Takeaways from the 2019 Legislative Session
Divided government unites on education issues
More dollars for scholars
PreferredOne

HEALTH PLANS FEATURING
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
Counseling
Talk Therapy
Work Life Resources/EAP
Face to Face, Phone, Online

PreferredOne is redefining behavioral health services. Contact your broker or PreferredOne at 736.847.4007 for details.

PreferredOne is the proud, founding sponsor of the Minnesota Self-Funded User Group, a unique “learning organization” that welcomes all public school administrators and labor leaders.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

6 | BOLD LEADERSHIP
2019 Summer Seminar bookended by leadership development coach, state demographer
Bruce Lombard

12 | DIVIDED GOVERNMENT
UNITES ON EDUCATION ISSUES
Public schools fare well with new funding, freeze of special education cross-subsidy
Denise Dittrich and Kimberley Dunn Lewis

18 | MORE DOLLARS FOR SCHOLARS
MSBA Scholarship marks its 11th year by awarding high-achieving students from Redwood Area, Pine Island
Greg Abbott and Bruce Lombard

22 | UNPACKING CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM THROUGH NETWORKED IMPROVEMENT COMMUNITIES
CAREI providing absenteeism review along with briefs on class sizes, homework, literacy and more
Kim Gibbons and Amber Humm Patnode

26 | MSBA BOARD DIRECTOR SPOTLIGHT: LISA ANDERSON

38 | MSBA: YEARS 1960–1980

4 | PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE Deborah Pauly, MSBA President

24 | ASK MSBA Amy Fullenkamp Taylor, MSBA Director of Management Services

30 | VENDOR DIRECTORY Pierre Productions & Promotions, Inc.

34 | LEGAL UPDATE Terry Morrow, MSBA Director of Legal and Policy Services

The MSBA Journal (USPS 352-220) is published bimonthly by the Minnesota School Boards Association, 1900 West Jefferson Avenue, St. Peter, Minnesota 56082. Telephone 507-934-2450. Call MSBA office for subscription rates. (Opinions expressed in the journal are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent MSBA policy.)
School board work requires bold leadership

By Deborah Pauly, MSBA President

The theme for this year’s MSBA Summer Seminar is “Bold Leadership.” As leaders in our local districts, we are faced with important and challenging decisions each day.

Bold leadership cultivates trust. One of the learning opportunities that MSBA offers is classes within “The Trust Edge” eight-pillar framework, which is based on the book and presentations by David Horsager. In order to be a bold leader, we must build trust with our stakeholders. If we want to make changes to impact student achievement, staff retention and student enrollment — that trust factor is critical. To be bold leaders, we must know our students and we must create a trust with their families and community. We must think beyond academics and consider social, emotional and cultural needs. We must hold all students to high standards.

Education is slow to change, but over the past couple years we have seen districts with bold leaders take new approaches to providing learning opportunities. The delivery model many districts are using in education is slowly changing. Some districts are going away from the traditional classroom model that has been the norm for most of the history of education in the United States. One of the outcomes of this work is to provide individualized learning plans tailored to the individual student. We are moving away from the cookie-cutter approach that has been the norm for many decades. We are working harder to reach students where their social, emotional, cultural, ethnic, and intellectual levels are. Venturing away from the comfort of doing things “the way they have always been done” can be scary and met with resistance by stakeholders. That is why building trust, as David Horsager shares, is critical to bold leadership.

A couple years ago, our Jordan Middle School needed a major remodel. Through bold leadership, our district passed a referendum to finance a total rebuild of the school and replace it with a design that is not a traditional classroom model. We created two Einstein Labs which have been used for a multitude of creative learning and meeting opportunities for any and all curricular areas. We have moved away from ownership of a classroom by our staff to a shared model. Our teachers’ “home base” is our Professional Learning Center (PLC) spaces. This is where we encourage our teachers to collaborate and be creative in how they can deliver their core curricular content in a teamwork approach. Through staff collaboration, we are working toward a model of individualized learning geared to each student. Our learning spaces spill over into large commons areas with genius bars, writable swivel glass surfaces and creative furniture geared to a variety of learning styles. Our creative design has won several architectural awards and drawn districts from across the state and beyond to tour our building. This didn’t happen by chance. Excitement and success of this model has spilled over to our elementary and high school and is something we continue to work toward districtwide. Through bold leadership and building trust with our parents, voters, and staff we have seen success and continued opportunities for our students.

MSBA’s Summer Seminar is a great resource for board members and superintendents. As we will all be gearing up for the new school year, it is an opportunity to demonstrate your commitment to lifelong learning. You will have an opportunity to hear what’s happening in other districts. MSBA’s Terry Morrow will give a “Case Law Update” and the MSBA Government Relations team will summarize the 2019 legislative session to help you maneuver the new laws enacted. Our keynote speaker will be Jolly Corley, a leadership coach who is passionate about experiential learning as a tool for growth and development. She cultivates leadership skills through the use of practical strategies for self-evaluation and goal setting. Jolly challenges participants to consider the challenges of growth and development from a personal point of view. Our State Demographer Susan Brower will talk about how demographics are changing Minnesota schools. The Early Bird Session speaker will be Bukata Hayes, who will speak on “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.” Bukata will show the importance of having a school climate that is inclusive, equitable, and diverse for improving student achievement for all.

I hope you will attend the Summer Seminar on Monday, August 5, at Minneapolis Marriott Northwest in Brooklyn Park. Bukata will present his Early Bird Session Sunday evening, August 4. Also, if you haven’t taken the Phase I or Phase II workshops (or if you would like a refresher), those classes will also be offered in conjunction with the Summer Seminar.

Be the best board member you can be. Be a bold leader.

Deborah Pauly is the MSBA President. You can contact her at dpauly@isd717.org.
CALENDAR

JULY 2019
4..............Independence Day (No meetings)

AUGUST 2019
4..............MSBA Board of Directors Meeting
4..............MSBA Summer Seminar Early Bird Workshop
(“Diversity, Equity and Inclusion”), Brooklyn Park
5..............MSBA Summer Seminar (“Bold Leadership in Action”),
Brooklyn Park
5..............MSBA Learning to Lead — School Board Basics:
Phase I Workshop, Brooklyn Park
6..............MSBA Leadership Foundations — School Finance and
Management: Phase II Workshop, Brooklyn Park
6..............MSBA Charter School Board Workshop, Brooklyn Park
6-7..........MDE/MASA Conference
13..........Primary Election Day (If applicable, no meetings or
activities from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.)
14..........Minnesota School District Liquid Asset Fund Plus Meeting

SEPTEMBER 2019
2..............Labor Day (No meetings)
3..............First Day School Can Be Held
5..............MSBA Insurance Trust Meeting
10..........MSBA Advocacy Tour (Locations TBA)
11..........MSBA Advocacy Tour (Locations TBA)
12..........MSBA Advocacy Tour (Locations TBA)
17..........MSBA Advocacy Tour (Locations TBA)
18..........MSBA Advocacy Tour (Locations TBA)
19..........MSBA Advocacy Tour (Locations TBA)
20..........MSBA Building a High-Performance School Board Team:
Phase III Workshop (Location TBA)
21..........MSBA Representing Your Community Through Policy and
Engagement: Phase IV Workshop (Location TBA)
27..........Last Day for Submitting Legislative Resolutions for MSBA
Delegate Assembly

MSBA thanks arts instructor Paula Kennedy and her students from St. Peter Public Schools for sharing their art in this issue.

COVER ART:
Makayla M.
Contact MSBA’s Bruce Lombard at blombard@mnmsba.org if you’d like to see your students’ art displayed in a future MSBA Journal magazine.

CORRECTION:
The art teacher was misidentified on Page 5 of the May-June 2019 edition of the Journal. Kandice Mascotti is the arts instructor for Stewartville Public Schools.
The MSBA Summer Seminar returns Monday, August 5, at the Minneapolis Marriott Northwest in Brooklyn Park. This year’s seminar is themed “Bold Leadership” and will feature keynote speakers Jolly Corley and Susan Brower (see sidebar on Page 7 for information about Brower).

Corley — a leadership development coach and motivational speaker based out of Mankato — will discuss “Bold Leadership in Action” during her opening keynote presentation.

A native of Indiana, Corley earned a bachelor’s degree in Theater in 1995 at Adrian College in Michigan. (“Adrian is like a little Gustavus,” Corley noted, making reference to the college campus located near the MSBA office in St. Peter.)

Following graduation, she acted professionally for about four years.

“My very first professional gig was at Park Square Theatre in St. Paul,” Corley said. “And I also worked for the Children’s Theatre in Minneapolis.”

Corley eventually familiarized with leadership principles.
2019 SUMMER SEMINAR

By 2001, she was teaching leadership skills and community building in New Hampshire for “130 emerging leaders” between the ages 18 to 30. These emerging leaders come from all over the United States and span the globe — from New Zealand, Mexico, Europe, Africa and parts in between.

Camp — where she still teaches at today — primes those emerging leaders to lead camp on their own, where they pass on what they have learned to children ages 7 to 15.

Corley moved to Minnesota in 2004 when her husband picked up a professorship at Minnesota State University, Mankato (MSU). Around 2008, Corley began “dabbling” in consulting, conducting leadership workshops, and doing some personal one-on-one coaching as well. By 2010, she had become a full-blown motivational speaker and leadership development coach.

In 2012, Corley earned her master’s degree in Educational Leadership from MSU.

Collectively, Corley’s undergraduate and graduate work revolved around leadership, group dynamics, experiential learning, philosophy, and theatre. Using games, theatre, and life experiences, she prepares attendees at her speaking engagements to understand that our own experiences are the most useful tools for reflection and growth toward a solid foundation to becoming leaders for life.

continued on page 8

Closing keynote speaker to address student demographics

State Demographer Susan Brower will discuss “Changing Student Demographics” in the Summer Seminar’s closing keynote address.

Brower — who became the state demographer in 2012 — travels the state talking with Minnesotans about the new social and economic realities that are brought about by recent demographic shifts.

Her work applies an understanding of demographic trends to changes in a range of areas including the state’s economy and workforce, education, health, immigration, and rural population changes.

Brower originally joined the State Demographic Center after working as a researcher on the Minnesota Compass project at Wilder Research in St. Paul. Prior to that, she worked at the Population Studies Center at the University of Michigan.

Susan earned her Ph.D. in sociology at the University of Michigan, specializing in demography and family sociology. She also holds a master’s degree in public policy from Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota.
“I also like to work on generational building and breaking down walls,” she said. “I do a lot of work with developing culture within organizations.”

Nowadays, she speaks all over the country in places like Chicago, Los Angeles, and Orlando and has made it as far south as Peru. Also, Corley had an interview spotlight on Radio BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) in 2019 during her visit to Glasgow, Scotland, to speak about emerging leadership.

Despite all these travels, Corley said it took until 2018 to speak locally for the first time when she made an appearance at the Mankato YWCA Women’s Leadership Conference.

For her presentation at the Summer Seminar, Corley said she plans to discuss why “Bold Leadership” is important for school leaders.

“Most people join a board or get into education to do really great things, to impact kids and the future,” Corley said. “We have all these ideas to change the world. But sometimes we tend to get into a to-do list mode — rather than looking at our vision and dreams. To-do lists are important, but they really don’t change the world much — they can even be stagnant and get us into a cycle where we’re not being more bold in our leadership. And by ‘bold,’ I mean by taking a look at ourselves. And taking a look at how we’re leading — and what we do that impacts and how does it impact, and if we are being honest with ourselves.”

Corley said people need to ask themselves, “What is it that am I doing that is impactful?”

“You need to revisit those ideas that you had,” she said. And ask yourself, ‘Am I still there for this reason? Am I moving myself forward or have I got caught up in this to-do list?’ And we kind of start placing blame on why we can’t get things done.”

When asked what key messages she would like school leaders to walk away with following her Summer Seminar presentation, Corley said: “I would like them to be open to being honest with themselves about what they are doing, what challenges they face — and why they are doing it.”

“I want the attendees to be open and honest with themselves and their impact,” Corley said. “Not just their impact at school and what they are doing with their career, but also the impact on their personal lives — because those all intersect in creating who we are and what we accomplish at the end of the day.”

Corley added: “I want school leaders to start looking at those things together rather than, ‘this is my work life and this is my home life.’ We need to learn how those impact each other and the dreams and the goals that we have for our lives.”

Bruce Lombard is MSBA’s Associate Director of Communications. Contact him at blombard@mmsba.org. Learn more about Jolly Corley at http://jollycorley.efoliomn.com.
**Early Bird Session focuses on equity and diversity**

6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.  
Sunday, August 4  
Minneapolis Marriott Northwest, Brooklyn Park

Bukata Hayes will present “Diversity, Equity and Inclusion” at this year’s Summer Seminar Early Bird Session.

Hayes will show the importance of having a school climate that is inclusive, equitable, and diverse for improving student achievement for all.

He has served as the Executive Director of the Greater Mankato Diversity Council since September 2006.

Hayes received his bachelor’s degree in Exercise Physiology from the College of St. Scholastica in Duluth. He has membership and/or is on the board of numerous organizations such as the Mankato Chapter of the NAACP, the Mankato Hospital Board, the Mayo Clinic, the Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Board, and the Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation Board.

Prior to his role at the Greater Mankato Diversity Council, Hayes served as the Coordinator of the Multi Ethnic Center at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minnesota — the first-ever position of its kind at the college.

This will mark Hayes’ second appearance at an MSBA Summer Seminar. In 2016, he presented “The Power of YOU in the Equity Conversation.”

