018 Legislative Session the “Alternative Fire Drill” language received positive attention and was included in the Education Omnibus Bill only to have it vetoed by the Governor.
- » Minnesota Statute at Minn. Stat. § 121A.035, Subd. 2 requires:
 - » A school board and a charter school must adopt a crisis management policy to address potential violent crisis situations in the district or charter school. ... The policy must include at least five school lock-down drills, five school fire drills consistent with section 299F.30, and one tornado drill.
- » Minnesota Statute at Minn. Stat. § 299F.30, Subd. 2 clarifies:
 - » Each superintendent ... shall instruct and train such students or other persons to quickly and expeditiously quit the premises in case of fire or other emergency by means of drills or rapid dismissals while such school, institution, home, or orphanage is in operation.
- » A strict reading of this Statute and interpretation by the State Fire Marshall places students in grave danger by not allowing School Districts to follow the guidance of **Homeland Security – School Safety Division**, local law enforcement, and others that suggest school staff should react quickly to a fire alarm, but, should quickly examine the situation and determine if there is an actual fire emergency and/or if it is safe to exit the building before proceeding.
- » This discretion on the part of trained school staff is essential in light of recent and ongoing acts of those who have targeted schools and children to use the fire alarm as a means of creating chaos and “flushing” students out where they are easier to be shot by the criminal.

2019 LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL

BOARD MINUTES

BE IT RESOLVED THAT SOUTHWEST METRO INTERMEDIATE DISTRICT URGES THE LEGISLATURE TO

Allow School Districts discretion to publish minutes and other required notices in a local newspaper OR in Board approved alternative sites such as on District websites.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE

- » Transparency and public accountability are important responsibility of School Boards.
- » At the same time, School Boards must be careful stewards of scarce public resources, and publication of minutes and other public notices in local newspapers is very expensive.
- » Fewer and fewer people access their news through local newspapers.
- » A better, in terms of both cost effectiveness and public dissemination, option for the publication of required minutes and notices exists in the form of things such as school district websites.

2019 LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL

PREGNANT TEEN TRANSPORTATION

BE IT RESOLVED THAT SOUTHWEST METRO INTERMEDIATE DISTRICT URGES THE LEGISLATURE TO

Allow pregnant and parenting teen students to be transported via special education vans and buses without loss of School District revenue.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE

- » Under current State Law, School Districts are entitled to reimbursement from the State for the majority of the costs associated with transporting students with disabilities to special education placements and students (with and without disabilities) to day treatment and other mental health facilities.
- » There are many times these vans and buses have one or more open seats available.
- » If a School District uses one of these open van or bus seats to transport a non-disabled pregnant or parenting teen to a special program, MDE will reduce transportation reimbursement to the District for this entire route.
 - » For example, if there are two students with disabilities on a route and one non-disabled pregnant and parenting teen is added to the route, reimbursement to the District is reduced by 33% even though transporting the pregnant and parenting teen added zero costs to the existing route.

2019 LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL

WARDS OF THE STATE

BE IT RESOLVED THAT SOUTHWEST METRO INTERMEDIATE DISTRICT URGES THE LEGISLATURE TO

Create a separate State account for students who become Wards of the State that would be used to pay educational costs associated with these students.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE

- » The Juvenile Alternative Facility (JAF) lies within the boundaries of Jordan Public Schools.
- » The JAF is a residential correctional facility operated by Scott County.
- » Jordan Public Schools contracts with the SouthWest Metro Intermediate District to provide educational services for students living at the JAF.
- » Most students who are served at the JAF come from other Minnesota Public School Districts and those Districts are billed for educational services.
- » Occasionally, other Districts place students at the JAF and these students become “wards of the state” while at the JAF.
- » Under MDE interpretation of current State Law, when this occurs, Jordan Public Schools becomes responsible for the educational costs of this student due to the fact that MDE has determined these children no longer have a resident District.
- » Additionally, on occasion, students who are “wards of the state” leave the JAF and are placed in a more permanent treatment facility out of State.
 - » This also results in Jordan paying the tuition bills.
 - » This places an unfair burden on Jordan taxpayers and diverts resources from Jordan students to cover costs of students who have no association with Jordan other than in some cases a few days of placement in the JAF.
- » A more fair and equitable model is for the State to assume all educational costs of students who become Wards of the State.

2019 LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL

EQUITABLE FUNDING

BE IT RESOLVED THAT SOUTHWEST METRO INTERMEDIATE DISTRICT URGES THE LEGISLATURE TO

Seek more equitable methods to fund schools such that “property poor districts” have access to equitable resources and revenue.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE

- » Jordan Public Schools is considered a “property poor district.”
 - » This means that it has a very low commercial tax base and the burden to fund schools, and large facility projects/new buildings, falls disproportionately on local homeowners.
- » This is an inequitable system and we’re asking legislators to seek more equitable methods to fund schools.

2019 LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL

INNOVATIVE MENTAL HEALTH GRANTS

BE IT RESOLVED THAT SOUTHWEST METRO INTERMEDIATE DISTRICT URGES THE LEGISLATURE TO

Re-authorize and continue the Innovative Mental Health Grants established previously by the Legislature and create a permanent funding source for said grants.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE

- » The Legislature created Innovative Mental Health Grants that were made available to Minnesota's Intermediate School Districts and the SouthWest West Central Service Cooperative.
- » These grants were used to provide mental health services for students with significant mental health needs that were interfering with the ability of these students to access their education.
- » It is critical that these grants continue as they are essential for the mental wellbeing of students and the ability of School Districts to provide educational opportunities to them.

2019 LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

BE IT RESOLVED THAT SOUTHWEST METRO INTERMEDIATE DISTRICT URGES THE LEGISLATURE TO

Re-authorize and continue Special Education Level IV Professional Development Grants established previously by the Legislature and create a permanent funding source for said grants.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE

- » Under State and Federal Law, Public School Districts in Minnesota must provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to all students with disabilities.
- » In providing FAPE, a District must have a continuum of services including services for the students with the most intense needs.
- » Students with this high level of need often act out aggressively and cause harm to staff and other students.
- » As a result, some students are placed (with parental consent) in programs known as Federal Setting IV locations.
- » The goal of these Level IV programs is to address the student's disability and help them learn skills such that they can reintegrate into their neighborhood school as quickly as safely possible.
- » Staff in these Level IV programs must be highly trained to ensure the safety of students and staff alike.
- » This training is expensive and time intensive.
- » The Legislature recognized these unique training needs and the importance of providing this training for the well-being of students and staff. To address this need, the Legislature provided one-time monies for this necessary training.
- » Unfortunately, due to the intense nature of these programs, there is high turnover of staff.
- » In addition, as this field evolves, new and better intervention strategies are discovered.
- » It is critical for student and staff safety and wellbeing that this funding for training and professional development be renewed and made permanent.