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TABLE OF CONTENTS

12 | MOVING FROM “SHOW” TO “GO” How a focused approach on continuous improvement makes a difference for Anoka-Hennepin students and staff Jim Skelly

16 | INNOVATION IN ACTION Pillager Public Schools take home grand prize

27 | DIGITAL INEQUALITY IS EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY How a statewide Initiative is working to close the K-12 connectivity gap in Minnesota Christine Bediones

32 | AVOID “SOLUTIONITIS” WHEN TRYING TO SOLVE COMPLEX PROBLEMS Recent findings from Research on Personalized Learning Kim Gibbons

35 | MEET MSBA’S NEW STAFF MEMBER: TERRY MORROW

36 | MSBA BOARD DIRECTOR SPOTLIGHT: HEIDI JONES

24 | 2018 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE SCRAPBOOK

8 | STRAIGHT TALK Kirk Schneidawind, MSBA Executive Director

10 | PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE Kathryn Green, MSBA President

34 | ASK MSBA Sandy Gundlach, MSBA Director of School Board Services

40 | VENDOR DIRECTORY Pierre Productions & Promotions, Inc.

44 | LEGAL UPDATE Cathy Miller, MSBA Director of Legal and Policy Services
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CALENDAR

MARCH 2018
3 .......... MSBA Officers’ Workshop, St. Cloud
7 .......... BoardBook webinar (10 a.m.)
10 .......... MSBA Charter School Board Training, St. Peter
13 .......... Township Election Day (if applicable, no meetings or activities 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.)
18 .......... MSBA Board of Directors’ Meeting
19 .......... MSBA Day at the Capitol

APRIL 2018
11 .......... BoardBook webinar (10 a.m.)
12 .......... MSBA Representing Your Community Through Policy and Engagement: Phase IV, Bemidji
13 .......... MSBA Building a High-Performance School Board Team: Phase III, Bemidji
14 .......... MSBA Building a High-Performance School Board Team: Phase III, St. Cloud
17 .......... MSBA Building a High-Performance School Board Team: Phase III, Marshall
19 .......... MSBA Building a High-Performance School Board Team: Phase III, St. Peter
20 .......... MSBA Representing Your Community Through Policy and Engagement: Phase IV, St. Peter
21 .......... MSBA Representing Your Community Through Policy and Engagement: Phase IV, St. Cloud
23 .......... MSBA Insurance Trust Meeting

MAY 2018
7 .......... Superintendent Evaluation Workshop, Alexandria
8 .......... Superintendent Evaluation Workshop, St. Peter
9–11 .......... MASBO Annual Conference
17–18 .......... MSBA Board of Directors’ Annual Meeting
22 .......... Minnesota School District Liquid Asset Fund Plus Meeting (tentative)
28 .......... Memorial Day (no meetings)

MSBA thanks art teacher Laura Grant and her students at Gatewood Elementary School and Glen Lake Elementary School in Hopkins for sharing their art in this issue.

COVER ART:
Frantzie S., fourth grade

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.
It was great to see school leaders at the 2018 MSBA Leadership Conference in January. I hope MSBA’s conference enriched your knowledge base and helped make you a more effective school board member.

During the Leadership Conference, I again had the pleasure of conducting the “Board Chair Q & A with MSBA” session. I always look forward to hearing from our state’s local school board chairs regarding their common questions and concerns.

One of the big questions that came up during this year’s conversation was: “How do you deal with one or two board members who are always questioning, challenging, or disagreeing with board discussion or agenda items?”

For anyone who has played golf, you know that hitting every fairway and green, and making every putt seems really easy, but is nearly impossible. And, quite honestly, the game of golf can be challenging. Similarly, school board work is challenging.

Any elected body — whether it be a school board, a city council, or a state legislature — has to deal with conflict. That’s just a part of democracy — and as Robert Kennedy Jr. once said: “Democracy is messy.”

Getting six or seven school board members to be on the same page can be “messy at times.” Everyone on the school board is elected (or appointed), which entitles them to their respective viewpoints.

The better a school board can display good conduct and ethics during disagreements and tough times, the more effective the board will be — and the more successful the school district will be because of it.

General Henry M. Robert once said: “The great lesson for democracies to learn is for the majority to give the minority a full, free opportunity to present their side of the case, and then for the minority, having failed to win a majority of their views, gracefully to submit and to recognize the action as that of the entire organization, and cheerfully to assist in carrying it out, until they can secure its repeal.”

At MSBA, we call this “supporting the decision of the board.”

If you believe that “leadership starts at the top,” good conduct and ethics at and away from the board table is where you set the example. The school boards that get stuck on issues and disagreements never seem to move the district forward.

There will be disagreements on how to get to the end, and that is natural. It is how the board functions within this sphere of disagreement and, more importantly, how it comes out of disagreements that will define the school board and the school district. How you ask a question is important. A question or comment shouldn’t be personal and you should be willing to offer and/or be open to solutions.

Board members need to recognize that differences will exist. The human element of being respectful and considerate of others’ opinions can play a big part in the goal of moving the school board and, ultimately, the school district forward.

MSBA’s Building a High-Performance School Board Team: Phase III Workshop explores the stages of board development, the types of processes for decision-making, and identifies your own and team leadership styles. This workshop will be offered at four locations in April.

Building an effective school board team is not easy. The reward for striving to develop a high-performing school board is very much worth the effort. Just ask your students.

Contact Kirk Schneidawind at kschneidawind@mnmsba.org.

STRAIGHT TALK

A High-Performing School Board is an Effective School Board

By Kirk Schneidawind, MSBA Executive Director
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I would like to thank each and every one of you who attended any or all of our 97th Annual MSBA Leadership Conference held in January at the Minneapolis Convention Center. “Student Achievement: Passion, Perseverance, and Possibility” was our focus this year. It was once again a brisk Minnesota January event that so many committed public school servants braved the weather for. The energy in the halls and hotels was warming and the networking was powerful. Our new space in the Minneapolis Convention Center seemed to bring us together with fewer distractions.

Our keynote speakers shared their stories with a passion that spoke to us as education leaders. They gave us insight into their personal journeys in our classrooms.

Minnesota-raised Mark J. Lindquist shared his unique perspective of being loved, and yet feeling different. His moving acknowledgement of the teacher in his life who lit the passion of music, will stick with me whenever I hear our national anthem. Manny Scott held our attention with his heart-wrenching sharing of his violent upbringing and faulty educational experience — faulty until he met a high school English teacher who recognized his talent and fought for excellence.