“Diversity, Equity and Inclusion” is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Sunday, August 4, at the Minneapolis Marriott Northwest.

Visit [www.mnmsba.org/SummerSeminar](http://www.mnmsba.org/SummerSeminar) for more information.

---

**Post-Summer Seminar workshops offer additional learning opportunities**

**Learning to Lead — School Board Basics: Phase I Workshop**  
5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Monday, August 5

Hit the ground running by discussing the role of the school board, the role of the superintendent, the leadership team relationship, and common scenarios facing new board members.

**Leadership Foundations — School Finance and Management: Phase II Workshop**  
8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday, August 6

Cover core topics such as budget, school finance, local levies, policies, significant laws affecting school boards, collective bargaining, and personnel issues.

**Charter School Board Workshop**  
8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Tuesday, August 6, 2019

This workshop offers all three state-required training components for charter school board members: Board Governance, Financial Matters, and Employment Matters.

Visit [www.mnmsba.org/SummerSeminar](http://www.mnmsba.org/SummerSeminar) for more information.
Summer Seminar Schedule At A Glance
8:45 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. Monday, August 5
Minneapolis Marriott Northwest, Brooklyn Park

- Welcome and MSBA Update — MSBA Executive Director Kirk Schneidawind
- Introductions and Logistics — MSBA President Deborah Pauly
- “Insights into the 2019 Legislative Session” — Denise Dittrich, MSBA Associate Director of Government Relations

- Opening Keynote
“Bold Leadership in Action” — Jolly Corley, Leadership Development Coach

- Fast Tracks
  - Case Law Update — Terry Morrow, MSBA Director of Legal and Policy Services,
  - Roseville Area Schools: Magna Award Winner (“Access and Equity in College Credit Class”) — Roseville Area School Board Chair Kitty Gogins, Superintendent Aldo Sicoli, and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Jenny Loeck
  - Marshall County Central Schools: Local Government Innovation Award Winner (“Outdoor Prairie/Outdoor Classroom—Connecting Students to Nature”) — Marshall County Central Superintendent Jeffrey Lund

- Closing Keynote
“Changing Student Demographics” — Susan Brower, Minnesota State Demographer

Visit www.mnmsba.org/SummerSeminar

If You Go
What: 2019 MSBA Summer Seminar
When: Monday, August 5
Where: Minneapolis Marriott Northwest, 7025 Northland Drive North, Brooklyn Park

Seminar Extras:
- Early Bird Session (“Diversity, Equity and Inclusion”): 6:30 p.m., Sunday, August 4
- Learning to Lead — School Board Basics: Phase I Workshop: 5:30 p.m., Monday, August 5
- Leadership Foundations — School Finance and Management: Phase II Workshop: 8 a.m., Tuesday, August 6
- Charter School Board Member Workshop: 8:30 a.m., Tuesday, August 6

Registration: Advance registration for the Summer Seminar, the Early Bird Session and the Phase I and Phase II workshops ends Wednesday, July 24.

Hotel: If you need lodging, please reserve your hotel room at the Minneapolis Marriott Northwest by Monday, July 17, to obtain the special group rate. Ask for the “Minnesota School Boards Association Group Rate.”

Visit http://www.mnmsba.org/SummerSeminar to access hotel and event registration information.
With over 100 years of combined experience in the field of school law, our attorneys are dedicated to providing customized, cost-effective legal services that fit your needs.

- Creative Problem Solving
- Tenacious Representation
- Goal-Oriented Advice
- Cost-Effective Services
- Timely Work Product

612-436-4300 | 333 South Seventh Street | Suite 2800 | Minneapolis, MN 55402 | www.raslaw.com
The 2019 Minnesota Legislature had five months to pass a budget that would fund the state government for the next two years. As beneficiaries, public schools have a huge stake in this process. “Any year is important at the Legislature, but the first year of the biennium is critical as it sets the financial direction for school districts across Minnesota,” said MSBA Executive Director Kirk Schneidawind. “Education is the largest category of state general fund spending.”

With a divided government, agreeing and passing bills can be difficult. The newly flipped Democratic House was largely made up of suburban women. The Senate maintained a slim rural Republican majority. Minnesota was promised a more transparent and timely process.

Throughout session, MSBA’s Government Relations staff advocated and worked with lawmakers on legislative agenda items. In fact, from January 8 through May 20, nearly 6,000 bills were introduced with approximately 10 percent pertaining to education. There were approximately 180 hearings on education issues with more than 20 school board members testifying. After hearing hundreds of bills, the House and Senate had vastly different omnibus bills to bring to conference committee.

At the end of the regular legislative session, the education conference committee received a global target of $543 million — one day before session was scheduled to end. Leadership’s directive was to put together the respective bill by 5 p.m. the next day in order to meet the constitutional deadline of May 20. Unfortunately, the education conference committee could not reach an agreement on policy and finance items, and as a result Gov. Tim Walz, House Speaker Melissa Hortman, and Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka took control to finalize the bill.

By midnight on the last day of the session, the Legislature passed only one of its budget bills, which meant a special session was imminent. In recent history, the term “special session” has become much more the norm despite its unpopularity. Gov. Walz, House Speaker Melissa Hortman, and Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka took control to finalize the bill.

The good news is the education bill that finally passed and was signed by the Governor has provisions that closely align to MSBA’s major funding priorities. And more good news — the bill does not contain several provisions that could have greatly changed or disrupted the ability for school boards to manage school districts.
Equally important to note are the items that did not make it into the bills. Throughout session there were multiple hearings to drastically alter the new tiered teacher licensure system. For example, one provision restricted renewals for Tier I and Tier II teachers. Other proposals eliminated utilizing experience and positive reviews to move forward and instead required teachers to be enrolled in a teacher preparation program, regardless of other degrees or experience.

Non-exclusionary discipline provisions were left out of the bill as well. Legislators heard bills and discussed this topic during the past two sessions. While ensuring students are not suspended or expelled without other interventions is important, school advocates argued it should be “when appropriate” so student and staff safety can be maintained.

MSBA was extremely disappointed to see several of New Ulm Public Schools’ special education paperwork reduction provisions left out of the final bill, even though five of the six provisions were included in both omnibus bills. Usually when provisions are the same or similar, they are adopted and become law. Unfortunately, the conference committee did not adopt.

A bill allowing school boards to appoint an individual when a vacancy occurs made it through the House. However, the Senate would not consider a hearing despite repeated requests and thus it did not make it into the final bill. MSBA continues to hear concerns related to the increasing number of school board vacancies and the high cost and complexity of special elections.

Divided government and differences in fiscal policy played a huge role in the discussion of another bill that fell outside education but would have an impact on schools. Paid Family and Medical Leave Act (HF 5, a bill that would create a statewide fund for employees to utilize, much like unemployment insurance, for family leave or more lengthy sick time). On its surface, the bill appears to be logical and provide a benefit to individuals and families.

continued on page 14
However, MSBA believes the discussions need to include state funding for the employer portion, which would be anywhere from $23 million to $46 million annually. Currently, school districts are not able to levy for the funds, so the general fund would be tapped, impacting programs and curricular offerings. We expect this issue to return in 2020.

Divided government came together in a special session and delivered good things for education. New funding, freezing the special education cross-subsidy, and reforming special education funding formula are benefits to districts. Policy items can be costly and controversial. Fortunately, the final agreement only included policy items previously adopted by conference committee and excluded many of the controversial policy provisions that would have limited the managerial authority of our schools.

Contact Denise Dittrich at ddittrich@mnmsba.org and Kimberley Dunn Lewis at klewis@mnmsba.org.

The governor may call the Legislature into special session on extraordinary occasions. Some state legislatures are allowed to call themselves into special session. The Minnesota Constitution does not permit this — only the governor can call the Legislature into special session.

To view a 30-minute webinar about the 2019 Legislative Session, go to www.mnmsba.org/webinars and click on 2019 Legislative Update.
2019 LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

Special Session Bill (HF 1)
Total Spending Over Base: $543 million

Financial Highlights

- **Funding Formula** — Two percent and two percent on the general education formula. The per-pupil formula increases to $6,312 or $126 per pupil in fiscal year 2020, and to $6,438 or $129 per pupil in fiscal year 2021. (MSBA advocated for 3 percent and 3 percent funding increases.)

- **Special Education Funding Increase** — $90.691 million in fiscal years 2020-2021 and $142.191 million in fiscal years 2022-2023 to freeze the growth of the special education cross-subsidy.

- **Voluntary Pre-K** — $46.787 million (fiscal years 2020-2021) only for voluntary pre-K to fund 4,000 seats set to expire.

- **School Safety** — $30 million (one-time funding) for safe schools, contingent upon closing balance for fiscal year 2019. If the balance is in excess of $33 million, but less than $63 million, the amount over $33 million is appropriated to schools. Funds are to be distributed on a per-pupil basis, approximately $34.70 per ADM (average daily membership), if the full $30 million is allocated. Used for the same purposes as safe schools levy and would be available October 1, 2019.

- **Tribal Contract Schools** — Permanent funding for Tribal Contract Schools ($3.434 million in fiscal years 2020-2021 and $4.620 million in fiscal years 2022-2023).

- **Teacher Mentorship and Retention** — $1.5 million in ongoing spending to encourage school districts to develop mentoring programs for teachers who are American Indian or in shortage areas.

- **Special Education Tuition Billing** — Rate paid of unfunded costs by the resident district for open enrolled students reduced from 90 percent to 85 percent in fiscal year 2020 and 80 percent for fiscal year 2021.

- **Pregnant and Parenting Teens** — Covers a school district's costs of transporting a teenage mother and her child to and from a school.

- **Operating Referendum Equalization (Tax bill)** — Increases the equalizing factor for Tier 2 of the referendum (new Tier 1) from $510,000 to $567,000. Includes $9.4 million of property tax relief in fiscal year 2021.

- **School Bond Agricultural Credit (Tax bill)** — Increased from 40 percent under current law to 50 percent in Pay 20, 55 percent in Pay 21, 60 percent in Pay 22, and 70 percent in Pay 23 and thereafter.

**Policy Highlights**

- **Board Control of Extracurriculars** — Requires a school board to take charge of and control all extracurricular activities. Requires a school district to reserve revenue raised for extracurricular activities and spend the revenue for that purpose.

- **Local Optional Revenue (LOR) Simplification** — Modifies LOR so that the revenue no longer needs to be factored into a district’s board approved referendum. Keeps the revenue and equalization levels the same as under current law.

- **Lead** — Requires a district that finds lead in water, beyond the federal guidelines, to remediate or make the source unavailable.

- **Dyslexia Screening** — Requires a school district to screen for characteristics of dyslexia in a locally determined manner.

- **Dyslexia Training** — Requires teacher prep programs to include dyslexia instruction.

- **Special Education Paperwork Reduction** — Allows districts to hold conciliation conferences with appropriate members of the IEP team. Also allows, but not requires, an IEP to report a student’s performance on assessments.

The MSBA Government Relations team is pleased to share the 2019 Legislative Summary with our members. Within the summary you will find details on how the 2019 legislation will affect your schools.

Some highlights include:

- District-by-District Runs
  General Education, Special Education, and Voluntary Pre-K
  Referendum Equalization
  General Fund Appropriation Summary
- 8 changes to MSBA Model Policies
- 7 new requirements for districts
- Advocacy Tour Dates - Mark your calendar

MSBA’s Denise Dittrich will give a full update and a preview of the 2020 Session at the Aug. 5 Summer Seminar!

---
You can join more than 600 of Minnesota’s school districts, cities and counties to provide affordable, high quality health insurance to your employees. Seven Minnesota Service Cooperatives have joined together under a new name, Minnesota Healthcare Consortium. **Together we provide the cost savings of being self insured with the financial safety of being in a pool.** Contact your local Minnesota Service Cooperative representative to learn more.
Designing spaces to fit new learning models.

Contact Dean S. Beeninga
www.atsr.com
800-545-3731

A passion for public law

School Law Group

Our attorneys provide responsive, creative, practical and high-quality legal services to public school districts.

Alex D. Ivan
Greg Madsen
Maggie R. Wallner
Adam C. Wattenbarger
Jenny S. Boulton
Lizzie Brodeen-Kuo
Martha N. Ingram
Brian D. Lehinger
Sofia E. Lykke
Doug D. Shaftel
Sarah J. Sonsalla
James M. Strommen

Education Law
Finance and Bond
Construction
Civil Litigation
Real Estate and Business

470 U. S. Bank Plaza, 200 South Sixth Street, Minneapolis, MN 55402
Phone 612.337.9300 • Fax 612.337.9310 • Toll Free 1.800.788.8201

kennedy-graven.com
Redwood Area’s Deon Estebo and Pine Island’s Andrew Kroll were announced this spring as the recipients of the 2019 MSBA Student School Board Member Scholarship. Now in its 11th year, the MSBA Scholarship continues to award a $3,000 cash prize to two student school board representatives to use toward their postsecondary education.

The MSBA Board of Directors Scholarship Committee selected Deon and Andrew from a field of nearly 40 student applicants. Currently, more than 100 Minnesota public school boards have at least one student representative.

MSBA will accept applications for its next scholarship in January 2020. Until then, learn more about the 2019 winners in the following text.

Deon Estebo, Redwood Valley High School
Deon Estebo is a student school board member from Redwood Area. He will be attending South Dakota School of Mines and Technology (Rapid City, South Dakota) to pursue a degree in mechanical engineering this fall.

One of the projects he was involved with during his stint on the board was the district’s oversight in the construction of a Career and Technical Center. He wanted to make sure the building appealed to students and was on the same page with his board about having many lab areas for students to learn hands-on.

