

November 2016
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PAKRAT and PAKRAT Roll & Read A St. Cloud District 742 Success Story

November 4, 2016
Board of Directors Meeting
7:00 a.m.
Grand Hall,
TIES Conference Center
St. Paul

November 15, 2016
AMSD Annual Policy Conference
8:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.
TIES Conference Center,
St. Paul

November 18, 2016
Executive/Legislative Committee Meeting
7:30 a.m.
Lexington Room,
TIES Conference Center
St. Paul

December 2, 2016
Board of Directors Meeting
7:00 a.m.
Grand Hall,
TIES Conference Center
St. Paul

January 6, 2017
AMSD Session Preview
8:00 a.m.
Grand Hall,
TIES Conference Center
St. Paul

Since 2011, the Local Education & Activities Foundation (LEAF) has been supporting the Partners And Kids Reading A-lot Together (PAKRAT) program in partnership with the elementary schools in St. Cloud School District 742. PAKRAT provides books to all preschool through grade 3 students in District 742. PAKRAT has been funded with LEAF grants, as well as generous grants given to LEAF from the Bernick's Foundation, the Morgan Family Foundation and the Otto Bremer Foundation.

As part of the program, students take a book home to read with their parent/partner each evening and then return the book, along with a brief worksheet about the book to their classroom teacher the next day. Several schools hold "PAKRAT Parades" at the end of each reading cycle to celebrate the students/classrooms that read the most books.

During the 2015-16 school year, 3,149 students in preschool through grade 3 read a total of 114,773 books during the six PAKRAT rounds! 77.3% of our preschool through grade 3 students participated in PAKRAT on a regular basis. The program has been a great success, with our most recent survey of parents, students and teachers indicating:

- **80% of the students** report that PAKRAT has made them a better reader.
- **94% of the parents** indicate they wanted the program to continue.
- **94% of the teachers** indicate they feel PAKRAT has benefitted the literacy development of their students.

"St. Cloud has taken an amazing pathway to provide this access to books available to learners in every single school," said Mary Dank, who brought the idea for the highly successful PAKRAT concept to St. Cloud when she began as an instructional coach.

The program grew quickly thanks to LEAF, broad community support, and the work of PAKRAT coordinators Melanie Jiskra and Sara Martini and instructional coach Beth Lovdahl. The PAKRAT



PAKRAT: P-3 Child literacy and parent involvement program

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AMSD's Mission

To advocate for state education policy that enables metropolitan school districts to improve student learning.



Association of
Metropolitan School Districts

From the Chair

If you are like me, you are very relieved that Election Day is almost here. This year has been a very clear example of why it is so challenging for school districts to conduct important referendum elections during very noisy presidential, congressional and state legislative campaigns. With a blizzard of direct mail from legislative candidates and independent expenditure groups hitting the mailboxes of voters every day, it is a monumental challenge for local school districts to educate their communities about school referendum questions. That is a major reason AMSD has long advocated for allowing locally-elected school boards to renew an existing referendum at the same level and will be asking state policymakers to consider that important reform again in the 2017 session. In the meantime, I encourage Minnesotans to educate themselves about their local referendum questions and to contact their school officials if they have any questions. Most importantly, I encourage everyone to exercise their right to VOTE on November 8!

John Vento, school board member from Robbinsdale Area Schools, is chair of AMSD.

PAKRAT Roll & Read Program Provides Access to Quality Reading Materials

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child literacy/parent involvement community-wide reading competency program has worked well at nine elementary and preschool locations since LEAF became involved in 2011.

Expansion to a summertime program has helped elementary students, including the less advantaged, to improve their reading skills and expand their educational potential, which is good for everyone in the community.

Based on Richard Allington's research, which indicates that up to 85% of the achievement gap can be attributed to the "summer slide" when many students have little access to quality reading materials, the summertime PAKRAT Roll & Read Program provides all students access to these quality reading materials on a weekly basis throughout the summer.

PAKRAT Summer Roll & Read

Sometimes a great idea is sparked, and with a little passion, that idea can grow into something spectacular. The PAKRAT Summer Roll & Read Program was the idea of Talahi Community School teacher, Sara Martini, after visiting a national conference in Washington, D.C. where another similar idea was already up and running. Martini with the help of Beth Lovdahl, another teacher in the district, started the program at Talahi.

