**Elections**

When school board member terms begin — and when boards can canvass

As some elections have happened Tuesday, MSBA usually gets a few calls about when a newly elected board member’s term actually starts. The cause for confusion is that there are really two answers, depending on if the newly elected board member is filling in to replace an appointed board member in a special election or whether the new member was elected to a full four-year term.

The starting date for newly elected members to a full four-year term is simple — they start on the first Monday in January. Since 2018 has New Year’s Day on the first Monday, even though the new board member starts, no meetings can be held on that day, so the earliest they would be seated at a board meeting is January 2.

For those new members filling out a term for an appointed board member, the exact date depends on many things. A school board has a timeline of three to 10 days after the November election day to canvass. This year, that means boards can canvass any time from November 13-17. (Note that with the Veterans Day holiday observed on November 10, that precludes any canvassing meetings from happening on Friday.)

Once a school board canvasses the results, a contest period of seven days opens up — allowing any other candidates to request a recount. Once the contest period ends (any time November 20-24), and IF the school election officer has the candidate’s Campaign Finance Certificate of Filing, the district can issue a Certificate of Election to the winning candidates. It is then that the candidate timeline kicks in — they have 30 days to return that Certificate of Election and sign the Oath and Acceptance of Office form in front of a notary. Once that is complete, the new board member from a special election can be seated. It might be as early as November 20 if the board canvasses right away on November 13 and there is no challenge during the contest period. It might be as late as December 24, if the board canvasses on November 24, and the candidate takes the full 30 days to return the election certificate and sign the oath and acceptance of office.

In either case, a new board member who replaces an appointed member in a special election is seated BEFORE the first Monday in January, whenever that member returns the election certificate and signs the oath and acceptance of office form.

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Greg Abbott  
Director of Communications  
gabbott@mnmsba.org

Registration is open for the 2018 MSBA Leadership Conference! See Page 2 for details.
2018 Leadership Conference | January 11-12 | Minneapolis Convention Center

Lindquist, Scott to headline conference

The 2018 MSBA Leadership Conference, “Student Achievement: Passion, Perseverance and Possibility” is scheduled for January 11-12, 2018, at the Minneapolis Convention Center. This is a two-day conference and there is no registration fee for MSBA members. MSBA provides this free conference every January as part of members’ annual dues.

The Leadership Conference features nationally recognized speakers, workshops on a variety of topics, a Show and Tell event and a trade show. Early Bird Sessions (see below) are provided the evening before the conference.

The conference will showcase a pair of motivational keynote speakers — Mark J. Lindquist on Thursday, January 11, and Manny Scott on Friday, January 12.

Opening Session speaker

Mark J. 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.”

Closing Session speaker

Manny 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, he is the author of two books, “Your Next Chapter” and “How to R.E.A.C.H. Youth Today.”

Choose from one of two great conference Early Bird Sessions

Arrive early to the 2018 Leadership Conference and join us for one of two Early Bird Sessions slated for 7 p.m. Wednesday, January 10, at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

- Through the “Designing an Effective Superintendent Evaluation” session, participants will review the principles of effective evaluation.
- Through the “Data Privacy and Data Breaches — Are You Prepared?” session, hear about what steps you need to take to be better prepared for data breaches and to have a more robust, legally defensible posture.

See http://www.mnmsba.org/EarlyBirdSessions for more information.

Showcase your programs! Show & Tell entry deadline extended to November 8

Show off your school program(s) at the Show & Tell event during the 2018 Leadership Conference. Show & Tell allows school districts to showcase exemplary student, adult or early childhood programs to the 2,000-plus conference attendees.

The Show & Tell application deadline has been extended to Wednesday, November 8. Access the application form at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2018Show-TellEvent.