“Many of my peers and I agree that we learn more effectively when engaging in hands-on activities,” he said, “especially in classes relating to agriculture, manufacturing, health, and technical fields of education.
Besides standing out academically, Deon was also involved in sports and other co-curricular activities such as robotics and band. He believes that co-curriculars are important because they give students opportunities to be part of an activity that is larger than what they can do themselves.

“A large amount of life lessons and important skills are taught outside of the class time hours at co-curricular activities.” He said. “Co-curricular activities have taught me countless lessons and shaped me into the person that I am today.”

As a student serving on the school district’s Student Council, Deon also picked up some ideas from being on the school board that he could transfer to the student group.

“Each individual school board member has expertise in a different career field or occupation. These differences assisted the school greatly, especially with the Career and Technical Center project,” he said. “This observation affirmed for me that each person on my council has expertise in different facets, whether they are gifted in designing T-shirts, talking in front of crowds, or leading discussions with peers.”

He also learned to encourage other student members to pursue projects that are in their own personal areas of expertise.

Redwood Area Superintendent Rick Ellingworth’s recommendation letter touted Deon as a strong servant leader. “He never runs from a challenge, but embraces it,” Ellingworth wrote. Ellingworth ran off a list of initiatives Deon had led, which included “water container refill” water fountains so students can refill water bottles and cut down on waste; an initiative to “be explicitly kind to others” and raise awareness of bullying and find ways to make everyone feel more safe at school; and hosting Red Cross blood drives.

“He’s a positive difference-maker,” Ellingworth said.

Deon said he is inspired by the service of his fellow school board members. “It can be stressful and difficult at times,” he said. “But each member steps up to the challenge and works to solve the issue at hand. It has taught me the importance of selflessly serving others for the betterment of the school and community.”

Andrew Kroll, Pine Island High School

Andrew Kroll served as the student representative for two years on the Pine Island School Board. This fall, Andrew will attend the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities campus to study at the Carlson School of Management.

The MSBA Scholarship Committee cited Andrew for his high-academic achievements (which featured a 4.0 grade-point average), the sheer volume and quality of his extracurricular activities (which included student council, speech team, and honors choir), and his ability to manage his heavy school/activity workload while working at Baker’s Square and volunteering in his community.

Andrew said he believes in the importance of student activities.

“It is very important for students my age to be involved in multiple activities because it prepares them for their busy lives ahead,” Andrew said. “I decided to be involved in so many co-curricular activities because I knew that it would help me find and develop my hidden talents and interests. Every student has a unique set of talents and interests. Clubs and activities help reveal a student’s potential for success. Clubs and organizations also function as support

continued on page 20
groups for students where they can talk to one another in a comfortable environment.” 

Andrew said he was honored to have been given the opportunity to make a positive impact on the way that his school operates.

“My favorite part about the student representative role was presenting my monthly reports at the open school board meetings,” he said. “I am also very thankful for the freedom that the school board gave me. The school board never pressured me to cover any certain topics, so I was able to present the concerns and successes of the entire student body the way I thought was best. Nothing gives me a better feeling than when I am able to help my school district become more successful.”

In Andrew’s opinion, the key to being a successful student representative comes down to having the right mindset.

“To be a successful student representative you have to be yourself,” he said. “In my first few reports, I was not sure what would be the best way to present the input I had gathered from my fellow students. So, I presented a basic bulleted-list report. Even though I was able to complete and deliver this type of report, it was not enjoyable for me and I could see that it was not influential to the school board members. At my next report, I delivered a detailed visual presentation that was less scripted. I felt much more comfortable and the school board was significantly more involved in what I covered. My advice to all student representatives is to not be afraid to change up the status quo. The more comfortable you are in your position, the more successful you will be.”

In the future, Andrew said he’d be interested in running for his local school board — wherever that may be.

“I think that it would be very rewarding to be a part of the planning and decision-making that goes into making a school function,” he said. “With my two years of experience as a school board student representative, I think that I have a good understanding of what goes into being a good school board member. The Pine Island School Board frequently establishes new goals to be even more successful and I would love to be a part of a team that is as united as the Pine Island School Board.”

In her letter of recommendation for Andrew, Pine Island Superintendent Dr. Tamara Champa wrote: “He is a young man of extreme character. His genuine, authentic attitude serves as a role model for both the student body and all who have the good fortune of working with him.”

Greg Abbott is the MSBA Director of Communications and Bruce Lombard is the Associate Director of Communications. You may contact them at gabbott@mnmsba.org or blombard@mnmsba.org, respectively.

11 YEARS OF MSBA SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

2019: Deon Estebo (Redwood Valley High School) and Andrew Kroll (Pine Island High School)

2018: Zachary Riffle (Mound Westonka High School) and Ashley Rensted (White Bear Lake Area High School)

2017: Nathan Hagerott (Caledonia High School) and London Lowmanstone (Hopkins High School)

2016: McKinley Lain (Sauk Rapids-Rice High School) and Taylor Nelson (Woodbury High School)

2015: Amber Bennett (Proctor High School) and Giancarlo Marconi (Austin High School)

2014: Tim Bergeland (Hopkins High School) and Erik Thibault (Duluth East High School)

2013: Stephanie Chavez-Estrada (Richfield High School) and Molly Sandstrom (Chisago Lakes High School)

2012: Michael Gaytko (Waseca High School) and Heather Rolffing (Lewiston-Altura High School)

2011: Marguerite Haggerty (Cannon Falls High School) and Maraki Ketema (White Bear Lake Area High School)

2010: Kai Fei (Duluth East High School) and Tanwaporn Ohl (Cass Lake-Bena High School)

2009: Ethan Lang (Hopkins High School) and Kendra Lynn (Cambridge-Isanti High School)
Scholarship winners reflect on leadership

The text below represents excerpts from application essays submitted by 2019 MSBA Scholarship recipients Deon Estebo and Andrew Kroll.

Deon Estebo

Helen Keller once said, “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” For the past two years, I have been honored with the opportunity to serve as a student school board member for the Redwood Area School District. Throughout my time serving on the school board, I have learned the importance of selfless service, teamwork, collaboration, and effective communication.

In the two years that I have served as a student representative for the Redwood Area School Board, I have been inspired by the service each of my fellow school board members provides to his/her community. Every member on the Redwood Area School Board serves selflessly to benefit his/her community.

While being a school board member can be stressful and difficult at times, each member steps up to the challenge and works to solve the issue at hand. Experiencing these difficult situations and watching how the school board members have stepped up has taught me the importance of selflessly serving others for the betterment of the school and community.

Andrew Kroll

My experience on the school board has taught me how to be committed. Throughout my two years as a board representative, I have only missed two meetings due to athletic competitions. On these days I made recorded video presentations that were presented in my absence. Most recently, I have worked with the board to establish a new student representative guideline.

I am very grateful to the school board for treating me like an experienced adult. I developed a system that is more valuable for the student representative and more influential to the board’s decisions. After I delivered a presentation to the student body outlining the duties of the position and giving an example report, the applicant pool became the largest it has ever been.

Over the past two years, my experience on the school board has not only taught me how the board functions but it has also molded me into a better leader. My improved reporting, presenting, and communication skills have proven useful in the many other organizations I am involved with. I am confident that my time working with the school board has prepared me for a successful future. Most importantly, none of this would be possible without the dedication and support of our school board and all that they do to help our students thrive.
It is estimated among K-12 students in the United States, roughly 5 to 7.5 million are chronically absent (i.e. missing 10% or more school days) each year. Missing 10 percent of instructional time has a significant impact on student outcomes such as math and literacy achievement, on-time graduation, and postsecondary enrollment. Given these outcomes, 36 states and the District of Columbia have adopted chronic absenteeism as a School Quality or Student Success indicator in their Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan. Minnesota is among the states that selected chronic absenteeism as an ESSA indicator. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) identified consistent attendance as a school quality indicator, which is defined as attending more than 90 percent of school days (MDE, 2018). Since MDE began gathering data on chronic absenteeism in 2011, consistently 12 to 13 percent of students in grades 1-12 have been absent for more than 10 percent of school days (MDE, 2018). Disparities in absenteeism rates are observed by racial and ethnic background, income, and special education status.

Many districts and schools grapple with how to determine the scope of the issue among their students, identify root causes, implement improvement strategies, and evaluate impact. The use of Networked Improvement Communities (NICs) offers a framework for support. NICs are collaborative research-practice partnerships that function as scientific learning communities where participants come together to understand and identify a problem that is common across settings, identify root causes for the problem, and engage in rapid cycles of design, implementation, testing, and redesign to develop solutions.

During this school year, the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI) at the University of Minnesota partnered with nine school districts and schools to unpack chronic absenteeism through NICs.
districts (including two online schools), to identify chronic absenteeism rates preK-12 overall and among subgroups. In addition to understanding prevalence rates, participants unpacked root causes for absenteeism related to student or family reasons as well as system contributors at the school, district, and county level. The districts and schools were then supported in identifying priorities and developing action plans to address barriers to consistent attendance. Participants had the opportunity to learn from other colleagues about barriers as well as potential strategies to improve attendance within their settings. The districts and schools will test out the effectiveness of the action plans and interventions during the upcoming school year and plan to share progress during principal meetings.

While chronic absenteeism presents a challenge for educators, it is alterable at the student and system-level when interventions are appropriately targeted and matched to student needs. The support of a networked improvement community provides the perfect environment for educators to determine strategies that will meet student needs.

CAREI anticipates hosting another Attendance/Chronic Absenteeism NIC during the 2019-20 school year. For more information regarding attendance/chronic absenteeism NICs, contact Kim Gibbons at KGibbons@umn.edu.


QUESTION: What role, if any, should school board members play in hiring the school district’s personnel?

ANSWER: Even though the school board is charged with governing the school district, and Minnesota Statute 123B.02, subd. 14., states, in pertinent part, “The board may employ ... necessary employees ...,” school board members should not interpret this language to mean they should be involved in interviewing candidates for the various positions at the school district.

The nationally recognized best practice is school board members do not participate in the interviewing or recommending process for any school district position other than the position of superintendent. The school board sets policies related to the hiring process, approves the budget which includes salaries and benefits, and takes action at duly called meetings to approve the hiring of personnel based on the recommendation of the school district’s administrative team. A couple questions school board members may ask themselves prior to acting on personnel recommendations include: “Is this a budgeted position?” and “Has the established hiring process been followed?” However, the school district’s administrative team is responsible for using the established policies, processes, and parameters to determine the individuals best qualified for the positions and to recommend those individuals to fill the positions in order to best meet the district’s goals.

When the full school board, a quorum of the school board, a committee of the school board (regardless of the number of school board members on said committee), a quorum of a committee of the school board, or an individual school board member is involved in the interviewing process, the school board needs to keep in mind Minnesota’s Open Meeting Law (OML). Per the OML, “meeting” means a gathering of at least a quorum or more members of the school board, or quorum of a committee or subcommittee of school board members, at which members discuss, decide, or receive information as a group on issues relating to the official business of the school board. Therefore, the interviews would be open meetings. In addition, having school board members participate in the interviewing or recommending process may lead to unintended consequences such as opening the door for local politics (e.g., “Bob and I have been friends for a long time and he really needs this job,” etc.) to become part of the process and/or micromanaging.

Again, MSBA would like to remind school districts, having school board members participate in interviewing/hiring committees for school district positions other than the superintendent position is not considered a “best practice.”

Contact Amy Fullenkamp-Taylor at ataylor@mnmsba.org. Thanks to the Oregon School Boards Association for allowing MSBA to use excerpts of their content for this column.
Protecting schools since 1974.

Your Minnesota classrooms deserve the security of solid coverage. We insure local because communities like yours matter.

Make the smart choice — Count on EMC®.

EMC Minneapolis Branch
800-362-4670
minneapolis@emcins.com

www.emcins.com

©Copyright Employers Mutual Casualty Company 2019. All rights reserved.
Lisa Anderson — “I am dedicated to ensuring that all of our students receive a quality education”

MSBA Director District 13 Board Director’s home district touts high graduation rates, strong personalized learning program

By MSBA Associate Director of Communications Bruce Lombard

Lisa Anderson joined the MSBA Board of Directors in 2018, where she represents Director District 13 — comprised of the southwest metro school districts located in Carver and Scott counties.

Anderson was born and raised in South Dakota and now resides in Chaska, where she serves locally on the school board for Eastern Carver County Schools.

“I have two wonderful boys who both serve in the National Guard,” she said. “Professionally, I am a leadership coach and consultant. My passion is coaching leaders to grow people and strengthen organizations.”

Anderson was appointed to the Eastern Carver County School Board in 2009 after serving on the referendum committee and the boundary task force back when the district opened its second high school. “I am dedicated to ensuring that all of our students receive a quality education despite social-economic status,” she said.

In the interview below, Anderson lauds Eastern Carver County’s personalized learning program and graduation rates, discusses the importance of inclusion for the ever-changing student population, and lists ways to tackle the achievement gap.

MSBA: What’s your proudest accomplishment as a school board member?

LISA ANDERSON: My proudest accomplishments include receiving a 98 percent satisfaction from our community and parents, passing a referendum to give more opportunities to kids, and recently increasing our graduation rate to from 91.7 percent to 94.9 percent.
MSBA: Is there anything special Eastern Carver County Schools is doing that you think other schools could emulate?

Lisa Anderson: Eastern Carver County is a leader in the nation for personalized learning, which puts the student in charge of their learning by meeting the learner where they are at. Personalized learning also recognizes that the learner should be an active part of their learning process. Giving the learner a voice, develops the skills that employers are seeking, including communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration. Most importantly, our students learn the invaluable knowledge of what does and does not work for them, lessons that will last them a lifetime.