Both stories remind us of the enormous task all of us who touch education have. Each and every student comes to us with his or her own story, challenge, talent and expectation. It is our job to create and support an educational system to meet them with the resilience to decode their wiring—and then charge their intellect. We need to ask ourselves, are we hearing what our students are telling us, or not telling us? Thank you, Mark and Manny, for reigniting our passion and sharing the gift of your powerful words.

Your Minnesota School Boards Association is already making plans for our 98th Leadership conference in January 2019. Our school districts are a huge part of the process. The surveys you filled out following your participation has been gone over, analyzed, and plans have been set into motion.

You may want to start thinking how your school district can participate. There are opportunities for student musicians in our general sessions, student Show and Tell, and the always popular, “Students at the Board Table” and “Straight Talk from Students” workshops. The DLR Group-sponsored Student Innovation Challenge is inspiring.

Our school districts are invited to submit applications to present round tables and workshop sessions. (The applications for all of these opportunities will be available on the MSBA website around August 2018.)

This year there were 155 submissions for 128 slots. My school district presented with a collaboration of five districts on the topic of “Building a 21st Century Culture of Innovation” — a group that gets together to vet education ideas. What is your school district doing that we could all benefit from knowing about? Watch for MSBA’s invitation in August to submit your ideas.

It is with pride I serve as your president. We have so much to be proud of in Minnesota — we work with a focus on our students’ achievement. When it comes to public education, passion drives us, perseverance energizes our resolve, and our possibilities are endless. Skol, Minnesota!

Contact Kathryn Green at kathyannegreen@gmail.com.
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Minneapolis Public Schools’ Adult Education Transition Plus Building
Is it possible that school districts can avoid the chaos that can impact decision-making through a system of planning and effective review of data?

Anoka-Hennepin schools has done just that, moving from talk to action, and doing it in an organized and understandable way. The Anoka-Hennepin School Board has adopted a continuous improvement cycle which focuses district leaders and staff alike on strategic priorities and systems to measure their impact. Resources are aligned where needed based on a review of data and results. Innovation is wrapped within a system of support, allowing new ideas and programs to be integrated into the system and sustained over time.
“Managing change in a school system can be a challenge,” said Anoka-Hennepin Superintendent David Law. “Being clear about district priorities and the system in place to set and review them is helping us move forward in a positive way.”

Active and engaged school board

The first consideration in the planning model takes into account the role of the elected officials in setting priorities, establishing project timelines, and determining data points used for measuring impact. “Through this system, school board members are able to fully contribute and actively engage in the direction of the district,” said Tom Heidemann, Anoka-Hennepin School Board Chair.

A traditional planning model for districts includes an annual summer retreat to review data and actions from the previous year and actions to finalize plans for the upcoming year. This model leaves little time or ability to implement emerging ideas for the upcoming year. In addition, student performance data from the previous year is not often available to use in decision-making.

“Instead of just reacting to plans, school board members are now involved in the process,” Heidemann added. “They’re also proactive and collaborative with staff and each other on these key decisions.”

For example, with school board approval of the 2018-19 strategic priorities in November, staff can begin the process of setting budgets and communicating within the organization, a full six months in advance of implementation.

Three strategic priorities, four-step process

Anoka-Hennepin has established three broad strategic priorities regarding academic performance, school climate, culture and effective operations, and a four-step timeline to guide priority items effectively through the process.

The strategic priorities planning cycle begins with considering then reviewing, and implementing then monitoring priority items. Items in the implementing category are those being completed in the current year. Priorities in the reviewing category are in the planning stages with work being done to consider future implementation, while priorities under consideration are in the early stages of review and may be considered for future years. The school board also selects priorities in the

About Anoka-Hennepin

The Anoka-Hennepin School District is one of Minnesota’s largest, serving approximately 38,000 students and 248,000 residents.

Spread out across 172 square miles, the district is made of 13 suburban communities north of the Twin Cities. Anoka-Hennepin has 24 elementary schools, six middle schools, and five high schools, plus alternative middle and high school sites.

About the School Board

A six-member school board governs the Anoka-Hennepin School District. The members include, Chair Tom Heidemann, Vice Chair Marci Anderson, Treasurer Bill Harvey, Clerk Jeff Simon, Director Nicole Hayes and Director Anna Dirkswager.

Mission: It is the primary mission of the district to effectively educate each of our students for success.

Vision: It is the vision of the district to be a public school system of excellence, with high-quality staff and programs and successful graduates.
system to closely monitor and determine if action is necessary. Strategic priorities are established and reviewed in alignment with school board budgetary and operations calendars, ensuring focused energy on the task and assurance that the district has the necessary resources to achieve, sustain and monitor priorities.

“Alignment of the current tools and processes the district uses to make decisions with the dates on the calendar is an important part of this work,” Law said. “This allows the district to fully inform and involve staff and community members regarding these priorities and get their collective energy behind strategies to improve schools.”

Continuous improvement next steps

Anoka-Hennepin is in the third year of using the continuous improvement cycle and work continues to refine and improve the system. The foundational work of how and when decisions are made is considered a strength of the system.

Anoka-Hennepin has incorporated a data-rich scorecard as a tool for the school board to monitor performance across the district. “We set high expectations for performance and use the scorecard as a way to measure results and determine where resources should be directed to get the results we need,” Heidemann said.

### ANOKA-HENNEPIN SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

**Mission:** It is the primary mission of the district to effectively educate each of our students for success. **Vision:** It is the vision of the district to be a public school system of excellence, with high quality staff, programs and successful graduates.

#### INCREASED STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

- **IMPLEMENTING**
  - 1.1 Elementary English Language Arts curriculum.
  - 1.15 Middle school literacy review.
  - 1.2 Math action plan K-12.
  - 1.3 Special education recommendations, year one.
  - 1.4 Technology plan, year three.
  - 1.5 Monitor and enhance magnet/specialty schools.
  - 1.6 Voluntary pre-K implementation, year two.
  - 1.7 Talent development recommendations, year one.

- **REVIEWING**
  - 1.8 College and career readiness.
  - 2.3 Class size analysis.

- **CONSIDERING**
  - 1.9 Q-Comp program impact.

- **MONITORING**
  - 2.4 Anti-bullying/anti-harassment work.
  - 2.5 Systems and programs for safety and security.
  - 2.6 Student engagement professional development.

