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N O V E M B E R  2 0 1 7
2–3 .......... MASBO Fall Conference
5–6 .......... MSBA Board of Directors’ Meeting
7 ............... Election Day (no meetings or activities 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.)
10 ............ Veterans Day Observed (no meetings)
11 ........... Veterans Day (no meetings)
13–17 ..... American Education Week
15 .......... Boardbook Webinar 10 a.m.
15 .......... Minnesota School District Liquid Asset Fund Plus Meeting
15 .......... MSBA Pre-Delegate Assembly Meeting, Little Falls
16 .......... MSBA Pre-Delegate Assembly Meeting, St. Peter
18 .......... MSBA Pre-Delegate Assembly Meeting, St. Paul
23 .......... Thanksgiving Day (no meetings)
24 .......... Optional Holiday

D E C E M B E R  2 0 1 7
1 ............ MSBA Board of Directors’ Meeting
1–2 .......... MSBA Delegate Assembly, Minneapolis
5 ............ MSBA Learning to Lead – School Board Basics: Phase I, St. Peter
8 ............ MSBA Learning to Lead – School Board Basics: Phase I, St. Cloud
9 ............ MSBA Leadership Foundations – School Finance and Management: Phase II, St. Cloud
25 .......... Christmas Day (no meetings)

J A N U A R Y  2 0 1 8
1 ............ Terms Begin for Newly Elected School Board Members
1 ............ New Year’s Day (no meetings)
9 ............ MSBA Learning to Lead – School Board Basics: Phase I, Minneapolis
10 ........... MSBA Leadership Foundations – School Finance and Management: Phase II, Minneapolis
10 .......... MSBA Charter School Board Training, Minneapolis
10 .......... MSBA Board of Directors’ Meeting, Minneapolis
10 .......... MSBA Early Bird Workshops, Minneapolis
11–12 ..... MSBA Leadership Conference, Minneapolis
12 ........... MSBA Board of Directors’ Meeting, Minneapolis
15 .......... Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Birthday Observed (no meetings)

Note: In the September-October 2017 edition of the Journal, Kallie Bumgarner’s artwork on Page 12 was a reproduction of Edward Hopper’s “Nighthawks” (1942).
MSBA believes it is important to keep our members informed about relevant and emerging issues.

We carry this out primarily through the MSBA eClippings and The Leader newsletter. We also produce the MSBA Journal magazine, an online MSBA Advocate (updates from the MSBA Government Relations staff) and its Advocate Weekly companion. (The Advocate Weekly is a great way of staying informed of issues during the legislative session. Email MSBA’s Bruce Lombard at blombard@mnmsba.org to sign up.)

We believe there is great value in all of our communication avenues. Our eClippings service is one of our members’ favorites. Originally called the News Clipping Service, this daily email update was spawned years ago when MSBA staff members would literally clip news stories from newspapers to share among themselves. If this was good enough for our staff, then the information would also be helpful for our school board members and administrators.

In addition to those publications, MSBA occasionally shares news stories on our Facebook and Twitter social media pages. From time to time, we have been questioned by some for certain content we have posted on our eClippings and those two social media sites.

We’ve been called “too conservative” a number of times, including once for a Facebook post announcing Gov. Mark Dayton’s Flags at Half-Staff notice for a Minnesota soldier killed in the line of duty. MSBA has great respect for our armed forces, but we post ALL Flag at Half-Staff proclamations (regardless of which political party the governor represents or whom the proclamation honors) in order to let our administrators know when they need to lower U.S. and state flags at their school buildings.

Also, we’ve been accused of being “too liberal” at times, including once for a Facebook post of February 23 story — “President Trump’s withdrawal of guidance on transgender student rights leaves bathroom questions up to schools and states” — from The Washington Post. The Post’s story provided a balanced view, offering opposing perspectives from the mother of a transgender girl in the state of Virginia on one side — and a Utah school board member who felt President Barack Obama’s original guidance on the issue was a federal overreach on the other side.

Running a certain article in the eClippings or retweeting a particular post on Twitter doesn’t necessarily mean we agree with or endorse it. We simply put information out there to inform members about what is happening in the education world — with a heavy emphasis on our Minnesota public schools and some important national stories. Part of a board member’s responsibility is to be aware of education-related stories on a local, regional, state and national level to help them gather information and gain perspective for decisions they could likely make today or in the future.