MSBA: What is currently the toughest issue facing either Eastern Carver County Schools and/or MSBA Director District 13 school districts?

Lisa Anderson joined the Eastern Carver County School Board in January 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Four-year Graduation Rates (by percentage)</th>
<th>2016-17</th>
<th>2017-18</th>
<th>2017-18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Group</td>
<td>Eastern Carver County Schools</td>
<td>Eastern Carver County Schools</td>
<td>State of Minnesota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td>94.9</td>
<td>83.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>96.3</td>
<td>95.5</td>
<td>86.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>73.9</td>
<td>88.4</td>
<td>66.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>67.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>94.6</td>
<td>96.2</td>
<td>88.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>72.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Learner</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>65.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>81.9</td>
<td>62.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free/Reduced Meals</td>
<td>72.4</td>
<td>88.3</td>
<td>70.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

continued on page 28
LISA ANDERSON: The changing demographics in our community is reflected in our schools and we are working to rise to that challenge. It is imperative that all of our students feel welcomed and included in our schools — and to educate our teachers and staff to recognize and correct our unintentional biases.

MSBA: The achievement gap continues to be a big issue statewide. What do you think should be done to address the gap?

LISA ANDERSON: The three things we are doing to address the achievement gap in Eastern Carver County Schools are:

1. Providing summer programming for all students who are below grade level, which not only provides education to enhance math and reading, but also offers exploration activities to help reduce the opportunity gap.

2. Creating an equity plan that will help us identify institutional bias that may exist in our system.

3. Implementing personalized learning allows all our students’ voice and choice, keeping them more engaged in their learning so they can be their personal best.

MSBA: What advice would you have for new school board members?

LISA ANDERSON: Listen and keep an open mind and make decisions based upon data. Sometimes the loudest voices have an agenda that is not in alignment with what is best for the district.

MSBA: What do you like most about being on the MSBA Board?

LISA ANDERSON: Meeting board members from all over the state and learning about all the great things that are happening in the state of Minnesota.

MSBA: What makes MSBA a valuable resource for school board members?

LISA ANDERSON: The opportunity to network and learn from other board members.

Contact Lisa Anderson at andersonlisa@district112.org. View the complete MSBA Board of Directors at www.mnmsba.org/MSBABoard.
Amplifying student voice to transform adult mindsets

Every student has a story. Are you listening?

VOICES OF TOMORROW
Amplifying student voice to transform adult mindsets

www.captivatemedia.us/voices

WE BUILD. trust. communities. people.
MSBA’s Vendor Directory

MSBA’s Vendor Directory helps connect school districts with the products and services they need. The directory is always at your fingertips. You’ll find it printed in the back of every Journal magazine as well as on the MSBA website at www.mnmsba.org. Most listings in the web version of this directory include a link so you can head instantly to a website or email address. The directory includes everything you need to know to contact a company quickly—phone numbers, fax numbers and addresses—in an easy-to-read format. If you have a service or product you would like included in this directory, please contact Erica Nelson at 763-497-1778 or erica@pierreproductions.com.

ARCHITECTS/ENGINEERS/FACILITY PLANNERS

Architects Rego + Youngquist, inc. (Paul Youngquist) 7601 Wayzata Blvd., Ste. #200 St. Louis Park, MN 55426 952-544-8941, Fax 952-544-0585 www.aryarch.com pyoungquist@aryarch.com

ATSS Planners/Architects/Engineers (David Maroney) 8501 Golden Valley Road Golden Valley, MN 55427 763-545-3731, Fax 763-525-3289 www.atss.com dmaroney@atss.com

Clark Engineering (Sylvia Murray) 12755 Highway 55, Suite 100 Minneapolis, MN 55441 763-545-9196, Fax 763-541-0056 www.clark-eng.com

Cunningham Group Architecture, Inc. (Judith Hoskens) 201 Main Street SE, Suite 325 Minneapolis, MN 55414 612-379-5508, Fax 612-379-4400 www.cunningham.com

DLR Group (Sara Guyette) 520 Nicollet Mall, Suite 200 Minneapolis, MN 55402 612-977-3522, Fax 612-977-3600 www.dlrgroup.com sguyette@dlrgroup.com

EAPC Architects Engineers (Sean Sugden) 539 Bielenberg Drive, Ste 115 St. Paul, MN 55125 701-412-3489 www.eapc.net

GLTArchitects (Steve Paasch) 808 Courthouse Square St. Cloud, MN 56303 320-252-3740, Fax 320-255-0683 www.gltarchitects.com

Hallberg Engineering, Inc. (Richard Lucio) 1750 Commerce Court White Bear Lake, MN 55110 651-748-1100, Fax 651-748-9370 www.hallbergengineering.com


ISG (Rod Schumacher) 115 E. Hickory Street, Suite 300 Mankato, MN 56001 507-397-6651 www.is-gp.com

InGensa, Inc. (Jacqueline Colman) 18215 45th Avenue N, Suite C Plymouth, MN 55446 952-222-3551, Fax 952-222-9940 www.ingensainc.com

JLG Architects (Dan Miller) 322 1st Avenue N, Suite 600 Minneapolis, MN 55401 612-746-4260 www.jlgarchitects.com

Larson Engineering, Inc. (Matt Woodruff) 3524 Labore Road White Bear Lake, MN 55110 651-481-9120, Fax 651-481-9201 www.larsonengr.com

Lawl Scott Erickson Architects, Inc. (Jennifer Anderson-Tuttle) 100 Portland Ave South, Suite 100 Minneapolis, MN 55401 612-343-1010 www.lsa-architects.com


Nexus Solutions (Michael David) 6885 Sycamore Lane North Maple Grove, MN 55369 612-747-1003, Fax 763-201-8410 mdavid@nexusolutions.com

Unesco, Inc. (Kevin McGauley) 2125 2nd Street White Bear Lake, MN 55110 651-814-9000, Fax 952-487-9389 www.unescomsp.com

Wendel (Jim Wilson) 401 2nd Avenue North, Suite 206 Minneapolis, MN 55401 612-332-1401 www.wendelcompanies.com

Wold Architects and Engineers (Vaughn Dierks) 332 Minnesota Street, Suite W2000 St. Paul, MN 55101 651-227-7773, Fax 651-223-5646 www.woldae.com

ATHLETIC SPORTS FLOORS/SURFACING

Fisher Tracks, Inc. (Jordan Fisher) 1182 235th Street E Boon, IA 50036 515-432-3191, Fax 515-432-3193 www.fishertracks.com

ATTORNEYS

Kennedy & Graven, Chartered (Maggie R. Wallner) 200 South Sixth Street, Suite 470 Minneapolis, MN 55402 612-337-9300, Fax 612-337-9310 www.kennedy-graven.com

Knutson, Flynn & Deans (Thomas S. Deans) 1155 Centre Pointe Drive, Suite 10 Mendota Heights, MN 55120 651-222-2811, Fax 651-225-0600 www.kfdmn.com


BUILDING ENVELOPE CHOICES

Kline-Johnson & Associates (Larry Brown) 2950 Metro Dr. Minneapolis, MN 55425 715-651-2500 larry@kline-johnson.com
COMMISSIONING

**ICS Consulting, Inc.**
(Pat Overom)
3890 Pheasant Ridge Drive NE, Suite 180
Blaine, MN 55449
763-354-2670, Fax 763-780-2866
www.ics-consult.com
pato@ics-consult.com

**Nexus Solutions**
(Michael David)
6885 Sycamore Lane North
Maple Grove, MN 55369
612-747-1003, Fax 612-201-8410
mdavid@nexussolutions.com
www.nexussolutions.com

**InGensa, Inc.**
(Jacqueline Coleman)
18215 45th Avenue N, Suite C
Plymouth, MN 55446
952-222-3551, Fax 952-222-9980
www.ingensainc.com
jcoleman@ingensainc.com

**Johnson Controls, Inc.**
(Lyle Schumann)
2805 Fernbrook Lane North
Plymouth, MN 55447
651-775-7548, Fax 763-566-2208
www.johnsoncontrols.com
lyle.c.schumann@jci.com

**Knutson Construction**
(Tony Joseph)
5985 Bandel Road NW
Rochester, MN 55901
507-421-9331, Fax 507-280-9797
tjoseph@knutsonconstruction.com
www.KnutsonConstruction.com

**Kraus-Anderson**
(John Huenink)
501 S. 8th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55404
612-255-2359
www.krausanderson.com
john.huenink@krausanderson.com

**Nexus Solutions**
(Michael David)
6885 Sycamore Lane North
Maple Grove, MN 55369
612-201-8410
mdavid@nexussolutions.com
www.nexussolutions.com

**Stahl Construction**
(Lisa Thiel)
861 E. Hennepin Avenue, Suite 200
Minneapolis, MN 55414
952-767-2104, Fax 952-931-9941
www.stahlconstruction.com
lthiel@stahlconstruction.com

**Unesco, Inc.**
(Kevin McGauley)
2125 2nd Street
White Bear Lake, MN 55110
888-514-1971, Fax 952-487-9389
www.UnescoCorp.com
kevin.mcgaulay@unescocorp.com

**Wenck**
(Andy Hoffmann)
7500 Olson Memorial Highway,
Suite 300
Golden Valley, MN 55427
763-252-6800, Fax 952-831-1268
www.wenck.com
marketing@wenck.com

**CONTRACT PURCHASING**

**Sourcewell**
(Jon Andres)
202 12th St. NE
PO Box 219
Staples, MN 56479
218-895-4131, Fax 218-894-3045
www.sourcewell-mn.gov
jon.andres@sourcewell-mn.gov

**COST ESTIMATING**

**ISG**
(Rod Schumacher)
115 E. Hickory Street, Suite 300
Mankato, MN 56001
507-387-6651
www.is-grp.com
rod.schumacher@is-grp.com

**EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS/ SERVICES**

**The Minnesota Service Cooperatives**
(Jeremy Kovash)
1001 East Mount Faith Avenue
Fergus Falls, MN 56537
218-739-3273, Fax 218-739-2459
www.lcsc.org
jkovash@lcsc.org

**University of South Dakota**
(Division of Continuing and Distance Education)
414 E. Clark Street
Vermillion, SD 57069
800-233-7937, Fax 605-677-6118
www.usd.edu/online
cde@usd.edu

**ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS/AV SYSTEMS**

**ISG**
(Rod Schumacher)
115 E. Hickory Street, Suite 300
Mankato, MN 56001
507-387-6651
www.is-grp.com
rod.schumacher@is-grp.com

**ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS**

**Unesco, Inc.**
(Kevin McGauley)
2125 2nd Street
White Bear Lake, MN 55110
888-514-1971, Fax 952-487-9389
www.UnescoCorp.com
kevin.mcgaulay@unescocorp.com

**ISG**
(Rod Schumacher)
115 E. Hickory Street, Suite 300
Mankato, MN 56001
507-387-6651
www.is-grp.com
rod.schumacher@is-grp.com

**ENERGY SOLUTIONS**

**Ameresco, Inc.**
(Eric Laumeyer)
9855 West 78th Street, Suite 310
Eden Prairie, MN 55344
612-315-6940, Fax 952-942-5421
www.ameresco.com
elauymeyer@ameresco.com

**ICS Consulting, Inc.**
(Pat Overom)
3890 Pheasant Ridge Drive NE, Suite 180
Blaine, MN 55449
763-354-2670, Fax 763-780-2866
www.ics-consult.com
pato@ics-consult.com

**Nexus Solutions**
(Michael David)
6885 Sycamore Lane North
Maple Grove, MN 55369
612-747-1003, Fax 612-201-8410
mdavid@nexussolutions.com
www.nexussolutions.com

**Unesco, Inc.**
(Kevin McGauley)
2125 2nd Street
White Bear Lake, MN 55110
888-514-1971, Fax 952-487-9389
www.UnescoCorp.com
kevin.mcgaulay@unescocorp.com

**ISG**
(Rod Schumacher)
115 E. Hickory Street, Suite 300
Mankato, MN 56001
507-387-6651
www.is-grp.com
rod.schumacher@is-grp.com
## MSBA's Vendor Directory

### FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

**Ehlers**  
(Greg Crowe)  
3060 Centre Pointe Drive  
Roseville, MN 55113  
651-697-8522, Fax 651-697-8555  
www.ehlers-inc.com  
gcrowe@ehlers-inc.com

MSBA-Sponsored Administration and Compliance Service (A&C Service)  
Administration and Compliance Service  
(Paige McNeal, Educators Benefit Consultants, LLC)  
888-507-6053 or 763-552-6053  
www.ebcsolutions.com  
paige@ebcsolutions.com

MSBA-Sponsored CP-DBS, LLC d/b/a PaySchools  
(Andy Eckles)  
12835 E. Arapahoe Road, Tower II, Suite 500  
Centennial, CO 80112  
720-208-9854, Fax 866-429-6354  
www.payschools.com  
andy.eckles@payschools.com

MSBA-Sponsored MNTAAB (Minnesota Tax and Aid Anticipation Borrowing Program)  
(Stacy Childers, Springsted Group)  
800-236-3033 or 651-223-3083  
www.springsted.com  
schilders@springsted.com

MSBA-Sponsored P-Card (Procurement Card Program)  
800-891-7910 or 314-878-5000  
Fax 314-878-5333  
www.powercardpfm.com

**PFM Asset Management, LLC - MSDLAF+**  
(Donn Hanson)  
50 S. 6th Street, Suite 2250  
Minneapolis, MN 55402  
612-371-3720, Fax 612-338-7264  
www.msdlaf.org  
hansond@pfm.com