- **EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT**
  - 3.1 Support board decisions in recommendations for facilities.
  - 3.2 Recruitment and retention of employees.
  - 3.3 Continuous improvement process update.
  - 3.4 Strategic investments.
  - 3.5 Collaboration time.
  - 3.6 HR/pay/finance software.
  - 3.7 Student and administrative support recommendations.
  - 3.8 Employee recognition.
  - 3.9 Insurance options.
Moving forward, improving understanding within the organization regarding the scorecard along with the continuous improvement cycle and strategic priorities is a goal. Changes will be made to better reflect indicators of progress on planning documents. Both internal and external audience needs regarding reporting on strategic priorities will also be enhanced in the year to come. The school board and superintendent have also committed to additional data collection and stakeholder feedback for future consideration. “This is a team effort with our building and department leaders to establish understanding of the strategic priorities with staff,” Law said. “One of the key planning parameters of this system is to have the strongest internal communication possible. Aligning the efforts will lead to the best possible outcomes for our students.” The Anoka-Hennepin School Board will present a complete overview of this system called “Moving From ‘Show’ to ‘Go’ — How One District Uses an Innovative Planning Process to Make Lasting Improvements for Students and Staff,” at the 2018 National School Boards Association Annual Conference in San Antonio, Texas. “We’re pleased to have this opportunity to share what works in our district for others to consider,” Heidemann said. “Using a continuous improvement approach, we fully expect to find new ways to further improve our model for the benefit of our students, staff, and community.”

Jim Skelly is the Director of Communications and Public Relations for Anoka-Hennepin Schools. Contact James at james.skelly@ahschools.us for more information.
In 2017, the Local Government Innovation Awards (LGIA) again recognized the creative ways school districts and other local governments are finding to deliver services with greater impact and at lower cost.

The LGIA awards program is organized in partnership with the Bush Foundation and its Native Nation Building Initiative. The awards are co-sponsored by MSBA, the League of Minnesota Cities, the Association of Minnesota Counties, and the Minnesota Association of Townships. The awards recognize projects in five different categories, and name one overall award winner in each: schools, cities, counties, townships, and new this year, Native Nations.

The 2017 overall school category winner was Pillager Public Schools for its Metier (pronounced “meteor”) program. Pillager Public Schools will receive a $5,000 grant from the Bush Foundation to continue local government innovation and redesign.

Innovation in Action

Pillager Public Schools take home grand prize

Pillager Middle School language arts teacher Kevin Votaw (center) accepted a Local Government Innovation Award on behalf of Pillager Public Schools during a ceremony December 7, 2017, in Minneapolis. The school district was named the Overall Category Winner among school districts for its Metier (pronounced “meteor”) program. Metier is an experimental learning program in grades 5-8 that teaches students to build a life and a career around “flow” — the happiest state wherein you feel and perform your best. Votaw received the award from Humphrey School of Public Affairs Senior Fellow Jay Kiedrowski (left) and MSBA President (and Austin School Board member) Kathryn Green.

The other 2017 LGIA-award winning school districts are Burnsville-Eagan-Savage, Hutchinson, Little Falls and Minnetonka. Learn about these school districts’ programs on Page 21.

The Lower Sioux Indian Community and the Redwood Area School District teamed up to win the inaugural Local Government and Native Nations Collaboration Award for “Creating Effective Culturally Based Resources and Results for American Indian Students.” See Page 22 to learn how this collaboration has helped more high school students learn the Dakota language.
Life is full of beautiful questions. From Socrates to Seneca, Jesus to Buddha, William James to Richard Dawkins, the evergreen questions of what it means to live this crazy life have plagued humanity: Who am I? Why am I here? What does it mean to live a life well-lived?

A similar question plagued us in May 2016 in the Pillager Public Schools break room. “How do you make kids passionate?” Jordan Herman, science teacher and co-founder of Metier (pronounced “meteor”), asked Kevin Votaw, English teacher and the other co-founder of Metier. Little did we know that that question would become a four-year program, an opportunity to receive innovation funding through the outstanding folks at the National Joint Powers Alliance, and the chance to connect with people all over the world with one singular mission: open-sourcing flow in education so that all students find their Metier — the job and life they love and loves them back.

Pillager Public Schools Earns LGIA Overall School Category Winner For Metier Program

Experimental learning program helps students find a subject they are passionate about

By Kevin Votaw

Metier is a grades 5-8 experiential learning program built around flow that guides students to find the truest, happiest, and greatest versions of themselves in the career field that makes them come alive. The program can be broken down into two levels: the fifth- and sixth-grade “Compass Craftsman” and the seventh- and eighth-grade “Flowblazers.” Both levels will be broken down in theory and logistics to gain a further understanding of each.
In the first level of Metier in grades 5-6 you’re a “Compass Craftsman.” “Passion is the intersection of three or more things you care about,” said award-winning author and flow expert Steven Kotler. The formula for passion — combined with extensive research by the Metier team — discovered that to be passionate, you must merge three elements: play, flow, and love.

“Play” is the truest version of yourself. It’s how you learn best. Palliative care nurse Bronnie Ware documented the regrets of the dying, discovering that the top regret of those in their last days was a wish to be true to themselves, not the life others expected of them. But when are we the truest version of ourselves? At play. All children, no matter the background, play. The research on play is so vast and so solid it is ridiculous. From psychologist Stuart Brown to the Institute of Play, play has been shown to be the defining characteristic of 21st century skills by default — children collaborate, communicate, critically think, and create on demand.

“Flow” is the second piece of being a “Compass Craftsman” — the happiest version of ourselves. Simply put, flow follows focus. According to the Flow Genome Project and their co-founders, Steven Kotler and Jamie Wheal, this state is where we feel our best and perform our best, skyrockets our productivity and performance, motivation and creativity. If that wasn’t enough, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, father of positive psychology and “godfather” of flow, discovered that those with the most flow in their lives have the highest rates of lifestyle satisfaction.

“Love” is the third and final piece of the Metier passion puzzle. Love is the greatest version of ourselves. Altrustic flow, or “Helper’s High,” as it is commonly known, is the highest indicator of sustained happiness. When we take our unique gifts and talents in service to the world, loving others, we obtain purpose. With purpose, there’s passion. With passion, anything is impossible. Religious references aside, love — true love — sacrifices to make the world a better place. It is the “why” Simon Sinek reminds us to start with. A legacy of love leaves its mark longer than money or fame ever could.