Trust me, in these politically charged times, we are very sensitive to our members’ political convictions. We take great pride in focusing on how we can better serve our boards by working with both sides of the aisle (at the state Legislature and U.S. Congress) to promote and advance policy and funding proposals — that come from our membership via our Delegate Assembly — that help our public schools and the students that they serve.

If any member has any concerns about any stories we share, please contact me and we can have a conversation.

As a leading advocate for public education, MSBA’s mission is to support, promote, and strengthen public education and the work of your school board.

Kirk Schneidawind is MSBA’s Executive Director. You may contact him about this column at kschneidawind@mnmsba.org.
LEARNING HAS CHANGED, BUT HAVE YOUR CLASSROOMS?

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Being a school board member has been one of the most rewarding endeavors of my life. I was drawn to it by my intense desire to be able to positively impact my children’s experience in our public school system. I, like many in any community, would tell you I already believed in what our district was doing and the dedication of our teachers and staff. I wanted to build on a district with a rich legacy of excellence, all the while knowing my kids were my motivation. That motivation soon grew to include our entire student body.

In 2017, our student body looks strikingly different than in 2000. In 2001, our English as a Second Language program served 7 percent of our student body — last year, that number was in excess of 16 percent. We currently have a robust refugee and immigrant population who speak more than 42 different languages at home.

What is abundantly clear is that a parent’s desire for what is best for their children is universal.

This fall I had an opportunity to view a screening of an independent documentary by Ansley Sawyer and Corey Embring, “Like We Don’t Exist,” the story of the longest ongoing civil war in Myanmar (formally Burma) that has been fought since 1947. The film told of the plight of the Karenni people, who are virtually without a country as many of whom fled their land and home to refugee camps on the border of Thailand.

Austin has become the home of a significant number of Karenni refugees. What struck me in the film were the statements made by parents that fleeing to the refugee camp was about getting their children to a structured education that was nonexistent in the war-torn country. The understanding that their children’s education was their only means of survival and prospering drove these people. The similarities of a parent’s desire to seek what is best for their child, with consequences many of us will never comprehend. A discussion of the film afterward allowed several different refugees from around the world to speak to their experience. The opportunity for education in the refugee camps was a common thread. Parental support of education is a leading indicator of student success. I have witnessed magnificent achievements by some of our newest residents. “Inspirational” comes to mind.

As a school board member sitting in the audience, I was humbled by story after story of the courage of these journeys and the perseverance in the face of adversity to get these students to us. The next element of parental drive was to voice their gratitude for what we have given their children. In our eyes we still have work to do, in their eyes, they are blessed beyond measure. We will combine our drive and continue to provide the best education possible for all of our futures. Our work is vital. We do make a difference.

“Like We Don’t Exist” will be available to view on YouTube in the near future. The trailer can be seen on http://likewedontexist.com.

Contact Kathy Green at kathyannegreen@gmail.com.
ONE IN TEN PEOPLE WILL HAVE A SEIZURE IN THEIR LIFETIME.

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WHERE SCHOOL BOARDS LEARN TO LEAD

Speakers Mark J. Lindquist, Manny Scott to headline MSBA Leadership Conference

MSBA’s marquee event returns in January. The 97th annual Leadership Conference is scheduled for Thursday, January 11, and Friday, January 12, 2018, at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

The theme of this year’s conference is “Student Achievement: Passion, Perseverance, and Possibility.” The conference will feature a wide variety of workshops, skills sessions and round table mini-sessions to help school board members, superintendents and other school district staff find new ideas and connect with their colleagues from across the state.

Mark J. Lindquist and Manny Scott will be the keynote speakers at this year’s event.

Lindquist is a nationally recognized motivational speaker, a highly sought-after success coach, the lead singer of the Mark J. Lindquist Big Band, a world-touring entertainer, a U.S. Air Force and Afghanistan war veteran, and author of...
the books, “Passion! 8 Steps to Reignite Yours,” “Passion! 8 Steps to Find Yours” and “Service! My Way of Life.”

Via his website, “Mark has performed live for more than 2.5 million people in 22 countries and 44 states throughout his career. He has performed for Grammy-winning artists, Academy Award-nominated actors, foreign dignitaries around the world, as well as staffers at the White House.”