### FIRE & SECURITY

**Arvig**  
150 Second Street SW  
Perham, MN 56573  
888-992-7844  
arvigbusiness.com  
answers@arvig.com

### INDOOR AIR QUALITY

**ISG**  
(Rod Schumacher)  
115 E. Hickory Street, Suite 300  
Mankato, MN 56001  
507-387-6651  
www.is-grp.com  
rod.schumacher@is-grp.com

**Johnson Controls, Inc.**  
(Lyle Schumann)  
2605 Fernbrook Lake North  
Plymouth, MN 55447  
651-775-7548, Fax 763-566-2208  
www.johnsoncontrols.com  
lyle.c.schumann@jci.com

### FITNESS EQUIPMENT

**Johnson Commercial Fitness**  
(Drew Wurst)  
7585 Equitable Drive  
Eden Prairie, MN 55344  
952-500-0508, Fax 952-906-6909  
www.2ndwindexercise.com  
drew.wurst@johnsonfit.com

### FOOD SERVICE PRODUCTS & SERVICES

**Taher, Inc.**  
(Erin Marissa)  
5570 Smetana Drive  
Minnetonka, MN 55343  
952-945-0505, Fax 952-945-0444  
www.taher.com  
e.marissa@taher.com

### HOUSE

**Sourcewell**  
(Michelle Barrett)  
13795 241st Ave.  
Staples, MN 56479  
218-895-4187, Fax 218-894-3045  
www.sourcewell-mn.org  
michelle.barrett@sourcewell-mn.org

### HEALTH INSURANCE

**PreferredOne**  
(Dan Stewart)  
6105 Golden Hills Drive  
Golden Valley, MN 55416  
651-243-4738  
dan.stewart@preferredone.com  
www.preferredone.com  
rkeller@NISBenefits.com

**UCare Retiree Coverage**  
(Amy Sundem)  
500 Stinson Blvd. NE  
Minneapolis, MN 55413  
612-676-3669, Fax 612-884-2005  
www.ucare.org  
groupsales@ucare.org

### INSURANCE

**EMC Insurance**  
(Marcus Traetow)  
11095 Viking Drive, Suite 230  
Eden Prairie, MN 55344  
612-643-4738  
m.ktraetow@emcins.com  
www.emcins.com

**Minnesota School Boards Association Insurance Trust (MSBAIT)**  
(Denise Drill, Gary Lee)  
1900 West Jefferson Avenue  
St. Peter, MN 56082-3015  
800-324-4459, Fax 507-931-1515  
www.mnmsba.org/MSBAIT  
ddrill@mnmsba.org  
glee@mnmsba.org

**National Insurance Services**  
(Rob Keller)  
14852 Scenic Heights Road, Suite 210  
Eden Prairie, MN 55344  
800-627-3660, Fax 262-814-1360  
www.NISBenefits.com  
rkeller@NISBenefits.com

### LABOR RELATIONS

**Kennedy & Graven, Chartered**  
(Maggie R. Wallner)  
200 South Sixth Street, Suite 470  
Minneapolis, MN 55402  
612-337-9300, Fax 612-337-9310  
www.kennedy-graven.com  
contactus@kennedy-graven.com

**Ratwik, Roszak & Maloney, P.A.**  
(Ann R. Goering)  
730 2nd Ave S., Ste. 300  
Minneapolis, MN 55402  
612-339-0060, Fax 612-339-0038  
www.ratwiklaw.com  
info@ratwiklaw.com

### PUBLIC FINANCE

**Kennedy & Graven, Chartered**  
(Maggie R. Wallner)  
200 South Sixth Street, Suite 470  
Minneapolis, MN 55402  
612-337-9300, Fax 612-337-9310  
www.kennedy-graven.com  
contactus@kennedy-graven.com

**Springsted Group**  
(Rick Yount)  
380 Jackson Street, Suite 300  
St. Paul, MN 55101  
651-223-3080, Fax 651-233-3046  
www.springsted.com  
yount@springsted.com

**Ratwik, Roszak & Maloney, P.A.**  
(Ann R. Goering)  
730 2nd Ave S., Ste. 300  
Minneapolis, MN 55402  
612-339-0060, Fax 612-339-0038  
www.ratwiklaw.com  
info@ratwiklaw.com

### SCHOOL SAFETY

**3D Response Systems**  
6224 Lakeland Avenue North  
Brooklyn Park, MN 55428  
Fax 888-445-2842  
www.3dresponse.com

**3D Response Systems**  
6224 Lakeland Avenue North  
Brooklyn Park, MN 55428  
Fax 888-445-2842  
www.3dresponse.com
Protection assurance when you need it. The Minnesota School Boards Association Insurance Trust (MSBAIT) endorses companies with a proven record of service.

Property, Inland Marine, and Crime
Workers’ Compensation
School Leaders’ Legal Liability
Automobile
Group Term Life
Long-Term Disability
General Liability
Excess Liability

MSBAIT has addressed the needs of public schools’ risk-management programs since 1972

Quality Coverage and Service Tailor-Made For School Districts
Call 800-324-4459 to find out what MSBAIT can do for your school district.

www.mnmsba.com/MSBAIT
School district policy is at the center of a school board’s responsibilities to students, staff, and the community. A quick review of the federal and state authorities will help Minnesota’s school boards plan for future development, adoption, and implementation of policy.

School district policy has a central role in the hierarchy of laws, rules, and regulations that govern Minnesota’s schools. The federal and Minnesota constitutions are at the top of this hierarchy. All school district policies must comply with both constitutions. For example, districts may not adopt policies on student expression that conflict with the First Amendment.

Second, school district policies must conform with federal laws and regulations that govern school operations. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) are just two examples of federal laws that directly impact district policies. Third, Minnesota laws and regulations, which must comply with federal laws and regulations (when such laws exist), form the basis of much of MSBA’s model policies. A fourth source affecting school district policies are federal and Minnesota court decisions interpreting the constitutions, the laws, and the regulations affecting schools.

Minnesota school district policies must comply with Minnesota Attorney General opinions (such as the recent one regarding school lunch debt and graduation ceremonies). Governmental bodies, including school boards, are encouraged to abide by the Minnesota Department of Administration Commissioner’s nonbinding advisory opinions (which often focus upon Open Meeting Law issues). Other departments, agencies, and boards, including Minnesota’s Departments of Education, Human Rights, and Health, can issue guidance that affects school district policies.

Given the wide array of legal authorities that affect Minnesota’s students and schools, policy review should be a year-round process. Whether a school board assigns a committee to this role or chooses to engage the entire board in this process, it is essential to establish a schedule for regular review of every board policy. Careful consideration of every policy can help ensure that the policy reflects the board’s mission, the district’s curricular goals, the community’s priorities, and other essential considerations while remaining consistent with the law.

MSBA is developing new approaches to supporting school boards as they strive to meet their policy-related responsibilities. Every June, the Minnesota Legislature enacts new laws and amends existing
laws in ways that require revision of MSBA’s model policies. To enable school boards to prepare for policy changes that may be required before the fall start of the school year, MSBA will notify districts in June about the laws that will result in new model policy language. Second, MSBA will produce revised model policy language for board review and adoption as soon as practicable and no later than October 1. Revisions of model policies that must be enacted by the new school year because of state law changes will be circulated to school districts by August.

Minnesota’s school boards are active leaders in developing, adopting, and implementing district policy. Boards regularly identify topics for MSBA’s consideration for MSBA future model policies. By working together, school boards and MSBA can strive to ensure that districts’ policies comply with the law and serve Minnesota’s students and their communities.

Terry Morrow is MSBA’s Director of Legal and Policy Services. Contact him at tmorrow@mnmsba.org.
Florence Lehmann, Minneapolis

The beeping signals from the Russian Sputnik might have well have been warning signals to the federal government that the U.S. was behind – behind in the space race, and behind in having its educated future workforce knowledgeable about science and math.

The federal view that education was best left designated to the states now turned to the federal government wanting a say in education. And with money, it had the clout to push schools in the directions federal agencies wanted education to go.

A report released by the United States Office of Education in April of 1961 ruffled the feathers of then-Executive Director Bill Wettergren, who feared a centralized Education Department would strip local school boards of all control over finances and curriculum.

In 1965 the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was approved by Congress. Federal money was now available for schools, but it came with many, many strings attached. The law was credited with solving the longstanding issue of whether federal money would also be used for private schools. A challenge to the Supreme Court finally made it clear: public tax money was NOT going to be used for private schools. Within a decade, education could boast stronger school libraries, stronger state departments of education and better funding to support students in poverty. What came with it were pushes for national testing (NAEP), national curriculum (that was to become Common Core), and requirements for schools that were many times left unfunded.

Ten years later, the federal government approved the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (later known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). Again, educators welcomed the challenge of educating all children, instead of sending those with learning disabilities to institutions. But the promised 40% funding by the federal government never followed. At its peak, it reached 18% and still remains a financial burden placed on local schools across the state.

The feds pushed desegregation and forced busing to help all students achieve. Title IX brought women’s sports into the high school mix and changes to what curriculum offerings were given to girls.

The feds capped off those two decades by breaking the Department of Education off from the Health, Education and Welfare Department. It was now its own agency, which had its own pros and cons.

The many changes in education also caused changes at MSBA. The little two-person staff of 1960 grew to a 12-member staff by 1979. Publications like The Boardcaster and Legislative Loggers were added to the mix. Management Services seminars were added, along with Negotiations Seminars to help with the new Collective Bargaining law and strikes that started to happen in the mid 1970s. The Delegate Assembly began in 1962, complete with 24 regional area meetings across the state.

The little 124-page School Board manual had grown to more than 500 pages, sent in a binder to each district. The little office in the basement of a St. Peter feed store moved to a full building in downtown St. Peter with a separate room for printing and mailing.

The insurance crisis spawned MSBA's Insurance Trust to form as a way to give school districts insurance at reasonable rates. The Council of School Attorneys (COSA) formed and had regular meetings at the Leadership Conference to keep lawyers informed on the latest issues in education.

The job of a school board member had become very complex. Schools and school boards needed many more services, and MSBA was there to develop and offer it. So when Uncle Sam shook everything up, MSBA was there to help calm the snow globe of new regulations.
The report was called “A Federal Educational Agency for the Future,” and it talked about “an enlarged office of education and the use of social scientists as key advisers.”

Wettergren slammed the report as proof that the federal agency would take control of the nation’s schools and put them in the hands of social scientists. “It points out very plainly that school board members and superintendents of schools are excess luggage as far as planning the needs of education,” Wettergren wrote. In a leaked memorandum on the report, the agency stated: “The tradition of local control should no longer be permitted to inhibit the Office of Education leadership.”

Those were fighting words for Wettergren, and MSBA joined with NSBA to put more effort into lobbying at the federal level. It was not until July 30, 1964, when President Lyndon Johnson reached out and brought all executives of all school board associations to the White House, that Wettergren cooled a little to the idea of a federal education agency. But he still feared a centralized educational agency would take away local control.

As a way to keep school districts up-to-date on what was happening at the Legislature, MSBA started its first Legislative Logger in 1962 that was mailed out to superintendents once every two weeks to inform them which bills were introduced that affected education and which bills advanced out of committee.

Title IX, though approved in 1972, took a couple years before implementation was mandatory; but it had a huge effect on schools. No longer could only boys take shop class while girls were designated for home economics. Co-ed gym classes became the norm, and districts now had to offer girls basketball and other sports, instead of relegating women to cheerleading teams. As a service to board members, the 1975 Leadership Conference had a special Women’s Resource and Hospitality Center to discuss and hand out materials on sex discrimination in education.

For small districts with 10 or fewer teachers:
Superintendent Salaries in 1961 averaged $7,100, with a high of $7,500. The average starting teacher’s salary with a 4-year degree was $3,575 per year. For large districts with more than 350 teachers: Superintendent Salaries averaged 20,225 per year. The average starting teacher’s salary with a 4-year degree was 4,380 per year.

continued on page 40
information in the Journal was not only taking up a majority of the magazine, but some of the information – especially legislative news and issues – was getting out to the members too late. For about a year, an idea was floated for MSBA to print and mail out a newsletter twice a month to the chairman of each school board and its superintendent. On July 13, 1965, the board of directors gave approval for the newsletter. Staff came up with its clever name, “The Boardcaster,” and it was mailed to each board chair and superintendent. Printed on a single yellow sheet – a two-page newsletter typed on one sheet of paper, it was used to keep current education news and MSBA events in front of members. It came with the cost of purchasing a Pitney-Bowes machine that would fold, stuff, seal, and place postage metering on the letters.

A month after it started, Miss Prunella wrote: “The staff of the Association have never been more complimented before on any service project as they have been on the Boardcaster!” It was so popular that complaints came in so were MSBA directors. As staff was added, more staffing was needed. From what was a two-person operation in 1952, it grew to a 10-person staff in 1968 alone, MSBA hired Mike Torkelson as a service secretary. The Boardcaster (many times referred to as the Broadcaster) would last until August of 2016, when it would be combined with MSBA’s Management Services Newsletter and renamed to today’s “The Leader.”

As for other publications, the School Board Service Handbook was becoming too big and too expensive to make into a book and mail to every board member and superintendent. The 1960s started out on a sad note. In June of that year, MSBA’s president, Emery Lindesmith, died from leukemia in Owatonna. He left behind a statement that he will forever be proud to have worked with MSBA on behalf of students – the future of our nation.