Each week in the summer of 2013, the Roll & Read school bus made stops throughout the Talahi attendance area, drawing students from virtually every elementary school in District 742! The pilot program in the Talahi attendance area was such a great success that by the fall of 2014 Martini and Lovdahl contacted LEAF executive director Bruce Hentges with the idea of LEAF purchasing a bus for the Summer Read & Roll Program to expand it district wide in the 240 square-mile district!

Connections were made and presentations prepared. The St. Cloud Rotary Club gave \$15,000 to purchase a used school bus, which had to be totally remodeled and repainted to fit DOT regulations. The Local Education Activities Foundation (LEAF) Board of Directors contributed a \$10,000 grant to help purchase books and an additional Scholastic Books grant worth \$8,000 was awarded to the program to purchase books. Paul Novak, a district employee, created the shelving designed to go inside the bus to safely store the hundreds of books. Then with the help of Apollo High School students, who made the shelves, the idea just continued to grow. A volunteer crew from New Flyer Bus Manufacturing painted the bus and was able to get the paint donated by Axalta Powder Coating, saving thousands of dollars. Other contributors included District 742 Administration and Transportation, Theisen Manufacturing, Don Farleo of ADCO, Rheume's House of Lettering and countless volunteers helped to get the program rolling.

A remodeled bus with an attractive paint job, stairs so students can walk up into the bus to check out books and volunteers not having to roll the carts of books on and off the bus at each stop, allowed the Summer PAKRAT Roll & Read Program to expand to the entire district in the summer of 2015. With an additional \$4,000 grant from the St. Cloud Downtown Kiwanis Club, more books were purchased for the program this past summer. During the summer of 2016, over **2,000 kids checked out 5,971 books from Clear Lake to St. Joseph during the seven week program!**

Because of the demonstrated success of the PAKRAT Program, District 742 has provided stipends for the school year building PAKRAT coordinators and summertime PAKRAT bus staff within the district's budget.

Recently, LEAF received a \$25,000 anonymous gift for the purpose of sustaining the PAKRAT Program. The PAKRAT Summer Roll & Read Program is a great example of what can happen when a teacher has a great idea, colleagues step up to provide the professional classroom leadership to support the idea, and the community provides the needed financial support to make it happen. All of those things came together in St. Cloud and our students continue to benefit!

For more information about PAKRAT and the PAKRAT Summer Roll & Read Program contact Bruce Hentges, the LEAF executive director through the LEAF website:

www.leaf742.org.



PAKRAT school parade



Kids checking out books on the PAKRAT Roll & Read bus.

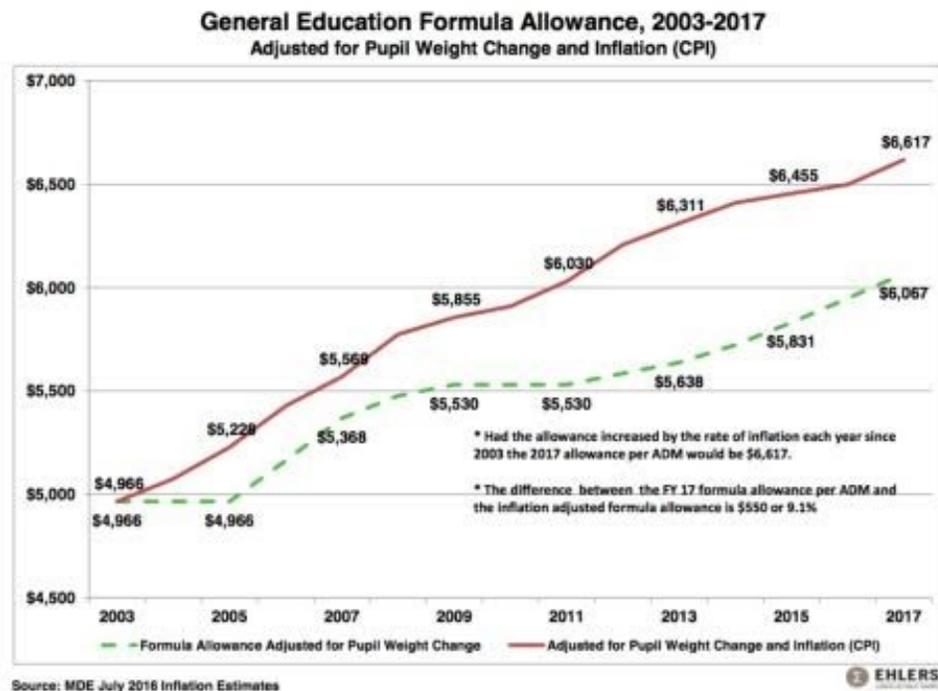
This month's member spotlight was submitted by Joni Olson, executive director of student achievement, St. Cloud School District 742.