Learn more about Lindquist on Page 14.

Scott — an original Freedom Writer whose story is told in part in the 2007 hit movie, “Freedom Writers” — has energized nearly two million leaders, educators, volunteers, and students worldwide with his authentic, inspiring messages of hope.

Also, Scott is the author of four books and the founder of Ink International, Inc. — an education consulting firm that has helped hundreds of organizations raise student achievement and leader effectiveness over 48 states and

### Pre-Conference Sessions

#### Learning to Lead — School Board Basics: Phase I Workshop

**When:** 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Tuesday, January 9  
**Where:** Hilton Minneapolis, 1001 South Marquette Avenue, Minneapolis  
**Tuition:** $105 for advanced registrants; $115 for walk-ins.

“Learning to Lead — School Board Basics” helps new board members hit the ground running. This session covers the role of the school board, the role of the superintendent, the leadership team relationship, and common scenarios facing new board members.

Visit [www.mnmsba.org/Phase-I-Workshop](http://www.mnmsba.org/Phase-I-Workshop) for more information and to register.

#### Leadership Foundations — School Finance and Management: Phase II Workshop

**When:** 8:45 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday, January 10  
**Where:** Hilton Minneapolis  
**Tuition:** $185 for advanced registrants; $205 for walk-ins.

Presented by MSBA staff and state experts, “Leadership Foundations — School Finance and Management” includes the training school boards are required to have by state law. The session covers core topics such as the budget, school finance, local levies, policies, significant laws affecting school boards, and personnel issues.

Visit [www.mnmsba.org/Phase-II-Workshop](http://www.mnmsba.org/Phase-II-Workshop) for more information and to register.

#### Charter School Board Member Training

**When:** 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, January 10  
**Where:** Hilton Minneapolis  
**Tuition:** $185 for MSBA Charter Associates ($250 for non-MSBA Charter Associates); walk-ins add $20.

Presented by MSBA staff, this training covers the three state-mandated areas for charter school board members: governance, employment and finance. Charter board members are required to start these trainings within six months of election to a charter school board and complete the trainings within one year.

According to his official website, “Manny has a gift: the ability to connect with, hold the attention of, and energize all kinds of audiences. From inner-city youth to business executives, Manny has learned to speak, and command, the language of his audiences with relevant, riveting, and compelling messages, moving them from cheers, to laughter, to tears, and go-forward determination.”

Leadership is important, and evaluating the superintendent’s performance and its own performance are two of the school board’s most important duties. Whether the school board is evaluating its own performance or the performance of its superintendent, the evaluation can be a powerful tool for growth and professional development. In addition, having a positive working relationship, between school board members and between the school board and its superintendent, is critical to accomplishing a school district’s mission and priorities. One way to develop this relationship is by having an effective, constructive evaluation process and procedures that help drive school district improvement efforts.

Workshop participants will review the principles of effective evaluation and become familiar with the “MSBA/MA SA Superintendent Evaluation: A Resource for School Board Members and Superintendents.”

Data breaches are becoming ever more prevalent, Equifax being the most recent significant example. It’s not a matter of if, but when! Are you prepared to speak with parents and the community about a data breach? Do you know where all of your data is, including non-digital assets? Hear about what steps you need to take to be better prepared and have a more robust, legally defensible posture.

Visit http://www.mnmsba.org/EarlyBirdSessions for more information.
EIGHT STEPS TO REIGNITE YOUR PASSION TO LEAD

Opening keynote Mark J. Lindquist will help MSBA members find their strengths

By Greg Abbott

Mark J. Lindquist likes to help people find their passion. As a young man growing up in Ortonville, Minnesota, it took him a while to figure out what he was good at and how his talents could help others.

As the MSBA Leadership Conference’s Thursday keynote speaker, Mark runs through eight steps to reignite your passion. One of his most important steps was to find his strength zone.

“There are things that I simply do not do well,” Lindquist said. “There’s a process of trying and failing and getting back up.”

But he learned to focus on things he did well — those things, when put on a scale of 1 to 10, he scored a 7, 8, 9 or 10.

“Once you find those strengths, you’ve arrived. You have fun,” he said. That’s why he sings the national anthem for the NFL. That’s why he’s a speaker whose mission
is to help other people find their strengths and develop their passions.