Vice-President Florence Lehmann was advanced forward to take on the role of President six months earlier than expected. Lehmann began her service with a speech related to the U.S. Space Race push to get students into science and math. But she also cautioned: “Without the sciences, there would be no discoveries; but without the humanities, there would be no understanding of how to use these discoveries.”

Perhaps one of the biggest accomplishments of the MSBA board during this time was to have one of its board members, Edna Paul of St. Paul, elected as President of the National School Boards Association in 1965. The next year, NSBA brought its national convention to Minneapolis.

Wettergren wrote: “School board members in Minnesota know Mrs. Paul through her work on Canby’s Class of 1961 had a membership of 172 boys in their FFA program, which was found to be the second-largest FFA membership in the nation. Bakersfield, California, had 174 members that year.

A 1961 report showed 16.5% of all public high school students took at least one foreign language course. Spanish was the most popular language.
the board of directors. Her dedication to the cause of public education is without question; her belief that citizens through the election of school board members should have something to say about the education of our pupils; and her seemingly untiring energy in working for the necessities of making our system of public education the very best, will serve the nation’s school board members well.” (See the article on Edna in this issue.)

MSBA’s representative on the Minnesota State High School League, Joan Parent, ended up becoming the first female president of that association – and the first female president of a high school sports league in the nation. (She would go on to be the second MSBA board member to lead the National School Boards Association.)

During the 1960s and 1970s, MSBA could count 100% participation in the Association from its 439 school districts – for 17 of the 20 years.

**MSBA SERVICES GROW**

Part of MSBA’s success was the board and staff’s determination to help explain complex state and federal laws and offer regional trainings for board members to understand how those laws and rules would work.

In 1957, MSBA formalized its training for new school board members. This full-day training looked at board and superintendent roles in the morning (now our Phase 1 program) and in the afternoon looked at school finance and hiring (now our Phase 2 program) that were required by law. With elections in May, the orientation course was usually offered in mid-July in St. Paul.

In 1960, MSBA began a new service – offering 21 regional workshops on the topic of Teacher-School Board Contract Relations. These sessions continued through 1966, when new laws complicated the process. One of the more trying times for MSBA was in 1966 when the negotiations process. Inservice meetings with specific boards eventually morphed into formal Negotiations Seminars done every other year with tips for boards on how to handle teacher contracts, while dealing with unions and the public.

In the 1975-76 school year, Minnesota saw seven teachers’ strikes, prompting Wettergren to wonder: “How many have made an effort to find out what the issues really are in those school districts” so boards can prepare if those issues surface in their own districts? He blasted attempts at arbitration or mediation, saying “decisions on curriculum, taxes, programs, and management of the school district should not be left to persons far removed from the school district.”

**THE ERA OF OPENNESS AND TRANSITION OF A BOARD MEMBER’S DUTY TO SETTING POLICY**

In the 1970s, Watergate had its influence on how every public entity across the nation did its business. On May 1, 1974, the Legislature’s new “Open Meeting Law” statutes began. NO private meetings at the café before the public meeting. NO private “executive sessions” to work out votes on agenda issues. It demanded that ALL public meetings be open meetings, with very few exceptions.

Members of the North St. Paul-Maplewood School Board responded in a Journal article that “the legislature, in its zeal to protect the public from unscrupulous deal-cutting and private decision-making, has done the citizenry a real disservice. It would appear that officials elected by the people are not to be trusted to discuss and make certain decisions in private!”

There was a $100 fine that would be imposed on each elected public official who broke the law.

As the job of a board member started to become very complex, MSBA took a step back and wanted board members to focus on being the policy-setters and handle big-picture goals for schools. In 1977, MSBA contracted with the National School Boards Association to offer its first Educational Policy Services. For $425, schools would get copies of a two-volume set of policies that could help guide boards

---

Out of 50 states, a 1962 survey on school calendar days showed Minnesota ranked as 39th for only requiring 174 school days.

---


---

Education of Handicapped Children Act approved in 1975

Rollin Denniston, Rosemount


U.S. Department of Education is established in 1979
An Alden, MN, Policy on pregnant students (1960): “Any unwed pregnant student will be dismissed from school. Any pregnant married student will be allowed to finish her high school work out-of-school if she is in her senior year.”

A survey in 1961 put the country in an uproar when more than two-thirds of teenagers responding to a survey of 687 teens said: “Patriotism is not important.”

One of 15 requirements for a good school board candidate from 1962: “Will the candidate accede cheerfully to the decisions of the majority?”

John Gilbert of Gilbert Youth Research wrote: “Either the love of country of America’s young people has withered in the atmosphere of disillusionment following two wars to end war, or it lies dormant, awaiting some crisis to awaken it.” This was a good five years before protests began over the war in Vietnam.

YOU CAN’T RELY ON TESTING TO PREDICT SUCCESS

As early as 1962, the National Merit Report found that too many students were getting scholarships based on test scores only. The researchers cautioned: “Reliance on test scores and school grades has led to a relatively narrow kind of talent-searching – the search for good grade-getters. Though testing is a moderately accurate measure for predicting college grades, it has little relation to post-college achievement.”

MOVEMENT BEGINS TO ABOLISH THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The 1961 Legislature had a couple bills that tried to abolish the Minnesota Board of Education and have education run solely by an appointed Commissioner of Education. Many school boards passed resolutions against the idea. MSBA also opposed that idea, with Wettergren stating: “I don’t see how the position of commissioner can be kept from being political under this kind of arrangement. School districts were designed to be non-partisan.”

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT JOHNSON DIRECT TO SCHOOL LEADERS

Before the ESEA Act was passed, President Lyndon Johnson called together the executives of all school board associations, superintendent associations, and commissioners of education July 30, 1964. MSBA was in attendance. In part of the President’s address, he stated: “We are what we are in this land – and that we have become in the world – because we have placed our faith as a nation in public education. What America is to be for our children will be decided and determined by how we work – by what we do – where we live today. Men who neglect their schools neglect their liberty. Our schools are bearing many burdens once borne only within the family home. Upon you and upon your teachers rests today the responsibility of passing to tomorrow’s leaders the values and the standards by which America has been led in all her past. The soul of our society is in your hands.”

A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER’S WIFE GIVES HER VIEWS

Mrs. James Jacobs (her first name is not given) wrote an article in 1965 on her role as a board member’s wife. She offers these suggestions:

1. Encourage and compliment that school board member of yours. “What could be an easier task for a wife than to give him honest praise, give him confidence, and build him up.”

2. Educate the children to lessen the tensions in the home. “It is up to the mother to give the child a positive feeling toward the job, which deprives your child so often of his father’s company.”

3. Be a good listener. “After a lengthy school board meeting, we may simply start the conversation with the query: ‘Did you have a good meeting?’”

4. Learn to take criticism. “I have learned that we can’t keep people from criticizing the School Board unjustly, but I can make up my mind not to let the unjust condemnation disturb me.”

5. Think of all the wonderful people you will meet. “Mr. Jacobs and I always welcome the opportunity we have each fall to greet the teaching staff.”

CIVIL RIGHTS ERA

Though most of the publications from MSBA stay clear of the major issues of Civil Rights and school segregation, Miss Prunella’s column in the Journal had one mention: “When Mr. Baker and I were in Chicago attending a seminar at the university of Chicago, we witnessed a bit of what is going on. It is not safe for a man or woman to be on the streets alone. The civil rights problem certainly must be one of the nation’s foremost sore spots, and the solutions are not coming easy.”

AN ALBERT LEA SUPERINTENDENT’S LETTER TO HIS SCHOOL BOARD ABOUT HANDLING DRESS CODE

Taken from the February, 1967, Journal from a commentary by Albert Lea Superintendent Lorne Ward: “In recent years blue jeans were eliminated from the Albert Lea High Schools as a mode of dress. The theory was that blue jeans encouraged a barn-like atmosphere in school and some students tended to act like they were in a barn. At the present time, we are seeking to eliminate the ‘beate’, the ‘wild man’ and the ‘freak’ haircuts. These haircuts are dangerous to the decorum and atmosphere of Albert Lea high schools. For those who argue that prescribing haircuts will
A 1962 Gallup Poll that ranked the top professions adults would most recommend for graduates were: medicine, engineering, and teaching.

frustrate children, I wish to point out that life is a series of frustrations. In the matter of freak and unusual haircuts, we, in Albert Lea, are trying to develop mainly men, not girlish boys.”

ABOUT NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND TESTING

In 1967, MSBA joined with the American Association of School Administrators to urge a boycott of field testing for the new National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) test. The Association stated that they “oppose any act that would, in effect, establish a national testing system or curriculum.” The Association went on to say that if national tests were given, any school below the national proficiency rating would be branded as low performing, and the tests “would become coercive.”

YEAR-ROUND SCHOOL

In the July, 1969, American School Board Journal, Minneapolis board president George Jensen wrote: “Can it be that school boards are about to put a stop to the outrageously wasteful way we allow our educational enterprise to close down for three expensively unproductive months every year? American education can no longer afford to retain the 19th century notion of part-time schools. Year-round operation is inevitable and would be a far better usage of school personnel, facilities and resources.”

NOT A FAN OF VOUCHERS

When the first proposed voucher plan came through Congress in 1970, MSBA’s Wettergren skewed the idea in no uncertain terms: “The Voucher System is a cruel hoax” that will hurt public education, “which has made this nation what it is today. To destroy the base of a great nation by destroying its system of public education through subterfuge is criminal.”

RECOGNITION OF THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

In a February, 1979, Journal, an article highlighted the People United to Save Humanity (PUSH) effort led by Rev. Jesse Jackson. The movement called on educators to become more sensitive to the abilities of black students and understand why students of color were not performing as well on tests. He wrote that “teachers and administrators simply do not expect much from blacks and do not challenge their talents.” The federal government gave the organization $400,000 to bring his program to more urban secondary schools.

NOW LET ME TELL YOU A LITTLE BIT

In a February, 1979, Journal, an article

Voucher System is a cruel hoax” that will hurt public education, “which has made this nation what it is today. To destroy the base of a great nation by destroying its system of public education through subterfuge is criminal.”

THE SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER OF THE YEAR

Since the 1900s, when the School Board Division was under the umbrella of the Minnesota Education Association, the MEA gave an annual recognition to the School Board Member of the Year. That tradition continued all the way up to 1969. In 1970, MSBA decided that since it was the association for school board members, the ASSOCIATION should choose and honor a School Board Member of the Year. Applications went out in 1970, and in 1971, MSBA named its first School Board Member of the Year, Charles “Tiny” Benson from Marshall. The program went on to evolve into the All-State School Board in 1974, which honored six school board members for their contributions to student and school district achievement. In 1986, a new program was started that recognized up to seven board members, chosen by a committee of the MSBA Board of Directors.

THE FORMATION OF THE COUNCIL OF SCHOOL DISTRICT ATTORNEYS (COSA)

MSBA had always called upon a few attorneys to present at the early Leadership Conferences. Over time, suggestions surfaced about having attorneys present at the early Leadership Conferences. Over time, suggestions surfaced about having attorneys present at the Leadership Conference. At the conference, Wettergren gave a “State of the Association” special address, talking about how membership went from 150 school districts to 437 districts – full membership for the past 17 years. And how the convention grew from what he thought was an astonishing 300 people to 3,200 people. How the Association added a third telephone line because so many calls came into the office – peaking at 127 calls in one day in February of 1970. He said his one main message going forward is “If public education is to survive, then it becomes imperative that we not only look to the needs of our local district, but to the general needs of public education in our state and in our country.” He said the school board member’s job will continue to get more complex, but that the Association and staff “will give you all of the assistance that is humanly and fiscally possible.”

TRENDS FOR THE 1980s

John Wherry, the executive director for the National School Public Relations Association, had these predictions for education in the 1980s in a March 1979 Journal article:

• A continued emphasis on the basics and proof of learning through competency testing
• Desegregation leading to cultural pluralism
• Re-examination of the cost of public education and whether everyone should be educated, regardless of cost.
MSBA: Years 1960–1980

Passing of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Put the Federal Government’s Footprint in Every School’s Door

Information compiled by Greg Abbott

On April 9, 1965, the U.S. Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, a sweeping landmark piece of legislation that would change the dynamic of how federal funds were directed to states – mainly funneled to the most disadvantaged children living in poverty.

MSBA’s Executive Director Bill Wettergren called it “the most confusing piece of legislation to school board members, state departments of education, and to the U.S. Office of Education and the Federal Congress itself.”

Wettergren mainly worried about federal intrusion into how schools were run at the state and local levels. One of his concerns was to come true years later when the law was renamed “No Child Left Behind.”

He wrote: “Public school boards should know whether the federal government is going to use the vehicle of National Assessment of Educational Programs as a future guide...for national testing programs.”

Though the NAEP test wasn’t used under NCLB, the federal government did demand each state set standards into a specific test that would be used for federal purposes – in Minnesota’s case it was the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) test.

MSBA also feared that a federal law setting the bar for testing could also establish “national curriculum” for all schools, impeding local teachers’ ability to create original curriculum specific to their students. Common Core curriculum advanced in 2010 again validated “national curriculum concerns” of past MSBA directors.

Wettergren also saw the passage of ESEA as the beginning of a school board member now having to advocate not just at a local level, but at a state and federal level as well. “If the federal government is going to have something to say, then the school board members and school administrators must get into the picture so when future legislation is enacted by Congress, it will not carry the confused status of ESEA.”

Minnesota’s First National School Boards Association President: Edna Paul

An Upholder for Equal Opportunity Education, Honesty, and Successful School Boards

by Kristi Manning

St. Paul School District’s Edna Paul fought for equal opportunities in education. As a leader in the school board system, at the local, state, and national levels, Paul left a legacy of determination, dedication, and persistent delivery to school boards across the country.