What research-backed identifiers does Metier use to find how students play, get into flow, and love others? To direct students into how they learn best, we leverage Howard Gardner’s eight multiple intelligences, looking to see which students naturally gravitate towards. For flow, we use the Flow Genome Project’s four flow profiles to see how students focus best: in a group as a Crowd Pleaser, by themselves as a Deep Thinker, going with the flow as a Flow Go-er, or with a challenge and competition as a Hard Charger. Finally, students learn how they love and serve others with Gary Chapman’s five love languages. Instead of asking how one receives love as marriage counselors do, Metier flips the concept on its head and asks how one gives love to others: Acts of Service, Gift Giving, Physical Touch, Quality Time, or Words of Affirmation.
Logistically, Metier’s “Compass Craftsman” learn the truest, happiest, and greatest versions of themselves as frugally and fun as possible. Without a limitless budget, the Metier team discovered that analog board games enabled students to access each multiple intelligence and flow profile instantly. Partnering with a world-class game advisor and game board organization, we identified games that matched each component in the time frame of less than a half an hour. Games are not frivolous. The 21st century learning and social-emotional learning happening in Pillager is astounding. Come play with us and you’ll see kids competing fiercely, winning excitedly, and losing gracefully. For the five love languages, students take on service-learning projects to immerse themselves within the world of that sacrificial language. These “Compass Craftsman” learn to “know themselves” so that they may “lead themselves” into a career field that makes them come alive in the seventh- and eighth-grade “Flowblazer” stage.

In the second level of Metier in grades 7-8 you’re a “Flowblazer.” Those living lives north of happy deliberately and intentionally build their lives around flow. But oftentimes, as we learned in our first failure, students don’t know what they like or don’t like because they simply haven’t had enough experiences yet. It’s hard to know what kind of ice cream you like if all you’ve had is vanilla. Metier students try one career field per month all the while asking: “Does this career field make me come alive?” To give the best possible experience for all students, we crafted a simple three-step structure of again, immersive learning, to see what career field sets students’ hearts on fire.

The first week of the month as a “Flowblazer” is the “hear it” stage. Students get a foundational understanding of what that career field is by taking notes from the Minnesota Career Information Systems and reading articles about careers in that field. The most powerful part of the introductory week is a guest speaker. Metier connects with a local community member that works in that career, inviting them in to be interviewed in our “North of Happy LifeDesign Interview” wherein we deconstruct the person’s profile and construct how they got to their career, too. These questions asked to every single guest, mirror the students’ work as “Compass Craftsman” and show the students the path to be that person should they come alive that month during the next stage of flowblazing.

The second and third weeks of Metier as a “Flowblazer,” students “do it” or explore the field through high-challenge and high-engagement activities. Sure, we offer suggestions and guidance from the side, but the students are the experts, sinking or swimming in challenges such as designing 3-D-printable cars on CAD for transportation, building “frankencars” for

---

Esmae B., sixth grade
robotics, building a business for a “Shark Tank” pitch, or sketching circuitry for electricity. Come to Pillager and you’ll see kids struggling and succeeding, being real about their likes and dislikes, processing who they are and where they are going before they get to the final part of the month.

The last week of the month for each career field is special. After students have been able to “hear it” and “do it” for three weeks, they now get to “see it” on a field trip to a local organization or business. It is said that vision trumps all other senses according to “Brain Rules” logic. Seeing is believing in Metier, and we strive to showcase the realities of that career field coming straight from the trenches of those who do it every day.

How do Metier students know whether or not that component makes them come alive? With the help of the world’s simplest directional survey, the Adolescent Emoji Flow Scale-II, which asks students to rank each experience on a scale of 1-10 on flow, fun, and feeling. Scores mirror a stoplight: Red is a 1-10 (“No!”), Yellow is an 11-20 (“Whoa!”) and Green is a 21-30 (“Go!”). Compiling the data enables each and every student to answer to say, with confidence, their own Metier profile at the end of eighth grade. Imagine a student saying this:

“I am an intrapersonal and verbal-linguistic (play) Deep Thinker and Hard Charger (flow) looking to serve my family, community, and world with Acts of Service and Gift Giving (love) in the field of education (career field).”

Metier began with answering a beautiful question: “How do you make kids passionate?” Without the support of an amazing administration (thank you, Mr. Doss!) trusting us with an impossible vision and allowing us to fail, Metier wouldn’t be where it is today. If you have innovative teachers in your building with the guts and hearts to fail in front of their peers and community, give the program time and patience. Not all change is progress, but there is no progress without change. Where will Metier go from here? Who knows? But with the trust and love given to us by our school board and administration, we have no doubt that that beautiful question will have a beautiful answer.

Kevin Votaw is a language arts teacher at Pillager Middle School. Direct questions to Kevin at kvotaw@isd116.org.

Watch a video about this program at https://youtu.be/pykAtJvXQcw
**Other LGIA School Award Winners**

**Burnsville-Eagan-Savage School District: Shaping Success for All Students — Financial Literacy, Career Pathways, and Business Partnerships**

Burnsville High School partnered with Firefly Credit Union to create the Finance Pathway, a student-run campus branch that supports financial literacy curriculums, offers banking services to the community, and provides authentic career experiences. Students in grades 9-12 receive education, including financial aid workshops and saving seminars, ensuring the high school’s 2,700 students are financially literate upon graduation. The Finance Pathway’s primary partnerships include the high school, the school district, and the credit union, while additionally connecting to the Dakota-Scott Workforce Development Center and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

**Hutchinson Public Schools: The TigerPath Initiative**

Hutchinson Public Schools launched the TigerPath Initiative to build a skilled workforce, transition high school graduates into careers, and significantly lower student debt. Partners in this initiative include the school district, the city of Hutchinson, Ridgewater College, the Southwest Initiative Foundation, and 20 local manufacturers and businesses. With $1.2 million in funding received, the initiative works toward multiple integrated efforts that benefit the community of Hutchinson — known as Minnesota’s “manufacturing city” and home to nearly two dozen precision, high-tech manufacturers.

**Little Falls Community Schools: Senior Internship Program**

Little Falls Community High School’s Senior Internship Program annually pairs one-quarter of its senior class of 200 with workplace mentors within local area key employers and businesses to gain firsthand exposure to a career of interest. Students devote at least eight hours per week to their internship while practicing soft skills and building a digital portfolio during weekly seminars. In addition to student value, area businesses are viewed as potential future employers, which is crucial to rural economic development.

**Minnetonka Public Schools: Minnetonka Academic Success Time (MAST)**

Minnetonka Academic Success Time (MAST) was developed by the Minnetonka High School faculty to ensure student success in their classes and overall academic goals through proactive weekly interventions integrated into the core school schedule. Teachers collaborate to develop MAST sessions to address the knowledge gap and individually assist up to 500 students who are at the highest risk of falling behind. MAST is scalable, actionable, and keeps the student body of 3,000 on track. Students have given MAST a 95 percent approval rating.
Over the summer, the Redwood Area School District, the Cedar Mountain School District, and the Lower Sioux Indian Community began having dialogues about bringing Dakota Language into the area schools. It had been a goal of Dakota language advocates to create an accredited Dakota class for high school students.