"Once you find those strengths, you start to run fast in life," he said. "But it’s a hard journey to find what you need to give to the world."

That process is important for school board members, as well — finding out what strengths you bring to the board and how you can help your school board team.

The recognition of those strengths also has to come from the superintendent or board chair and veteran members.

“If you’re in a situation where there are several rookies, it’s got to go back to the basics of spending some good one-on-one time with them,” he said. In this email and text society, looking people in the eye over a cup of coffee is what people on a team need to go back to doing, he said. Ask people on your team what their vision for our young people in society is.

“I follow the principle that a team doesn’t care how much you know until they know how much you care,” he said. "You need to show that you care about what they bring to the table.”

Putting your passion to work can be as simple as getting behind a solid strategic plan. By thinking about what students are going to need eight to 10 years out, you move some supports in place and design a path to reach the goals.

“If you have a big enough ‘why’, you can live with all the ‘whats’, ” he said. Setting those future goals will involve lots of work — developing that grand vision, explaining why you are moving in a certain direction, finding out what strengths each board member brings with them to reach the goals and then getting buy-in from the community and staff and students.

But, when everyone can bring their passion to the table, that’s when things take off, he said.

“I’m hoping that people who walk away from this presentation — those people who have been volunteering on boards for years and have made it their life’s work — that they will have a new breath, new excitement for what they can do and believe they can make an impact,” he said.

Greg Abbott is the Communications Director for MSBA. To comment on the article, you can reach him at gabbott@mnmsba.org. Learn more about Mark J. Lindquist at http://www.markjlindquist.com.
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There are a lot of children in the world today who are living with the pain that I used to have. I see — like it was yesterday — the face of a young man who stopped me in the hallway after I spoke at his school. He was trembling, with a pain in his eyes that was so overwhelming that he could not speak. After I sat with him for a while, he was eventually able to share with me that he had just walked into his front door and found his father dangling from a rope. His dad had committed suicide.

I also see the face of a young, blonde-haired, blue-eyed, high school student who stopped me on my way out of her school’s gymnasium. She looked just like a Barbie doll. She said, with a tone of directness, “I have two parents. I have straight A’s in my classes. I’m on the honor roll. I’m a leader in our Student Body Government. My family has a lot of money. I live in a big house … but two days ago,” her voice softened, “I tried to kill myself.” I was not expecting her to say that. She continued, “I work hard in school, and try to get my
parents to notice me, but they travel all the time, and throw money at me. But I don’t want their money.” She then started weeping. Through her sobs, she whimpered, “I don’t know if anybody really loves me.”

I also see the face of a hardened young man who was reduced to tears as he tried to tell me about his 3-month-old baby sister whose insides were destroyed by his mom’s boyfriend, who had raped and killed her.

Then there’s the face of the young man who walked up to me, perspiring, with his head hanging, and tears falling from his face. As I hugged him, blood just started gushing from his nose onto my clothes and shoes and onto the gymnasium floor. Through the blood, all he kept saying to me, over and over again, was, “thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you …”

I have thousands of stories like that weighing heavy on my heart as I write these words. Those children are living in an abyss of despair, and there are thousands of kids in your schools in Minnesota who are just like them. They need hope and practical help.

With all that is already on school districts’ plates — having to do more with less, fewer things better, and having to learn how to navigate your increasingly diverse classrooms — what can board members, school leaders, teachers and staff do realistically to help troubled children succeed in school and come out prepared for work and life?

That is what I will address in my keynote presentation on Friday, January 12. I will share an approach informed by the teachers and loving adults who helped me overcome my environment, and how they helped me go from earning Fs and Ds to As and Bs — an approach honed through 18 years of connecting with kids who desperately need someone to show them a path to a more positive future.

Since 1999, I have been on the road up to 300 days a year, speaking primarily at conventions, conferences, and schools to nearly 2 million administrators, teachers, leaders, and students. Roughly half of those audiences were, and are, middle and high school students. In urban contexts, the students with whom I work are primarily Caucasian,
African-American, and Mexican-American. Most of my student audiences are living at or below the poverty line. They are typically the kids that many teachers have had a hard time reaching and teaching.