As a young woman, Edna Paul graduated from Bethesda Hospital School of Nursing. It was not until her first son entered kindergarten during the 1940s that she became passionate about education and began her involvement in the schools. She started helping out at PTA activities and then moved to serve on the PTA Council as president. Through her involvement on the PTA, she worked on a commission to pick St. Paul’s superintendent in 1947. She also helped 30th Governor of Minnesota, Elmer L. Andersen, in the campaign for his bill that would designate St. Paul as an independent school district. As part of this team, Paul worked to build support among every constituency in the city.

Prior to serving as MSBA president, Paul was one of the members on the St. Paul School Board in 1951. As a member of this board, she was an advocate for education, promoting fair and honest learning for all students. As a school board member, she was re-elected for six terms. In addition, she also served on the board of directors for the Minnesota School Boards Association starting in 1951. With MSBA, Paul also held the positions of vice president from 1956-1957 and president from 1957-1958. Following her term as Minnesota School Boards Association president, Paul took her involvement with education even further to the National School Boards Association.

In 1960, she became treasurer of the National School Boards Association. In 1965, after holding multiple positions on the NSBA executive board, Paul went on to serve as the 18th president of the National School Boards Association from 1965-1966. She was the third woman to serve as NSBA President in the 25 years of the association, as well as the first Minnesotan to hold the position. When Paul first became NSBA president, women were distinctly in the minority of school board members across the country. However, she remained optimistic about the changes that would come to school boards throughout the country with her leadership.

The Courier-Journal from Louisville, Kentucky, quoted her in 1965: “There are more women board members throughout the country than when I started in NSBA.” At this time, 10 percent of school board members were women.
As president of NSBA, Paul traveled around the United States and spoke at multiple school board conventions. In October 1965, Edna was the featured speaker at the 40th annual convention of the Montana School Boards Association, providing a keynote address on “Increasing Board Responsibility in an Education Age” which was the theme for that conference.

That same year, nine Minnesotans were invited to attend the White House Conference on Education. The focus of the conference was mainly on university education; however, educators from all backgrounds attended. Paul, who had begun her term as president of the National School Boards Association, was in attendance at the conference, as well as five Minnesotans from the university.

In 1966, the National School Boards Association convention was held in the Twin Cities. The theme for the convention was “School Boards Chart a New Course.” During the past year, there had been a lot of discussion and consideration of federal aid and the government’s role in our nation’s school system, she said. Edna was hesitant about allowing the federal government to come into the schools, concerned that they would take control over every aspect of the school boards. She felt that the support of schools should be coming from local and state resources.

However, the schools needed help, and the federal government was able to provide for them.

During her time as president of NSBA, Edna also named subcommittees that focused on the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, preschool programs, and special federal aid to schools with high enrollment. With these smaller task forces, she aimed to make NSBA “the organization of importance and prestige it should be in the realm of education.”

Throughout her time as National School Boards Association president, Edna worked hard to improve education, create better boardmanship, and enforce and maintain school board policies. In addition to traveling and attending education conferences and conventions, Paul also took the time to visit individual school boards to try and improve school board functions. Paul saw a lot of places where school boards could work to improve education. Some of her biggest concerns revolved around finance of schools, professional negotiations by teachers, and social problems that were a result of segregation.

“Our schools are not perfect, but they are the best that the world has ever seen,” said Paul in her 1966 address. “We have done what no nation on earth has attempted: Open our schools to all children to benefit from, as their ability allows.”

She saw schools as the country’s last defense as the political entities from counties to cities and states were turning to schools to solve many of its problems. Her goal for the National School Boards Association was to make sure that all children were granted equal opportunities within education. Clearly successful due to hard work and dedication serving as a school board member, advocate, and president of both MSBA and NSBA, Paul got her faithful and enthusiastic attitude from her family.

Edna was the daughter of a Swedish-immigrant father. In the Star Tribune from April 24, 1966, her father was quoted saying, “Don’t think this country owes you anything. You get out and do something for the country.” This quote alone explains why she was so passionate and dedicated to helping the school boards in the United States. In 1965, Paul was awarded “Evangelical of the Year” from the St. Paul Association of Evangelicals, and in 1966 was awarded for distinguished service as a school board member by the Minnesota Education Association. She died in April of 1968, just two years after stepping down as NSBA president.

Edna worked to improve conditions for school boards and students across the country. Her optimistic attitude and love for serving led her to accomplish work across the states in communities where school boards needed help most. As the first Minnesotan to become president of the National School Boards Association, Edna set a prime example of what it means to serve positively for the purposes of education.

Kristi Manning was an intern from Gustavus Adolphus College, who worked for MSBA during the 2018 school year.

Metropolitan Boards Form New Branch for Lobbying

Information compiled by Greg Abbott

When an Association represents ALL school boards, lobbying for bills requires that almost all districts come out winners. In the 1970s, this became hard to do.

Signs of dissatisfaction from some metropolitan districts about lobbying efforts from MSBA started to appear in 1972. Anoka School District and some other metropolitan districts felt that the basis of assigning delegates to the Delegate Assembly was biased toward small, rural districts.

The argument was: Since delegates were determined simply by the region of the state, rather than how many students the district or area represented, rural areas were given a much bigger voice.

In October 1973, three Anoka school board members and Superintendent Johnson made their case to the MSBA Board of Directors and asked for additional representation based on the number of students a district represented. Though it kicked off a re-examination of the way delegates were apportioned to the Delegate Assembly, it didn’t change the fact that sometimes the interests of metropolitan districts would hurt some rural districts. And if some resolutions supported by rural districts were approved, it would have a negative impact on some metropolitan districts.

“Such is the compromise when an Association truly tries to represent ALL school districts,” said then Executive Director Bill Wettergren. “We have to look at resolutions that benefit a good 90 to 95 percent of school districts, not just metropolitan or not just rural.”

In July of 1974, metropolitan districts made another appeal to the MSBA Board of Directors, asking for discussions between staff and metropolitan school districts to form an additional organization for the purpose of legislative activity. It was defeated on an 8-4 vote.

Later that year, metropolitan districts formed the Association of Metropolitan School Boards – an organization set up specifically to lobby for the needs of larger, metropolitan school boards. MSBA followed by agreeing to set up an ad-hoc metro council of school boards, advised with seven members of the Minnesota Association of School Administrators, to give input to the MSBA board.

At the 1974 Leadership Conference, MSBA changed its bylaws in a hybrid approach: each area would still receive a minimum of 3 delegates to the Delegate Assembly, but more delegates would be added based on whether an area represented more than 15,000 students.
Re-equalizing School Finance Through the Minnesota Miracle

By Ted Kolderie

Minnesota had first enacted an equalization program for public education in the 1950s. Its essential idea was for districts to pay a uniform proportion of their wealth toward the cost of educating the children of their community and, whatever that rate raised in dollars — that amount varying with the differences in property wealth — for the state to pay the balance up to a per-pupil amount deemed adequate (the “foundation base”).

Over the years, the Legislature had failed to keep the foundation base up with the rise in actual spending. By the mid-1960s the state was equalizing only up to about half the actual cost per pupil.

In the late 1960s, this came to crisis. In addition to the equity problem, the spending for schools was driving effective property-tax rates painfully high. Voters were increasingly rejecting excess-levy referenda and proposals to borrow for capital needs. Aid provided when the sales tax was introduced in 1967 lightened the pressure on property taxes but did not stop the rise in spending. So, a crisis was developing as Minnesota came toward 1970 and the gubernatorial election.

Was school funding adequate

Partly the question was “adequacy” — whether the schools had enough. Partly it was about equity; about citizens in high-value communities being able to finance a rich level of program with relatively low tax rates while citizens in low-value districts paid taxes at a high rate to produce a lower level of program. The Citizens League comparison of taxes on an average-value house (then, $18,000!) showed the disparities; Edina vs. Centennial. School finance was a growing issue nationally. Soon California had the Serrano case; Texas the Rodriguez decision.

Van Mueller and Jerry Christenson were actively developing the question in Minnesota; Van at the Twin Cities K-12 “service unit” and Jerry as state planning director. The League took the question under study in a committee chaired by Bill Hempel. Its recommendation in June 1970 for a re-equalization — heavily charged politically, with the election coming on — took three meetings to clear the board.

The recommendation was central at the League’s annual meeting October 1 when a panel of League actives, John Mooty moderating, questioned the candidates for governor; Douglas Head, the Republican, and Wendell Anderson, the DFLer. Both had left off moderating, questioned the candidates for governor; Douglas Head, the Republican, and Wendell Anderson, the DFLer. Both had left off campaigning for almost a week, getting briefed on League proposals by League actives from their respective parties.

The evening of serious and substantive policy debate would hardly be believed today. I remember David Lebedoff, one of Anderson’s advisers, passing by afterward, saying, “Only in Minnesota ...” Anderson endorsed — actually, went beyond — the League proposal on K-12 finance. Afterward, the Republicans caucused; decided to oppose his plan on grounds it would require a big increase in taxes. As the controversy exploded, the DFLers said: Back us; we’re supporting your proposal. Mooty advised the staff: Let the report speak for itself.

Anderson was elected. Some years later, when Anderson recalled his unhappiness at not being supported, I reminded him that people in politics were always telling “good government” groups: “Be realistic: We can’t put ideas ahead of electoral needs and personal loyalties.” I said, “People in politics need to be realistic, too. Those of us working with ideas can’t be taking sides in a political fight.” Republicans were unhappy with the League as well. I think Doug Head never spoke to me again. But it was hardly the League’s fault that a political candidacy misjudged a major question of social equity.

The Miracle in Minnesota: The 1971 legislative session did better. It still had a conservative majority. The majority leader, Stan Holmquist, asked Senator Wayne Popham, with whom the League had worked closely, to take the lead on their response. The regular session ran...
Out. The first special session that enacted “fiscal disparities” ended without agreement on school finance. Discussions went on privately among legislators until fall when negotiations at the governor’s residence finally produced agreement. A second special session enacted the re-equalization; for the first time, major education finance questions handled not in the education committee but in the tax committee as part of an omnibus finance bill. It provided for a one-quarter increase in the state income tax and a one-third increase in the sales tax. It was the only case in America of equalization being accomplished through the political process rather than through the courts. A federal judge tried, but was late with his decision: By the time Van Dusartz came down legislative action was committed, virtually completed.

The League’s school-finance report had recommended adding a 40 percent weighting for students from AFDC families. That was adopted — as was its recommendation to prohibit local sales and income taxes. A new aid formula for cities was adopted, worked out with legislators by Dean Lund at the League of Cities. Essentially, the Legislature accepted responsibility for the level of local property taxes. It was far-reaching legislation; bipartisan — and controversial. The comment from a fiscal consultant that the package was “largely the work of the Citizens League” was probably not meant as a compliment.

Learning about the legislation, the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR) in 1972 wrote about “The Miracle in Minnesota” — by which John Shannon meant the whole package of fiscal reforms. (Minnesota superintendents continue to appropriate the “Miracle” term as if the legislative action had been entirely about school finance.)

The schools had gotten a big raise; riding in, as Allan Odden at the Education Commission of the States put it, “on the back of the property-tax revolt.” But this was to be the last time the Legislature was to address the problems of public education purely as a matter of money. After 1971, education policy moved to questions about system structure and about learning. Which is another story.

Ted Kolderie is the author of “Thinking Out the How” (2017), about the Minnesota Miracle. This article is an excerpt from his book and was used with his permission. To contact Ted about the article, you can reach him at ted@educationevolving.org.
It Took Decades to Move Children with Disabilities from Institutions into Schools

By Norena Hale

Minnesota began public school classes for children with disabilities early in the 20th century; however, implementation was permissive and progress was slow for the first 50 years. Note that some of the language included in this article is uncomfortable and considered disrespectful today; however, the language of the time period is kept, as it was the language commonly used in public policy.

The first public school permissive legislation was passed in 1915 for “blind, deaf, subnormal, and speech defective” children, and in 1921 for crippled children. One stipulation was that five children of the same disability be found to form a class eligible for state aid. Children with different disabilities could not be mixed to form a class.

Prior to this time and up to the 1960s, children with disabilities were placed in state institutions at the recommendation of physicians and experts. The early placements included the State Institution for the Deaf and Dumb (1858), State School for the Blind (1879), the State Institution for Imbeciles (Feebleminded) (1880), and the State Hospital for Indigent, Crippled, and Deformed Children (Gillette Hospital) (1897).

Since the public school legislation was permissive and five children with the same disability were required to form a class, only larger cities were able to start them. For example, Minneapolis started classes in 1912–13 for children who were found to be mentally defective, stammerers, or tubercular (tuberculosis). However, state compulsory laws allowed for exceptions when “a child’s bodily or mental condition is such as to prevent his attendance at school.” Hence, enrollments in special classes were limited.

By the 1950s, parents were beginning to reject recommendations that they place their child in an institution and “forget them and get on with their lives.” In 1950, a group of parents met in Minneapolis and formed the National Association of the Parents and Friends of the Mentally Retarded (now the ARC). They organized themselves without outside guidance and became active in encouraging and lobbying for educational services for children with disabilities in local communities.