With only five first-language Dakota speakers still living in Minnesota, it is urgent that we create as many language learning opportunities as possible for the Dakota people. Dakota is the first language of Minnesota and gives the Dakota people their identity. After designing the course with Vanessa Goodthunder and Nora Murphy and ensuring that we met all American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages standards, the local school boards accepted Dakota Iapi Omaka Tokaheya as an accredited Foreign Language class in the school districts.

The Lower Sioux Indian Community agreed to sponsor the class for the first year with the intent of the classes being inside the schools the next year. With Dakota Iapi Omaka Tokaheya not beginning until October 2, 2017, the class was to be hosted at the Lower Sioux Historic Site every Monday and Wednesday from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Strengthening the relationship between the school and the tribe has been the objective in recent years. The creation of this Dakota language class will build a greater understanding between the two nations.

Dakota Iapi Omaka Tokaheya is a unique learning experience. Twelve students enrolled for class this year. We begin every class by smudging with sweet grass. (Smudging is a spiritual cleansing ceremony that brings in positive energy.) After we have all smudged, I have all of the students tell me something in Dakota. Following this, we then begin our lesson, using Dakota Language (Flute & Schommer, University of Minnesota, 1979) for our curriculum.

The lessons of this book are built around dialogues between the students. Using this book as a guide advances the learner to conversational Dakota.

Award-Winning Native Nations Collaboration Helps Preserve Dakota Language

By Ryan Dixon
speaking abilities. In addition to this curriculum, we also have embraced technology within the classroom. Using the Transparent Language Dakota application, I am able to assign lessons and track the progress of each individual student.

Transparent Language requires the learner to recognize the word in Dakota by reading, writing, hearing, and speaking the words. Kahoot is another learning activity enjoyed by the students. We play this application on our classroom Apple TV. Kahoot is a quiz game in which the students try to be the first to select the correct answer.

All of the games we play in class help grow the vocabulary of the students. Two teams from our class have competed in Dakota language bowls and they did very well. Speaking the language as much as possible in the classroom is imperative. The more the students speak Dakota, the more likely they will be able to remember it when spoken or when they hear it.

It has been a rewarding experience watching the growth of the students through language. A few of my students did have previous exposure to Dakota, but overall I would say each student is well on their way to becoming a Dakota speaker. The students of this class understand the importance of preserving our language and its importance to our identity. These students will be teaching the next generation of Dakota speakers.

Ryan Dixon is an instructor with the Dakota Language program. If you have questions about this article, contact Ryan at ryan.dixon@lowersioux.com.
Northland Community Schools’ Native American Drum and Dance Troupe provided the entertainment ahead of Friday’s Closing Session.

MSBA’s Joel Stencel presented “Negotiations: The Tools to Compare Contract Data” during a Friday morning Round Table session.

The Alexandria School District showed off a student-built tiny house during Thursday’s Show and Tell event.

The 2018 All-State School Board members are (standing from left to right): George Hoeppner, Stillwater Area; James Buckley, Redwood Area; Walter Hautala, Mesabi East; and (sitting from left to right) Helen Bassett, Robbinsdale Area; Karen Kirschner, Mora; and Betsy Anderson, Hopkins. Sue Kaslow, Hill City (right), was unable to attend the Recognition Luncheon.
Northland Community Schools’ Native American Drum and Dance Troupe provided the entertainment ahead of Friday’s Closing Session.

Mark J. Lindquist (left) and Manny Scott both delivered inspiring keynote speeches during the Leadership Conference.

Members of the New Ulm School Board took a stroll through the Exhibit Hall during the Leadership Conference. More than 1,100 school leaders attended the conference.

Mark J. Lindquist (left) and Manny Scott both delivered inspiring keynote speeches during the Leadership Conference.

Photos courtesy of Lifetouch
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Launched in 2016, the Minnesota K-12 Connect Forward Initiative is a joint partnership between the Office of the Governor, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) and the national nonprofit EducationSuperHighway.

The initiative’s goal is to ensure every school district has access to scalable infrastructure, high-speed affordable bandwidth, and ubiquitous Wi-Fi for digital learning. Increasingly, school district leaders are seeing the importance of broadband upgrades to provide their students with equal educational opportunities.

In his effort to bring high-speed Internet to Goodhue Public Schools, Superintendent Mike Redmond worked with Wasioja Education Technology Cooperative (WETC) to get his two schools connected to a fiber infrastructure.

Mark K., Lindsay S., Amrad M., sixth grade

Digital Inequality is Educational Inequality

How a statewide initiative is working to close the K-12 connectivity gap in Minnesota

By Christine Bediones
The Governor’s Task Force on Broadband recently released its 2017 Annual Report, which highlighted the task force’s work and included policy recommendations for Governor Mark Dayton and the Minnesota Legislature.

The task force has studied issues related to broadband affordability, adoption and accessibility, and has made recommendations to remove barriers to broadband deployment and modernize Minnesota’s telecommunications regulatory framework.

MSBA staff member Denise Dittrich is a member of the Broadband Task Force. “It has been an honor to serve on this task force,” Dittrich said. “It’s been a great privilege to be the voice for schools on broadband.”

This report contains two recommendations for state lawmakers to:

• Provide $71.48 million in ongoing biennial funding for the Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant Program, until the state achieves its broadband speed goals.

• Provide the Office of Broadband Development with $500,000 in ongoing biennial funding and maintain the existing partnership with the Minnesota Department of Commerce, until the state achieves its broadband speed goals.

Visit https://mn.gov/deed/assets/2017-bbtf-annual-report_tcm1045-323417.pdf to view the task force’s report.

“This is the task force’s last report to Gov. Dayton,” Dittrich said. “It will be up to the next governor on whether or not to continue the work of the Broadband Task Force.”

Visit https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/broadband to learn more about the Broadband Task Force.

Goodhue Public Schools receives 1Gbps (gigabits per second) of service, which is enough bandwidth to support the digital learning needs of their 650 students. After their upgrade, Redmond said students and teachers saw significant improvements.

“We have fewer interruptions, better service, and we’re seeing our use of video streaming and production and connecting to other resources continually increasing year to year,” Redmond said.

Redmond, who is also a member of the K-12 Connect Forward Initiative team — added “we all want the best for our kids — nobody wants education to be determined by our students’ ZIP codes.” (MSBA’s Denise Dittrich and ECMECC’s Marc Johnson also represent public schools on the K-12 Connect Forward Initiative team.)