Using the approaches I will share in my keynote, I have been able to reach many students, and in quite meaningful ways. For example, not too long ago, a state superintendent of public education invited me to speak in a rural school district to nearly 2,000 middle and high school students. During the hour I was speaking at the assembly, I sensed something special happening in the room. I learned later that after my presentation, 43 students went to counselors to confess that they had been thinking about committing suicide and needed help. All of them received help.

Because of my work, I have seen many young people who were once thinking about dropping out of high school go on to college. I have seen those who were getting Fs and Ds turn things around academically. I have seen young people who were molested learn to view themselves as survivors and to live with zest and purpose. I have seen young people come to me with tears in their eyes and tell me that they are no longer going to cut themselves, no longer going to disrespect teachers, no longer going to dishonor their parents. I have seen real changes take place, and I am so very grateful to have played a small part in those transformations.

My keynote presentation will aim to help you and your district have this kind of impact on the young people in your schools. I look forward to meeting you in Minnesota very soon.

Manny Scott was an original Freedom Writer whose story is told in part in the 2007 film, “Freedom Writers.” In 2007, he founded Ink International, Inc., an education consulting firm that has helped hundreds of organizations raise student achievement and leader effectiveness. Ink has also helped prevent thousands of dropouts and suicides. Learn more about Manny Scott at http://www.mannyscott.com.
When I speak to classroom teachers about our special education laws and how they impact student discipline, I can predict what will happen when it’s question and answer time. It will go something like this:

“I teach fifth grade, and I have 22 students in my classroom. Actually, I don’t think of them as 22 students anymore. I think of them as 21 students — and then there’s Eric. Eric is taking up most of my time. He’s very disruptive. Sometimes, he’s violent. Eric is the one I’m worrying about as I drive to school. Eric is the one who has me thinking that maybe it’s not too late to go to law school. I’m getting phone calls and emails from the parents of the other kids, asking why Eric is in our classroom.

“I know that Eric deserves a good education, and I try my best to give it to him — but what about the other kids? Don’t they have any rights?”

This question comes after I have spent 45 minutes talking about the rights that Eric has, due to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The teacher’s question is an excellent one. And it’s one that school board members should be able to answer.
The short answer is that, of course, the other kids also have a right to a good education, provided by well-qualified educators in a safe and orderly environment. But creating that school has become more complicated since the passage of federal laws guaranteeing a “Free Appropriate Public Education” to kids like Eric.

Long ago, public schools simply expelled students like Eric. Prior to 1975, there was no legal requirement to serve all students, much less to do so in the “least restrictive environment.” There was no legal duty to consider how a student’s disability might impact the student’s behavior. Troublesome kids were just moved out of the way.

That all changed in 1975 with passage of the federal law now known as the IDEA. To comply with IDEA, your campus administrators must balance two duties that sometimes conflict with each other.

First, there is the duty to maintain a safe and orderly campus. The other duty—spelled out in detail in IDEA — requires schools to serve all students appropriately, including those with disabilities who commit serious or violent offenses at the school. Not only does the law require schools to serve all such students, it also reads that services must be provided in the least restrictive environment.

These two duties occasionally bump into each other.

Court precedent

The U.S. Supreme Court addressed these conflicting duties in 1988 in the only case it has heard involving the discipline of students with disabilities. Honig v. Doe arose when California school officials attempted to remove John Doe and Jack White from school after they had engaged in seriously disruptive behavior. Both boys were identified as having emotional disabilities, and all parties acknowledged that their behavior was a manifestation of disability.

The parents challenged the removal and invoked the “stay put” provision in the statute. School officials argued that their duty to maintain safety overrode the “stay put” rule. The court emphatically rejected the school’s argument. It wrote: “We think it’s clear, however, that Congress very much meant to strip schools of the unilateral authority they had traditionally employed to exclude disabled students, particularly emotionally disturbed students, from school.”

That certainly put it clearly.

That was 30 years ago. Much has happened since then, but the basic tension between two competing duties remains. Schools must simultaneously maintain a safe and orderly school, while appropriately serving students like John Doe, Jack White — and Eric — in the least restrictive environment.

For the most part, this tension is resolved on a case-by-case basis. The law emphasizes individualized decision making by a group of educators working in collaboration with the parents — the IEP team. This team ultimately has the duty of determining how to balance the duty to serve in the least restrictive environment with the duty to maintain safety.

