

Association of Metropolitan School Districts

2026 Legislative Platform

AMSD understands that the biennial budget was adopted last session. At the same time, school districts continue to face significant fiscal and operational pressures. Inflationary costs continue to outpace general education revenue, challenging the ability of school districts to sustain essential programs and services. School leaders are also striving to enhance school safety and implement the numerous new programs and requirements approved in recent years.

Of particular concern is the instability in compensatory revenue and the contingent \$250 million reduction in special education cross-subsidy reduction aid scheduled for the next biennium. Such a cut would negate an inflationary increase in the basic formula and further exacerbate existing funding shortfalls and jeopardize critical student supports.

To enhance school safety and stabilize funding, state policymakers should address the priorities listed below.

Stabilize Funding

- Extend the hold-harmless for compensatory revenue through FY27 and amend the formula to include the application for educational benefits form, in addition to direct certification, to determine eligibility for compensatory services;
- Repeal the contingent \$250 million cut to special education cross-subsidy reduction aid in the 28-29 biennium; and
- Increase Local Optional Revenue to \$979 per pupil and link it to the formula.

Enhance School Safety

- Increase the Safe Schools levy to \$100 per pupil;
- Strengthen secure gun storage requirements in homes and in vehicles on school property; and
- Allow limited removal time from class with Non-Exclusionary Discipline to enable schools to plan effective reentry supports and interventions to ensure safe classrooms.

Reduce Mandates, Enhance Local Control and Restore Managerial Rights

- Repeal the requirement that school boards negotiate e-learning days, student testing, and student-to-staff ratios;

- Allow locally elected school boards to renew an existing capital project levy at the same rate after a public hearing;
- Fully fund or repeal summer term unemployment insurance for non-licensed staff;
- Provide funding to cover the employer premium and substitute staffing costs, or exempt school districts from the Paid Leave program;
- Modernize the hours of instruction requirements to allow students to earn credit for learning wherever it occurs; and
- Replace the high school MCA exams with a nationally recognized college entrance exam and create a Blue-Ribbon Commission to evaluate and make recommendations to improve the assessment system to support student-centered balanced assessment.

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