School Referendums Play Critical Role in Funding Education Programs, Technology and Facilities

Six AMSD member school districts will have important referendum questions on the ballot November 8. The ballot questions range from operating referendum renewals or increases to capital project levy and bonding proposals. Statewide, 28 school districts are conducting referendum elections this fall.

Minnesota’s education funding system is a state and local partnership and local referendums play a critical role in funding the basic education program, as well as technology and school facilities. Nearly every school district in the state relies on referendum revenue to provide basic education programming for their students. Referendum revenue has become increasingly important since 2003 as state funding has lagged behind inflation. As Figure 1 shows, the general education formula allowance, the primary source of funding for schools, would be \$550 per pupil higher today if it had simply kept pace with inflation since 2003.

Figure 1



School districts also rely on capital project and building bond referendums to provide critical technology infrastructure and safe, secure and healthy environments for students and community members.

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AMSD Members: Anoka-Hennepin School District, Bloomington Public Schools, Board of School Administrators (Associate Member), Brooklyn Center Community Schools, Burnsville-Eagan-Savage, Columbia Heights Public Schools, Eastern Carver County Schools, Eden Prairie Schools, Edina Public Schools, Elk River Area School District, Equity Alliance MN (Associate Member), Farmington Area Public Schools, Fridley Public Schools, Hopkins Public Schools, Intermediate School District 287, Intermediate School District 917 (Associate Member), Inver Grove Heights Community Schools, Lakeville Area Public Schools, Mahtomedi Public Schools, Metro ECSU (Associate Member), Minneapolis Public Schools, Minnetonka Public Schools, Mounds View Public Schools, North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale School District, Northeast Metro Intermediate School District 916, Northwest Suburban Integration District (Associate Member), Orono Schools, Osseo Area Schools, Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools, Richfield Public Schools, Robbinsdale Area Schools, Rochester Public Schools; Rockford Area Schools, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public Schools, Roseville Area Schools, Shakopee Public Schools, South St. Paul Public Schools, South Washington County Schools, SouthWest Metro Intermediate District (Associate Member), Spring Lake Park Schools, St. Anthony-New Brighton Independent School District, St. Cloud Area Schools, St. Louis Park Public Schools, St. Paul Public Schools, Stillwater Area Public Schools, TIES (Associate Member), Wayzata Public Schools, West Metro Education Program, West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan Area Schools and White Bear Lake Area Schools.

Six AMSD Districts Have Ballot Requests

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Figure 2 outlines the AMSD member district referendum questions that will appear on the November 8 ballot. **More detailed information is available by clicking on the district name in the chart below.** In addition, superintendents, district staff and school board members are always available to answer questions about the proposed referendum questions.

Figure 2

District	Referendum Specifics
Minneapolis Public Schools	Operating Referendum Renewal: \$1,604.31 per pupil for nine years adjusted annually for inflation.
West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan School District	Operating Referendum Renewal: \$964.82 per pupil for 10 years adjusted annually for inflation.
Orono Schools	<p>Question 1: Revoke and Replace Operating Referendum: \$1,975 per pupil for 10 years adjusted annually for inflation.</p> <p>Question 2: Bond Referendum to construct a multipurpose athletic, physical education and community center not to exceed \$27,390,000.</p>
North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale School District	New Operating Referendum Request: \$630 per pupil for 10 years adjusted annually for inflation.
St. Cloud Area School District	<p>Question 1: Building Bond \$104.5 million (new Tech High School facility)</p> <p>Question 2: If Question 1 is approved, Building Bond \$38.75 million (remodel existing Apollo High School)</p>
Rockford Area Schools	<p>Question 1: Operating Referendum: \$1,142 per pupil for nine years.</p> <p>Question 2: Capital Projects Levy (Technology) \$3,555,900 over nine years for the acquisition, installation, replacement, support and maintenance of software, computers, mobile devices, improved technology, technology systems, networks, infrastructure, office and instructional technology and related training.</p>

AMSD also provides nonpartisan information about the election and education issues, including a 2016 Education Election Guide. The guide includes relevant education facts and data and potential questions for legislative candidates. You can find the guide and additional election information on [the AMSD web page](#).