

2020 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public Schools

Educating our students to reach their full potential



DISTRICT196
One District. Infinite Possibilities.

School Board

Jackie Magnuson, chairperson
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Art Coulson, treasurer
Craig Angrimson, director
Cory Johnson, director
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Superintendent

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OUR BELIEFS

- Students come first
- All students can learn
- High expectations inspire students and staff to excel
- Learning is maximized in a safe, respectful and inclusive environment
- A well-rounded education includes opportunities in academics, the arts and athletics
- Learning is a lifelong pursuit
- Effective management of resources is critical
- Partnerships and collaboration enhance educational programming
- A culture of innovation and continuous improvement prepares students to be college and career ready
- An informed and engaged community guides effective decision making

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On behalf of our 30,000 students and 155,000 residents, the District 196 School Board and Legislative Advisory Council thank the Legislature and Governor for providing inflationary increases for E-12 education in 2019. Although this is not a budget-setting session, we believe that state leaders should continue to focus on long-term solutions to providing stable, predictable and equitable funding for all Minnesota schools.

The current funding system does not serve the needs of all students and is unfair to taxpayers in districts with lower property wealth, like District 196. The chronic underfunding of special education and unpredictable funding for general education have created instability, increased reliance on local operating levies and a widening gap in the educational opportunities available to students depending on where they live. We believe the Legislature should:

✓ Provide stable, predictable and equitable education funding

• Index funding to inflation

The general education funding formula has lagged inflation by nearly 10 percent, or \$639 per pupil, since 2003. Indexing the formula to inflation would provide a predictable funding source needed for stability and long-range planning.

• Reduce unfunded special education costs

The state and federal governments mandate special education services but fund just 65 percent of what it actually cost District 196 to provide those services last year. The other 35 percent, totaling \$25.6 million, was subsidized by the district's general fund.

• Increase equalization aid to enhance taxpayer equity

Equalization aid is meant to equalize the impact of school taxes for homeowners in districts with lower property wealth. However, the formula is not indexed to growth and, as a result, provides a diminishing level of equalization. Increasing equalization of the operating referendum, local optional and debt service levies would provide property tax relief for homeowners. It would not increase funding for schools.

✓ Increase mental health support for students

Nearly 1 in 4 students who participated in the 2019 Minnesota Student Survey reported having some mental health, behavioral or emotional concerns. Increasing the Safe Schools levy and state aid would enable schools to add staff to address the mental health needs of students.

✓ Reduce mandates and increase local control

Locally elected school board members and staff are in the best position to understand the needs of their district and how best to address those needs. We support legislative changes that would reduce mandates and increase local control, and oppose any new unfunded mandates.

One District. INFINITE POSSIBILITIES.

Our Demographics

- 30,000 students
- 155,000 total residents
- 37% students of color (34% statewide)
- 23% of students qualify for free or reduced-price school meals (37% statewide)
- 15% of students receive special education services (16% statewide)
- 6% of students qualify for English Learner services (8% statewide)
- 40% of district households have preschool and/or school-aged children
- 86% of school-age students who live in District 196 attend District 196 schools, one of the highest "capture rates" in the metro area



Our Achievement

District 196 is a high-achieving school district with a record of outstanding achievement both in and out of the classroom. District 196 students consistently win large numbers of scholarships, as well as state and national awards in a variety of academic, arts and athletic competitions. Approximately 91% of District 196 students graduate after four years of high school and 90% of graduates indicate plans to pursue postsecondary education.

- **Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments** – The percentage of District 196 students who scored proficient in reading, math and science exceeded statewide averages for all grades tested in 2019.
- **ACT** – District 196 students had an average score of 23.0 in 2019. This is 1.6 points higher than the Minnesota average, which was highest in the nation among states that offer the ACT to all students.
- **College Credits** – In one year, 766 District 196 high school students were named AP Scholars for earning scores of 3 or higher (on a scale of 1 to 5) on three or more AP exams. In that same year, District 196 students earned 6,185 college credits from the University of Minnesota, valued at more than \$3.1 million.

Our Awards and Honors

In the 2018-19 school year:

- Five District 196 teams and performing groups won state championships in marching band, one-act play, mock trial, girls' track and field and adapted softball.
- Twenty District 196 students won individual state titles in speech, debate, Science Olympiad, wrestling, boys' and girls' track and field, and boys' tennis.
- Two District 196 high schools were named top-20 Speech Schools of Excellence and one District 196 high school was named a top-10 School of Outstanding Distinction at the National Speech and Debate Association tournament.
- Two District 196 high schools were in the top 10 high schools in Minnesota in *U.S. News & World Report's* ranking of the nation's Best High Schools.

For more information, go to
DISTRICT196.ORG