Another way that Redmond took action for Goodhue students was by utilizing their share of the E-rate Category 2 funding...
Affordable internet service is a basic necessity for our schools. The internet is used in all aspects of education from the classrooms’ curriculum, multi-electronic instructional devices and testing, to the business of education with district food service, communications and transportation.

Inequity in internet service affordability exists across the state.

- State funding dropped from $7.5 million statewide in 2009 to $3.7 million in 2010.
- The cost of full funding has risen to $9.3 million, which has created a gap of $5.6 million.
- The state pays only 40 percent, while school districts pay 60 percent — this where the inequity lies.

Inequity:

- Average general fund spending per student to provide Internet access in the seven-county metro area was $6, while the average general cost per student in Greater Minnesota was $18.34 — three times as much per student.
- In the southwest metro area, the average out-of-pocket cost is $2.98 per student, while the average cost per student in southwest Minnesota is $40.26 per student — 13 times as much for the same service.
- The lowest out-of-pocket cost paid by a district in the state is $.86 per student. The highest cost district is $146.77 per student — which is 170 times higher.

Solution: A total of $6 million would fully fund the Telecommunications Equity Aid (TEA) for approximately two years. This could be achieved by passing the bipartisan bill (SF 936 and HF 881) in the Minnesota Legislature. [Sen. Bill Weber and Rep. Dave Baker are the bill’s primary authors.] MSBA’s Government Relations staff got this bill drafted based on a resolution passed by the MSBA Delegate Assembly.
Network upgrades can be challenging, but with the support provided through the Minnesota K-12 Connect Forward Initiative, you can take action to connect your students. Much of the technical assistance, tools, and support is provided at no cost to school districts and charter schools.

Compare your Internet connection type, provider, and cost with other school districts in the state and country using www.compareandconnectk12.org. This free tool has helped thousands of school district leaders get more bandwidth for their budget by negotiating cost savings with their service provider.

To leverage these resources and access the free technical assistance provided by EducationSuperHighway’s team of network experts, call 415-738-8669 or visit https://www.educationsuperhighway.org/districts.

Christine Bediones is the EducationSuperHighway’s Associate Marketing Manager. Contact Christine at christine@educationsuperhighway.org. Learn more about EducationSuperHighway at https://www.educationsuperhighway.org.

Visit https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/broadband/connect-forward to learn more about the Minnesota K-12 Connect Forward Initiative.

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Natural Athletic Turf
Big news for Title IX

When all the calculations are done, 4 natural turf fields can be built for the cost of 1 synthetic field. Learn how you can provide equitable opportunities for women and men to participate in sports, even with limited funds.

New report shows that Natural Turf is a 4:1 win!

Plaisted Companies is the leading athletic field soil supplier in the Midwest. We’ll help you determine a solution that fits within your criteria.

Synthetic vs. Natural Turf article at www.PlaistedCompanies.com

Contact: Kerry Glader, 763.633.6571
KGlader@plaistedcompanies.com
During the Minnesota Association of School Administrators Spring 2017 Conference, I had the pleasure of participating with Jim Rickabaugh in a keynote address on the topic of personalized learning and Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) frameworks. The task was to do a cross-walk between personalized learning and MTSS. The talk was not intended to be a contentious debate about the relative merits of personalized learning versus MTSS, but an opportunity for attendees to better understand how the two frameworks work together (rather than an “either-or”).

Overall, it was a wonderful opportunity to have a professional dialogue about innovative ways to improve student outcomes. There were similarities between the two approaches — most notably in the goal of improving outcomes for all learning through matching instruction to student need and building an effective infrastructure to support learning. There were also some differences including assessments, goal-setting, and evaluating the impact of these frameworks.

For the past few years, I have focused less on what we call what we are doing and more on ensuring that we evaluate the impact of what we do and that what we do is specifically matched to the needs that exist in each district and supported by research. Over the past several decades, we have said hello (and sometimes goodbye) to myriad philosophies and approaches to improving instruction including RtI, Differentiated Instruction, Project-Based Learning, Flipped Classrooms, Constructivism, MTSS, Personalized Learning, Design Thinking, Outcomes Based Instruction, and Whole Language to name a few. The list could continue for several pages.

In his book “Learning to Improve,” Tony Bryk talks about an affliction that is common among educators — “solutionitis.” Solutionitis occurs when educational leaders jump quickly on a solution before fully understanding the exact problem to be solved. Popular ideas move very quickly, and each initiative becomes the new “hot” hammer to fix educational problems. Many times, the ideas lack a research base, outcomes are not satisfactory, and we move on to the next hot new idea. Solutionitis is often referred to as siloed reasoning because complex problems are often viewed through a narrow lens. My only hesitation about personalized learning was whether there was adequate research showing the effectiveness of this framework before bringing it to large scale and that it would become the next “hot” hammer.
As it turns out, the Gates Foundation funded a major study of personalized learning schools that is being conducted by RAND Corporation researchers. In a recent Education Week interview, the researchers of personalized learning were interviewed about the most recent findings of the study. They summarized a few big ideas (Marshall, December 2017):

- **The evidence base for personalized learning is very weak at this point.** More research is needed to validate this approach. While some schools are seeing positive results, it is too early to generalize the conclusions to other settings.

- **Consensus has not been reached on a common definition of personalized learning.** Many districts implementing a personalized learning framework are creating individual learning plans and using a mastery approach where students do not move on to new material until they have mastered previous content. In addition, the use of technology is often a common denominator. However, there is great variability in how personalized learning is implemented.

- **There are barriers to implementing personalized learning.** Time is a very real challenge. Teachers need time to create materials that are matched to students’ instructional levels, and collaboration among colleagues can be challenging with so many personalized lessons.

- **There are myths around the “pitfalls” of personalized learning.** One myth is that students receive the bulk of their instruction via technology when in fact, teachers are still instructing students in large and small groups.

- **The major recommendation from the RAND research is to wait for current research to be completed and keep the focus on effective instruction.** Collaboration is important, and educators should continue working as teams to accomplish the schoolwide vision.

The Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI) wants to help avoid solutionitis! We are here to partner with districts to help evaluate the impact of various initiatives and frameworks on student outcomes and help improve implementation of various programs and frameworks. Feel free to email me at kgibbons@umn.edu if you would like more information!