For example, the Mankato Association of Retarded Children presented the need for providing classes for these children at a 1956 meeting of the Blue Earth County School Board. In August 1956, the board approved a “room free of charge in the Roosevelt Building . . . under the sponsorship” of the Association for the school year 1956–1957. This meant the Association had to provide the instruction, materials, funds, etc. with whatever they could piece together. The program was found to be worthwhile, meaning the administration and local school board saw that the children could learn. So, in January 1957, the board approved “that a department for training of children with I.Q.s of 25–50 be established at the opening of the 1957–1958 school year provided a qualified teacher can be procured.” (Mankato School Board Minutes)

Also, during the 1950s, parents advocated for various committees to be formed complete with public hearings and written reports. The Advisory Board on Handicapped, Gifted, and Exceptional Children was formed under the leadership of Maynard C. Reynolds, University of Minnesota. The report was presented to the state legislature which created an Interim Commission to further study the needs and make recommendations. Notable members included Governor Elmer L. Andersen and State Rep. Al Quie. Some 14 hearings were held around the state, and legislation was drafted. The result was the 1957 special education law for handicapped children “who are educable”—one of the first in the nation.

Following the law’s passage, public schools began expanding programs across the state as the requirement for five students with the same disability was waived. The law created the Special Education Section in the Department of Education, and university programs were funded to train special education teachers.

In 1971, state legislation was passed to require educational services for “trainable children.” However, this did not include children who were more severely disabled, including those who were non-ambulatory or not toilet trained.

In the meantime, Al Quie was elected to the U.S. Congress and played an active role in creating Title VI (Education of the Handicapped Act (1965)) of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965. With his experiences through the statewide public hearings and writing and passing the 1957 Minnesota special education law, he was poised to provide leadership on the national level.

Title VI provided discretionary federal funds to states to expand services for the handicapped in public schools; however, it did not mandate those services. Minnesota chose to use its funds to create special education leadership positions at the local level through inter-district cooperatives in rural areas, especially for children with low incidence disabilities.

During the 1970s, parents felt policy makers were not moving fast enough to provide special education services in local communities. Over 140 lawsuits were filed across the nation, and the Congress took notice. The court rulings urged the U.S. Congress to take action. This resulted in the passage of Public Law 94–142 (Education for All Handicapped Children Act), the first national comprehensive special education mandate. For the first time, all states were mandated to provide special education to children with disabilities ages 3 to 21. The law required a free, appropriate public education, individual education program plans (IEPs), nondiscriminatory evaluation, least-restrictive placement for each child, and due process.
The outcome of Minnesota’s court case, Welsch v. Likens, resulted in significant changes in the provision of special education services in public schools. It was filed in 1972 and resolved through a system-wide Consent Decree in 1980, taking seven years to deinstitutionalize the children. Institutionalization of mentally retarded persons had reached a peak of 6,565 in 1962 and had declined in the late 1960s. However, progress regarding the “right to treatment,” the poor conditions – including the use of seclusion and restraints – at the hospitals, and the lack of staff funded by the state legislature was deemed too slow by parents and advocates.

The Consent Decree resolution moved thousands of children with disabilities back to their local communities, and public schools were required to provide for their education. In the 1980s, Minnesota focused on beginning services at birth (1987), transitioning from school to work (1987), interagency cooperation through interagency early intervention committees (1994), community transition interagency committees (1987), and family service and mental health collaboratives (1993). One struggle to cooperation was that since special education services were a right, that is a mandate. If services provided by other agencies were included in the IEP or in the child’s program, then the schools would be mandated to continue the services if or when the other agency stopped providing them because of a lack of funds or change of direction.

In 1990, the EHA became the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The amendments stipulated a focus on improving results for children with disabilities. Since its passage, the focus nationally has been on early intervention, access to the general education curriculum and learning, increased high school graduation rates, access to post-secondary programs, increased employment, and accountability.

The 1976 Leadership Conference dropped its Tuesday morning breakfast and instead went with new Mini Clinics, consisting of 30-minute presentations held around a table on different topics. Those Mini Clinics eventually became the Leadership Conference Roundtable sessions.

The 1975 Gallup poll on school board members found: 63% of people couldn’t name one thing their school board has done, 53% didn’t know how many school board members were on their board, and only 49% of people gave their local school board a favorable rating.

The 1976 Leadership Conference dropped its Tuesday morning breakfast and instead went with new Mini Clinics, consisting of 30-minute presentations held around a table on different topics. Those Mini Clinics eventually became the Leadership Conference Roundtable sessions.

The 1975 Gallup poll on school board members found: 63% of people couldn’t name one thing their school board has done, 53% didn’t know how many school board members were on their board, and only 49% of people gave their local school board a favorable rating.

The 1976 Leadership Conference dropped its Tuesday morning breakfast and instead went with new Mini Clinics, consisting of 30-minute presentations held around a table on different topics. Those Mini Clinics eventually became the Leadership Conference Roundtable sessions.

The 1975 Gallup poll on school board members found: 63% of people couldn’t name one thing their school board has done, 53% didn’t know how many school board members were on their board, and only 49% of people gave their local school board a favorable rating.

The 1975 Gallup poll on school board members found: 63% of people couldn’t name one thing their school board has done, 53% didn’t know how many school board members were on their board, and only 49% of people gave their local school board a favorable rating.

The 1975 Gallup poll on school board members found: 63% of people couldn’t name one thing their school board has done, 53% didn’t know how many school board members were on their board, and only 49% of people gave their local school board a favorable rating.
As the decade of the 1970s dawned, so did an era where the cost of insurance for school districts was causing great concern. The riots, shootings and vandalism that hit colleges during protests of the Vietnam War had spread to vandalism and threats to high schools.

Then MSBA Director of Field Services, Jim Schmid, said the threats of violence, vandalism and arson caused insurance rates to skyrocket. Some school districts couldn’t even buy insurance. A national survey showed schools in tough straights – 212 districts (54%) had experienced vandalism during the past three years; 67 districts reported arson claims.

Many more had bomb threats with one district reporting a home-made bomb that did explode in a school. Because of those statistics, insurance companies were scared away from offering reasonable insurance policies to schools.

In Minnesota, the statistics weren’t so drastic, but getting insurance companies to believe that those acts of vandalism wouldn’t happen in Minnesota schools was a hard sell. For two years, MSBA tried to get the Legislature to put pressure on insurance companies to offer insurance at reasonable rates. Nothing happened legislatively, so MSBA took it upon itself to form an insurance committee.

Schmid said he felt that insurance for public schools could be written profitably by insurance companies. As phone calls mounted from districts, whose insurance increases in 1971 ranged from a low of 3% to a high of 244%, MSBA came up with a plan to pool insurance monies to help public schools.

On Oct. 9, 1972, MSBA officially created the Minnesota School Boards Association Insurance Trust to serve only Minnesota public school districts. A seven-member board, consisting of school board members and the MSBA executive director (as an ex-officio member), runs the Trust.

The operation of MSBAIT allowed for significant cost savings to participants through group purchase of insurance at reduced price levels. Initial endorsed insurance offerings included property/casualty, workers’ compensation, fidelity bonds, and group life.

Over the years, MSBAIT has paid more than $388 million in workers’ compensation claims, adjudicated more than 151,000 workers’ compensation self-insured claims, paid more than $155 million in property and casualty self-insured claims, and purchased reinsurance from markets around the world.

MSBAIT has partnered with many companies in its almost-50-year run. As of 2016, MSBAIT began endorsing Marsh & McLennan Agency and the MSBAIT Risk Protection Program. The Trust also partners with National Insurance Services for group term life insurance and group long-term disability insurance.

MSBAIT representative Denise Drill says the program works hard to make sure it understands the varying risks of particular districts and constantly adjusts and fine-tunes its approach.

For more information on MSBAIT, go to www.mnmsba.org/MSBAIT.

Birth of Federal Education Department Was Watershed Moment

But Some Disagreed on Whether Washington Was Friend or Foe

By Dan Linehan - Special writer for MSBA

From its beginning, the U.S. Department of Education wrestled with an internal contradiction.

The education of children was too central to the nation’s future to relegate to inconsistent local authorities. But any muscular federal intervention collided with the country’s tradition of local and state educational sovereignty.

As he argued in favor of a separate education department in 1979, President Jimmy Carter walked this tightrope by saying the federal government had “confused its role of junior partner in American education with that of silent partner.”

The law creating the Department of Education walled off from its influence the core elements of education, like curriculum, administration and teaching methods, said Michael Resnick, a retired lobbyist who worked for the National School Boards Association for 44 years.

“That protective language was necessary for us as it was for many associations that supported it,” he said.
Though securing a cabinet-level position was a watershed moment for education, it was part of an evolution rather than a break from tradition. For 15 years, the federal government had taken an escalating interest in education, passing laws intended to promote equity for students in poverty and those with disabilities.

Even when educators supported these aims broadly, they worried about the strings that would be attached to federal money, said Minnetonka Public Schools Supt. Dennis Peterson, who in the ‘70s was a school administrator in Austin and Mounds View.

“Whoever has the gold makes the rules,” he said, and federal money was sure to be accompanied by rules.

MSBA opposed the formation of the federal department. Its first executive director, Bill Wettergren, held in slight regard rules and regulations coming from afar.

They came from people, “who by their actions have shown little knowledge of how a public school district operates,” he wrote in the November 1979 issue of the “MSBA Journal.”

Federal lawmaking in the late ‘60s and ‘70s created the backdrop for how Wettergren and some others viewed the department. Understanding the contemporary reaction to the department’s formation requires a brief history of the federal government’s foray into education.

The Times Were a Changin’

Before 1965, the federal role in education was largely limited to vocational education and some technology funding. That year, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was passed, providing new funding for high-poverty schools, grants to states, English language learners and, a few years later, bilingual education.

In 1975, Congress passed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), promising an education to children who had previously been kept at home or institutionalized.

“It was a time of great change,” says Peterson, the Minnetonka superintendent, “We started to re-examine how we taught kids and who needed to be taught.”

The federal government promised to pay 40 percent of special education costs, which “didn’t seem like that bad of a deal,” he said.

Many priorities of the federal government — like educational equity, food subsidies and expanded options to children with disabilities — were shared by local educators and board members, said Resnick, the retired national school boards lobbyist.

As Peterson put it, “I think with IDEA, for the most part, educators welcomed the opportunity to start serving children who’d not been served previously,” even if they at first lacked the skills to do so.

Larry Wicks, executive director of the Minnesota Education Association and Education Minnesota from 1987 to 2007, said federal involvement had been needed on both special education and school integration.

Before Washington, D.C., got involved, “huge numbers of children weren’t being properly served,” he said.

But even when these aims were broadly shared, the at-times stringent regulations soon became a frustration — the implementation of Individualized Education Programs became a case study — and much of the promised funding never seemed to materialize.

Even if by 1979 the federal government’s involvement had soured Wettergren and some others, the formation of the department had widespread support. Its biggest supporter was the National Education Association, which gave its first presidential endorsement to Carter in the 1976 election.

The growing clout of the educators’ union in building support for the federal department “was on the minds of a number of us,” Resnick says, but that wasn’t a reason to oppose it. The new department also had support from national school boards and administrators’ associations, he says.

But, as with most conflicts about the limits of federal authority, it was a highly partisan issue.

A Fight Over Control

Since 1953, education at the federal level had been part of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, where it was one priority of many. Wicks said people had argued for decades that separating it would bring more focus to education.

And because many people shared the overall goals of the federal department, there was broad agreement that the new emphasis would be a force for good, he said. Still, with 50 states and 16,000 districts, there was bound to be an uneven implementation. Minnesota, for example, had moved into special education earlier than most states, and some chafed at the new federal rules.

Though most Democrats supported the department’s creation, noted Minnesota liberal Rep. Martin Sabo voted against it. According to a 1982 essay written by a Sabo legislative aid and published by the conservative think tank American Enterprise Institute, the Democrat had a number of objections to the federal rules around special education, including that they:

• imposed an adversarial system for resolving disagreements between parents and schools
• promoted arbitrary labels for children with disabilities
• gave local officials a financial incentive to classify children as having a disability

Some opponents cited the Constitution’s 10th Amendment — that powers not granted to the federal government, like education, were given to the states and the people — but the debate mostly played out on public policy lines, Resnick says.

The bill passed easily in the Senate, but the vote was closer in the House, at 215 to 201. Except for Rep. Sabo and Republican Arlen Erdahl, who voted in favor, the Minnesota delegation voted along party lines.

Despite the Republicans’ landslide 1980 win, President Ronald Reagan was unable to abolish the department.

An Uneven Legacy

Federal government skeptics like Wettergren can find evidence from the department’s 40-year history to confirm their suspicions.

“Personally, I still would not be opposed to eliminating its department status,” says Dick Anderson, who began working for MSBA in 1973 and later became its executive director. Every presidential administration implemented its own priorities, leaving school boards to constantly adjust to changing incentives, he says.

Exhibit A of this phenomenon, the No Child Left Behind Act, is in his eyes an example of the department’s mixed legacy.

“The one good thing that matriculated out of that was a greater sense of data being used to drive student achievement, but technology might have led that to happen” regardless, Anderson says.

In part because the states were partners in the funding and execution of federal programs, the federal department accelerated the shift from local to state spending, he says.

And the promised 40 percent of special education funding failed to materialize. Now, the federal government provides only about 14 percent of special education costs, Peterson says. He said the difference between promised and actual federal funding is about $6 million a year in his district alone.

Wicks, the union leader, said the federal government’s involvement has played out unevenly, but on balance it’s been a force for good.

“It was the right thing when President Carter signed the legislation, and I think it’s still the right thing today,” he said.

Dan Linehan is a freelance journalist from Minnesota who now lives in Delaware. To respond to the article, you can contact him at dtlinehan@gmail.com.
For every future graduate.

Planning | Funding | Construction | Technical Services

www.ics-consult.com | 763.354.2670