On top of that, the IDEA regulations identify seven things administrators can do to address safety issues while still serving all students appropriately.

- The principal can seek parental agreement for a change of placement. If the school and the parent agree, a change of scenery is easily accomplished through an IEP meeting.
- The principal can propose a change of placement when the parent does not agree. The district must be prepared to defend this proposal in a due process hearing, and the “stay put” rule will likely keep the student in
the current placement until that hearing runs its course.

- If the principal believes that a change of placement is urgently needed due to safety concerns, and the parent will not agree, the school can seek an order via an expedited hearing before a hearing officer or judge.
- If the student has committed one of three “special circumstances” offenses — drugs, weapons, infliction of serious bodily injury — the principal can order an immediate removal of the student to an interim, alternative setting for a period consistent with the district’s code of conduct, not to exceed 45 school days.
- The principal can suspend a student from school, without any services, for up to 10 cumulative days during the school year.
- The principal can report possible criminal activity to the police, consistent with how the school would treat similar behavior by nondisabled students.
- Most importantly, the principal can ask the IEP team to develop a behavior intervention plan for the student with the goal of improving the student’s behavior.

Providing resources

What is the school board’s role in this? Primarily, it is about providing resources in two ways. First, you need to provide the physical resources for schools to continue to serve students who engage in inappropriate behavior. There is no such thing as giving up on students’ education when they are protected by special education laws. Students may be removed from the school they would normally attend, but the school has a duty to continue providing appropriate services.

It’s up to the school board to make sure that the administrators have the resources to do this. Every district in the country needs to have access to an Interim Alternative Educational Setting — where students can be served by qualified staff. Do you have such a program? Is it staffed by certified teachers? Can you deliver the services that the student needs in that setting?

Second, your administrators need professional resources to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Your school needs access to experts. Your school is serving students with a wide array of complex issues. You have students with learning disabilities, autism, and emotional disturbance. You have students who are medically fragile. Have you provided the resources your school will need to meet the needs of all these students effectively?

IDEA put the force of the law behind an important moral commitment — to serve every student without exception. This is a worthy commitment that school board members and educators support. No one wants to give up on the Erics of the world.

But the law has never been adequately funded by the federal government, and so it can be challenging for districts to fulfill the requirements of the law. Board members who understand how the law works and what it requires will be in a better position to provide leadership to the district.

Jim Walsh (jwalsh@wabsa.com) is a co-founder of Walsh Gallegos Treviño Russo & Kyle P.C., in Austin, Texas.

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MSBA hired Joel Stencel on September 5, 2017, as its new Director of Association Finance.

Stencel spent the previous 17 years employed at Eide Bailly in Mankato as an auditor, where he worked mainly with school districts and other local governments.

He attended Minnesota State University, Mankato and holds a bachelor’s degree in accounting and business administration.

At MSBA, Stencel will be responsible for the association’s annual budget and audit, monthly financials, and investments.

He will also serve as a staff liaison to the Minnesota School District Liquid Asset Fund Plus (MSDLAF+), the Minnesota Tax and Aid Anticipation Borrowing Program (MNTAAB), PaySchools, Minnesota Association of School Business Officials (MASBO), the Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO), and the Financial Management, Accounting and Reporting (FMAR) Advisory Council.

Stencel lives in Mankato with his wife, Andrea, and his two children, Ethan and Owen, and enjoys spending time with his family camping, golfing, and other outdoor activities.
QUESTION: What is the purpose of a “mentor” school board member?

ANSWER: When new board members join the team, matching them with mentor board members can make for a smoother transition. A “mentor” is a designated, experienced, current board member that the new board member may contact to ask questions and to accompany him/her to some of the trainings.

MSBA offers a discounted registration to “mentor” board members who have previously attended the “Learning to Lead — School Board Basics: Phase I” and “Leadership Foundation — School Finance and Management: Phase II” workshops.

Questions that arise may revolve around board processes, members’ roles at and away from the board table, and/or providing a history regarding current issues. Not only is matching a new member with an experienced member-mentor an opportunity to make training more relevant and specific to the particular district, but also it allows board members to get to know each other better.

MSBA has a detailed resource for board mentors, superintendents, and staff. MSBA’s “New Board Member Orientation Year At-a-Glance” can be accessed on the MSBA website at http://www.mnmsba.org/Mentoring. This resource is a guide and can be adapted to your school district and board.

