

# 2026 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

## Fair and Sustainable Funding

- Protect existing special education funding and repeal the contingent \$250 million cut to special education cross-subsidy aid.
- Expand eligible uses of student support personnel aid to include:
  - » Allow student support personnel aid to be used to retain existing FTE positions and shield those staff from district budget cuts, not only replace positions funded by federal funding.
  - » Expand the allowable uses to include other mental health professionals (e.g., licensed clinical counselor, licensed psychologist)
- Fund interventions to prevent the need for restrictive procedures and seclusion
- Ensure education funding is delivered through direct aid to school districts and not through a competitive grant process

## MASE Mission

Building strong leaders who work on behalf of students with disabilities.

[www.mnase.org](http://www.mnase.org)

## Flexible and Supportive Policy

### SPECIAL EDUCATOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

- Eliminate the requirement to annually repost positions held by teachers with a Tier 1 License or Out-of-Field Permission
- Allow out-of-state enrollment in approved teacher preparation programs for Tier 2 teachers to support ongoing development
- Fund special education paperwork assistance to teachers, while allowing district flexibility to meet local needs.
- Align MN requirements for short-term objectives and benchmarks to federal requirements, including the requirement to regularly report progress on each annual goal in the IEP.
- Expand flexibility for out-of-field permission when conditions are such that no licensed candidate has applied
- Support MN entering into the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact

### SAFE AND SECURE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

- Make changes to K-grade 3 Non-Exclusionary Discipline (NED) requirements to enable schools adequate time to plan effective reentry supports, and preventative interventions to ensure safe classrooms.
- Preserve the permitted use of seclusion for handling emergencies to secure the safety of staff and students.

# KEY LEGISLATIVE CONTACTS

## PRESIDENT

**Dr. Amy Ernst**

Director of Special Services  
Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose Schools  
763-682-8721 | aernst@bhmschools.org

## PRESIDENT-ELECT

**Ms. Nicole Bolduan**

Assistant Special Education Director  
Red Wing Public Schools  
651-385-4600 | ntbolduan@rwps.org

## SECRETARY

**Ms. Michelle Cuka**

Director of Student Support Services  
Prior Lake-Savage Area Schools  
952-226-0033 | mcuka@plsas.org

## TREASURER

**Ms. Erin Hoffman**

Executive Director  
West Central Education District  
320-256-6102 | ehoffman@wced6026.org

## PAST PRESIDENT/LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE TRI-CHAIR

**Ms. Niceta Thomas**

Executive Director of Student Services  
Roseville Area Schools  
651-336-3532 | niceta.thomas@isd623.org

## LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE TRI-CHAIR

**Ms. Heidi Nistler**

Asst Superintendent of Specialized Services  
St. Paul Public Schools  
651-744-6508 | heidi.nistler@spps.org

## LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE TRI-CHAIR

**Ms. Nicole Woodward**

Executive Director  
St. Croix River Education District  
320-358-1244 | nwoodward@scred.k12.mn.us

## MASE LOBBYIST

**Ms. Valerie Dosland**

Director of Government Relations  
Ewald Consulting  
612-490-3052 | valeried@ewald.com

## MASE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Ms. Erin Toninato**

Minnesota Administrators for Special Education  
507-822-0877 | erin.toninato@mnase.org

## MINNESOTA ADMINISTRATORS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

1601 Utica Ave S, Ste 213  
Minneapolis, MN 55416  
651-299-0502 | [www.mnase.org](http://www.mnase.org)