Kim Gibbons, Ph.D., is the Associate Director of CAREI. CAREI is the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement at the University of Minnesota. Learn more about CAREI at https://www.cehd.umn.edu/carei. Contact Kim about this article at kgibbons@umn.edu.
The most important decision your school board will probably ever make is to choose a new school district leader. As the school district’s chief executive officer, the superintendent interacts regularly with the school board and other school district stakeholders, conducts the daily operations of the school district, and is ultimately responsible for the school district’s results. So, finding the right superintendent for your school district is an important task. Below are some frequently asked questions and answers.

What is the quality of the superintendent candidate pool?
MSBA is often asked what the superintendent candidate pool looks like. Each year and each situation are a little different. However, in general, the number of superintendent applicants both in Minnesota and nationally is declining.

The school board can influence the applicant pool by maintaining positive press. This can be accomplished by establishing a good relationship with the current superintendent, and maintaining constructive school board member-to-board member interactions, and by emphasizing the positive things the school board does in the school district.

How much time should we allocate for the search?
The search process typically takes between three months to six months to complete. The process includes a series of steps that school boards take to learn as much as they can about the applicants to help with their decision-making. The steps are noted below.

Steps of the search process
- advertise the position
- accept applications
- screen the applicant pool
- conduct first round interviews
- conduct second interviews
- check references
- conduct site visit, if needed
- make a selection
- offer and negotiate the contract

Each step is important and serves to help school boards to more fully determine each candidate’s strengths and limitations and what he/she might bring to the job. School boards should not skip any of the steps. In fact, school boards that skip a step often regret doing so.

Are the superintendent search-related meetings open to the public?
Yes. All meetings related to the superintendent search are open meetings. The staff and community may observe the planning and selection of finalists’ meetings, all first- and second-round interviews, school board deliberation meetings, etc. However, participation in the interviews and deliberations is limited to the “finalists” and the school board members.

What can we do to gather stakeholder input?
Hiring the superintendent is the school board’s responsibility; however, many school boards choose to gather public input via stakeholder surveys, one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and/or listening sessions. When involving stakeholders, the school board must develop a process that ensures the stakeholders understand their role is advisory.
What applicant information is public?

Applicants are free to disclose personal information about themselves at their own discretion. However, the school board can only release the following information on applicants for a position: name (only “finalists”), veteran status, relevant test scores, rank on eligible list, job history, education and training, and work availability (see M.S. 13.43, Subd. 5). All other information on applicants is private.

Can the public review an applicant’s file?

No. Applicants’ files contain private data, and, to protect the applicants’ privacy rights, only the school board may review said information (see MSBA Service Manual, Chapter 13, Law Bulletin I).

When do the names of applicants become public?

The names of applicants for employment are private, but the names of “finalists” are public. “Finalist” means an individual who is selected to be interviewed by the school board. The names of those individuals not selected to be interviewed by the school board remain private. For additional information, please refer to the Minnesota Data Practices Act (see M.S. 13.43, Subd. 5).

Contact Sandy Gundlach at sgundlach@mnmsba.org.

Meet MSBA’s New Staff Member: Terry Morrow

MSBA hired Terry Morrow in November 2017 as its new Associate Director of Management and Policy Services.

Morrow is a former member of the St. Peter School Board and the Minnesota Valley Education District.

He served in the Minnesota House of Representatives for three terms and taught at Gustavus Adolphus College for 18 years. More recently, Morrow was the Legislative Director and Legal Counsel for the Uniform Law Commission.

At MSBA, Morrow will assist with and provide member support relative to policy, school board/employee relations, labor relations and negotiations, and Master Agreement language and analysis.

Morrow lives in St. Peter with his wife, Martha.
MSBA Board Director Heidi Jones represents public school board members in the southwest Minnesota region of Director District 1.

Jones — a member of the Red Wing School Board — joined the MSBA Board of Directors in January 2016 after winning a special election for a one-year term to replace Austin’s Kathryn Green. (Green vacated the Director District 1 seat after becoming MSBA President-Elect.) One year later, Jones won an election for a three-year term to assure herself a place on the MSBA Board until at least 2020.

Jones began her local school board service for Red Wing in January 2009. Over the years, Jones has served on the MSBA Delegate Assembly and compiled enough MSBA training points to earn the following awards: the Leadership Development Certificate, the MSBA Directors’ Award, and the MSBA President’s Award.

Jones and her husband, Steve, have three 20-something sons, Trevor, Ben and Jamie.

In the ensuing interview, Jones recalls why she ran for school board, it shines a light on her school district’s successful solar garden, dishes on their summer food program, and more.

**MSBA:** Why did you run for your local school board?

**HEIDI JONES:** I was recruiting women to run for several local offices when someone asked me why I wasn’t running. Good question! Like many women, I felt that I wasn’t “ready.” That question forced me to reassess my own thinking. I had served on three City of Red Wing commissions, including leadership positions.

I had a long history of parent involvement in the schools, too.
I learned how to advocate for my children’s needs. I was able to articulate my concerns while navigating sometimes difficult conversations.

I did not have a personal agenda but was interested in being part of a team that cared about outcomes for all of our children.

**MSBA:** How can school board members make the biggest impact?

Many school board members run for office because of a specific issue or area of concern, but often not realizing that there are so many aspects to serving the mission of public education. A board member must be a committed lifelong learner themselves. They must demonstrate that repeatedly. Fully embracing the mission of public education is critical for all of our students as the state’s population demographics shift. Connecting to the whole community helps board members understand the needs of our students.

Becoming informed about current issues in public education is important, too, so that board members can advocate for their districts. MSBA has helped me better understand all the aspects of being a good, effective board member.

**MSBA:** What is the biggest challenge for school board members?

Understanding their role as an elected school board member is a great challenge. We are a team who can only make a decision as a collective. We are obligated to follow the Open Meeting Law, which can be hard to understand. We have many areas of concern: funding, student achievement across all populations, keeping up with technological advances — both in and out of the classroom — choosing programming that makes sense for our students, and advocating in the community and at the Legislature.

**MSBA:** Are there any specific issues that are currently affecting your MSBA Director District?

My Director District is made up of small, rural communities and midsize towns. We share many concerns about state funding and local referendum support. We all want to be sure that our outstate voices are heard when it comes to the needs of students across Minnesota. We are proud of the creative solutions we come up with when faced with difficult circumstances. We want our stories to be heard.

**MSBA:** What has been beneficial about Red Wing Public Schools’ solar garden? Would you recommend other school districts tap into solar, too?