Experienced board members need to remember to mentor new board members — even though meetings and issues may seem to be running smoothly. Stopping to make certain everyone understands the process is important. Board members should remind each other to slow down and describe the processes currently in place — doing so also helps when communicating to the community and staff.

In addition, experienced board members and staff need to be careful when using acronyms. Do not assume new board members are familiar with “education-ese.”

Finally, all board members should keep in mind the emotional commitment required to be a board member and be supportive of one another. Remember, you can always call MSBA staff with questions.

Contact Katie Klanderud and Gail Gilman at kklanderud@mnmsba.org and ggilman@mnmsba.org, respectively.

Additional resource: MSBA’s “Running for the School Board: A Primer for School Board Candidates” which is available at http://www.mnmsba.org/BecomingASchoolBoardMember under the Candidate Resources links. After accessing the link, press F5 on your keyboard to view the presentation.
Good governance starts with good policies

MSBA crafts model policies to meet the myriad needs of member school districts. Members can adapt and adopt these policies rather than spend time and money writing them from scratch.

MSBA reviews and updates the policies at least annually to meet requirements from new legislation, agency regulations, and court cases.

Policies mandated by legislation are available to all MSBA members. The remaining policies are available as a separate subscription.

A Policy Manual Auditing Service is available for individual school districts that are subscribers of Policy Services. A district’s policy manual is reviewed against pre-determined criteria for compliance with current state and federal requirements. The district’s manual is also reviewed for consistency and ease of use.

Contact MSBA’s Cathy Miller today at cmiller@mnmsba.org or 800-324-4459
LINDA LEIDING: “LEARNING IS A LIFELONG PROCESS”

MSBA Director District 2 Board Director enjoys giving back to the community via service on the Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial School Board

By Bruce Lombard/Suzy Guthmueller

Last year, Linda Leiding ascended to the Board Director position for MSBA Director District 2 — which covers school districts in south-central Minnesota.

At an early age, Leiding was instilled with the importance of education by her father.

“My dad was the department head for Chemistry and Chemical Engineering at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology,” said Leiding, who was raised in Rapid City, South Dakota. “One of the things that he helped us understand was that education and learning are a lifelong process. That’s what helped me start thinking about serving on the school board when I got to that point in my life.”

Prior to her present-day school board years serving the Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial (LCWM) School District, Leiding amassed a plethora of knowledge along the way. She graduated from Minnesota State University, Mankato with a bachelor’s of science in Recreation, Parks, and Community Education with an emphasis in Therapeutic Recreation — and then followed up with a master’s degree in Public Administration.

For most of her professional career, Leiding has worked to help people with disabilities, including a tenure as a vice president of an organization that helped people with disabilities find employment.

Leiding and her husband, Brad, raise corn and soybeans on a farm north of Lake Crystal. The couple have five daughters and five grandchildren.

“When I grew up in Rapid City, my graduating class was 500 students,” Leiding said. “Our daughters went to school in Lake Crystal, where they had graduating classes of about 75 students. Our daughters were able
to participate in so many activities. Large schools and small schools all offer many different opportunities for students.”

Leiding was seated on the LCWM School Board in 2009. In the following interview below, Leiding explains why that time was right for her to run for a board seat, what key issues her fellow school districts in Director District 2 are facing, and what advice she would give to new board members.

**MSBA:** What made you want to join the Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial School Board?

**LEIDING:** I had a good friend call and said that there were going to be several openings on the school board and she asked if I would consider it. The timing was right because I had always thought about running for school board, but wanted to wait until our kids were out of school. It was important to me to be able to attend all of their activities. So, when the openings were available, I ran for the school board. Serving on the school board is a way for me to give back to the community and be able to promote lifelong learning.

**MSBA:** Are there any current issues LCWM or MSBA Director District 2 are facing?

**LEIDING:** I had the opportunity to ask that question during an MSBA Advocacy Tour meeting in September. We have a diverse Director District — we have large schools and we have some of the smaller schools in the state. One of the issues that was prevalent among most board members is having access to qualified teachers and to be able to hire teachers during a time of worker shortages.

**MSBA:** What’s been the most rewarding aspect of serving on your local school board?

**LEIDING:** It is an honor to serve on the LCWM school board and be able to give back to the community. I am very fortunate to work with a team of talented and knowledgeable board members and administrators. Everyone at LCWM works as a team. I am always so impressed with dedication and commitment of the administration, teachers, paraprofessionals, and all support staff members. Everyone is focused on enhancing student achievement and providing the best opportunities for all students.

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

**LEIDING:** My advice to new board members is to learn as much as possible, to take advantage of all the different trainings that are offered, and to always ask questions. There are no stupid questions. When I first got on the board, our superintendent sat down with me the day after the election. He had an inch-thick binder and said, “These are all the different levies and funding structures that we have.” As he watched my eyes glaze over, he said, “You don’t have
to know all this, we’ll help get you through it.” The best advice is don’t be intimidated — ask the questions.

**MSBA:** What’s the best part about being on the MSBA Board of Directors?

**LEIDING:** It’s an honor for me to represent Director District II on the MSBA board. I love serving with the talented leaders that are on the MSBA Board and having the opportunity to work closely with the MSBA staff members. Each board member brings a unique perspective to the board. We are afforded a forum to learn about innovative services and programs being offered around the state, to understand the issues that will impact student achievement at the state and national levels, and to share the information with the members of our director districts.

**MSBA:** Why is it important for school board members to utilize MSBA as their go-to resource?

**LEIDING:** MSBA’s tagline is “Where School Boards Learn to Lead.” MSBA is the go-to organization for any school board member — if you are a new board member or if you are a seasoned board member — to find answers to almost any question. MSBA has knowledgeable staff and they are responsive to all members. They are advocates for all students and promote student achievement. They represent school boards at the Legislature and provide guidance to school board members about current issues. They strike a balance in meeting the needs of all school districts including rural and urban schools and large and small districts. MSBA has a big job and they do it very well.

Contact Linda Leiding at leidil@hickorytech.net.
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School board members in Minnesota begin their terms on the first Monday in January following their election. School boards often administer a ceremonial oath of office to the new school board members at the first meeting in January. The official oath of office is taken shortly after the election and must be signed.

Minnesota law also requires school boards to meet and organize by selecting their officers on the first Monday in January “or as soon thereafter as practicable” (M.S. 123B.14, Subd. 1.) If January 1 falls on Sunday or Monday, the first Monday in January will be the New Year’s Day holiday, and no school board meetings may be held.

If the chair most recently elected is still on the board, he or she calls the meeting to order and presides over the meeting until a new chair is elected. If not, the board should select an acting chair to serve until the new chair is elected. The superintendent is not an elected board member and should not chair the meeting.

The law requires three school board officers: chair, clerk, and treasurer. Many school boards also have a vice chair, who performs the duties of the chair if the chair is temporarily absent. The duties of clerk and treasurer can be combined and delegated to “a single person in the Office of Business Affairs” (M.S. 123B.14, Subd. 1). The school board must pass a resolution to accomplish this, and the school board officers still need to be in place. Typically the duties are further delegated by the “single person in the Office of Business Affairs” to at least one other administrative staff person. Often the school business official performs the duties of the treasurer and the superintendent’s administrative assistant performs the duties of the clerk. The school board officers typically perform oversight of the officers’ duties and continue to sign required documents as the clerk or treasurer.

The election of officers often raises questions. MSBA has prepared a booklet, “The First Monday in January,” which is on our website under the “Resources” tab, to help answer these questions. Please review this booklet before your organizational meeting. Your school board should decide on the procedures it will follow before the organizational meeting.

Like all votes, the votes for officers must be recorded, so election of school board officers cannot be done by secret ballot. If a tie vote occurs, the election fails for lack of a majority. Some school boards are unable to elect a chair at the organizational meeting and must vote again at the next meeting.

The organizational meeting is also a good time to establish the regular meeting schedule for the year, designate the school district’s depositories for funds, decide on the school board members’ compensation, and appoint board committee members. MSBA recommends the school district’s legal counsel be selected and those authorized to contact legal counsel be named. Typically the superintendent and board chair are authorized to contact legal counsel. In larger school districts, the human resources director is usually another authorized contact. If an issue comes up between meetings, legal counsel can then be contacted without the board having to call a special meeting to approve that action.

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