We’re very proud of our courage in pursuing this revenue-enhancing project for Red Wing Public Schools (RWPS). Not only did RWPS participate in a solar garden, but we also leased land for a solar array. We expect to realize a savings of more than $61,000 in the first year of operations. By year 25, the savings will be nearly $500,000. We have not paid an electrical bill for the past six months. Leasing 33 acres for 20,000 solar panels to provide 7.3 million kilowatt hours per year has also added $33,000 in income annually to the general fund. All in all, we anticipate the total income for the district over the 25-year life of the project to be around $7.7 million with zero out of pocket expenses for us!
Would I recommend other districts to pursue a solar garden? Yes! But only if the terms are favorable and make sense in your district. I am sure our buildings and grounds director would be happy to discuss how RWPS negotiated our contract.

**MSBA:** Are there any other programs or projects in your school district that you are excited about?

Red Wing Public Schools is on the move! We are planning for the second year of facility maintenance work after the community approved a $22.6 million bond referendum in April 2016. Our administrative team has been working for months on strategic planning and we’re nearing the finish line on this important work. The board hopes to see improved results and reporting on student achievement.

The district has assumed the responsibility of preparing food for our Summer Food Program through our local United Way and the Hunger Free Kids Network. This program provided more than 14,000 meals to kids this summer! We have added the Naviance software to help prepare our students for college or careers after high school. This has only been implemented this year and we are already seeing our young people engaging more in their postsecondary plans. I have helped reconstitute our student school board member program. We are building some excellent future leaders in Red Wing!

RWPS is also a partner in a collective impact initiative called Every Hand Joined. We continue to work with other community partners to address kindergarten readiness, third-grade reading, eighth-grade math scores, and college and career readiness. Several board members and our student board members serve in different areas on committees to address these goals.

**MSBA:** What is the most rewarding thing about being a board member?

While I was the board chair, I was able to make long-term changes for the better in board governance with roles for all board members across multiple committees. (We had previously only had one board committee.) I also instituted the superintendent evaluation process.

I have really enjoyed the role of advocate for all students. Working with a dedicated, talented staff has also been tremendously rewarding.

**MSBA:** What advice do you have for new board members?

Red Wing Public Schools’ solar garden has been operational since January 2017 — and it is already paying off for the school district.
Be a lifelong learner. Developing your understanding of the role of being a good board member is critical. I believe strongly in board training and development. I am still excited to learn new information in public education!

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

I love working with smart, passionate people who are determined to make a difference for ALL kids! My fellow MSBA Board members come from all over the state, but are united in advocating for students in many ways across all communities, big or small. The MSBA staff is so focused on supporting us and carrying out our mission, “Where School Boards Learn to Lead,” so that students get our best efforts. It’s truly a great pleasure to be part of this team!

**MSBA:** Why is MSBA valuable to board members?

First and foremost is the training available to all members. The training has been invaluable to my formation as an effective board member in my district. It’s a safe space to ask questions and broaden your understanding of the more challenging aspects of public service. Second, MSBA has a finger on the pulse of the new issues coming forward in public education. They strive to provide us the best and most recent information on topics that will affect our districts. Third, the framework for advocacy built through the grass-roots Delegate Assembly has been essential to board members throughout the state. The research provided by the MSBA Government Relations staff has allowed me to be an effective advocate for our students in policy and funding challenges.

Contact Heidi Jones at hkjones@charter.net.

View the complete MSBA Board of Directors at http://www.mnmsba.org/MSBABoard.

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Heidi Jones and her husband, Steve, have three sons — Trevor, Ben and Jamie.

*Heidi Jones: Life Outside the Board*

**Family:** Husband, Steve; sons, Trevor (27), Ben (24) and Jamie (20)

**High School:** Cambridge Central School (K-12), Cambridge, New York

**College:** St. Lawrence University, Canton, New York (1984), B.A. in Government

**Favorite movie and/or TV show:** I love the British mystery series. I’ve watched “Foyle’s War” several times because of its social commentary on World War II.

**Favorite book:** No surprise, I’m a huge fan of mysteries of all types. My latest favorite series is the Inspector Gamache series by Louise Penny set in Quebec. I really enjoy Minnesota author William Kent Krueger’s Cork O’Connor series, too.

**Favorite music:** Classic rock

**Fun facts:**

- I recently returned to music by joining a local church handbell choir. I was part of setting a world record at the Mall of America last November (2016) for the largest handbell choir!
- I spent two weeks in Kitui, Kenya, this past June as a delegate to listen and learn about Kenyan life. I lived in the bush village of Migwani for five days. I am part of the leadership team for this partnership now and hope to be an advocate for the Kenyan people in the future.
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 about company products—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 erico@pierreproductions.com.

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The Role of the School Board Chair

By Cathy Miller, MSBA Director of Legal and Policy Services

Minnesota law requires school boards to select three officers: a chair, a clerk, and a treasurer. Many school boards also choose to have a vice chair. The term of these offices is one year and until “successors are selected and qualified” (M.S. 123B.14, Subd. 1).

When rules of parliamentary procedure conflict with Minnesota law, the law controls. One area of conflict often found is whether the chair votes on motions. Many rules of parliamentary procedure provide the chair votes only to break a tie. Minnesota law requires all school board members to vote. So, the school board chair is required to vote on motions, unless a conflict of interest exists.

The chair presides at school board meetings. This means the chair moves the agenda along, makes decisions on issues of parliamentary procedure, and keeps the discussion on the point raised. The chair is also the primary enforcer of school board policies on how the school board will operate. Other school board members can help remind the full board about the policies it has chosen to guide its work and support the chair if the need arises. All school board members should be given an opportunity to provide input. The chair may encourage voices not yet heard to speak.

The school board chair may be called upon to represent the school district in legal actions and needs to sign some of the legal documents of the school district. In situations of conflict among board members, the chair is often called upon to act as mediator. He or she may ask for assistance with this role from other school board officers or members, but a quorum of the school board cannot meet unless the Open Meeting Law notice provisions are met, and the meeting is open to the public.

If the school board has adopted the MSBA model policy language, the school board chair works with the superintendent to set the agenda. All school board members may provide input and, if the items offered are not included on the agenda, may move for an addition to the agenda before it is approved. This motion requires a second and a majority vote of approval before the addition can be made.

The school board chair may be responsible by policy for selecting members of school board committees. If this duty is not established in policy, the board can determine the membership of its committees.

In many school districts, especially those without a communications director position, the school board chair may have the responsibility of being the spokesperson for the board. Sometimes this role is with the media only. Other times, the board may decide that the chair will respond to inquiries to the board from the public as well.

The role of the chair holds many responsibilities, but the school board as a whole still maintains the overall authority to do its work.

Contact Cathy Miller at cmiller@mnmsba.org.
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