Leadership Conference Registration and Hotel Information

- **Registration:** Ask your school district office to visit http://www.mnmsba.org/EventRegistrationHome and register you for the Leadership Conference by selecting “Gen Sessions, Workshops and Exhibit.” Registration is also available for the MSBA Workshops Series, Early Bird Sessions, the Recognition Luncheon (11:30 a.m. Thursday, January 11) and more.
- **Hotel:** See www.mnmsba.org/LeadershipConferenceHousing to view your hotel options. The conference is set for January 11-12 at the Minneapolis Convention Center, with pre-conference sessions scheduled for January 9-10.
Learning

Learn to lead! Register for first two phases of MSBA’s School Board Workshop Series

Advance registration is open for the Learning to Lead — School Board Basics: Phase I and Leadership Foundations — School Finance and Management: Phase II workshops.

The Learning to Lead — School Board Basics: Phase I workshop helps new board members hit the ground running. This workshop covers the role of the school board, the role of the superintendent, the leadership team relationship, and common scenarios facing new board members.

The Phase I workshop will be offered Tuesday, December 5, in St. Peter; Friday, December 8, in St. Cloud; and Tuesday, January 9, in Minneapolis (during Leadership Conference week).

The Leadership Foundations — School Finance and Management: Phase II is a state-mandated training required by law. Presented by MSBA staff and state experts, this session covers core topics such as the budget, school finance, local levies, policies, significant laws affecting school boards, collective bargaining, and personnel issues.

The Phase II workshop is slated for Saturday, December 9, in St. Cloud; and Wednesday, January 10, in Minneapolis (during Leadership Conference week).

MSBA Database

District staff: Please update your board members’ information with MSBA as soon as your election results are canvassed

MSBA encourages school district office staff to update their school board members’ records via the MSBA website. Updates would include information such as newly elected board members, board members that are not re-elected, and any individual contact information changes.

Why? Registration for all MSBA events is now online only. Because of this, the MSBA database must be updated before any event registration for new board member(s) can occur. Once you have updated MSBA’s database, it will be easy to register your newly elected board member(s) for MSBA’s School Board Workshop Series coming up in December and January and also to register for the MSBA Leadership Conference, the Recognition Luncheon and Early Bird Sessions coming up in January.

Please email any unofficial referendum results to MSBA’s Greg Abbott at gabbert@mnmsba.org. Greg will be updating results through midnight Tuesday.

How do I update my board members’ information?
Visit http://www.mnmsba.org/School-Board-Election and let us know who your new board member(s) are and which board members have been re-elected or replaced. You will be asked to enter the new board member(s) contact information (address, email address, phone number, etc.).
Save the date: “First Monday in January” webinar on November 29

Join MSBA at noon Wednesday, November 29, for a FREE timely webinar highlighting “The First Monday in January” — also known as the school board’s organizational meeting.

MSBA staff will walk participants through organizational meeting do’s and don’ts and best practices — including the term of office effective date for newly elected board members, running the organizational meeting, selecting board officers, and much more.

Registration will be available on Wednesday, November 15.

MSBA Board of Directors

Five MSBA Board seats up for election in January 2018

Elections will be held for five open MSBA Board of Directors’ seats on Thursday, January 11, and Friday, January 12, during the 2018 Leadership Conference at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

Please contact Kelly Martell at kmartell@mnmsba.org or 800-324-4459 if you are interested in running. Don’t know your MSBA Director District? Visit www.mnmsba.org/AboutMSBA for a MSBA Director District list and map.

Note: Each seat is for a three-year term.

- MSBA Director District 3 (southwest Minnesota) — OPEN SEAT | current director: Linden Olson, Worthington

- MSBA Director District 6 (northeast metro) — OPEN SEAT | current director: George Kimball, White Bear Lake Area

- MSBA Director District 9 (east-central Minnesota) — current director: Kirby Ekstrom, North Branch Area

- MSBA Director District 12 (northwest Minnesota) — OPEN SEAT | current director: Ann Long Voelkner, Bemidji Area

- MSBA Director District 13 (southwest metro) — OPEN SEAT | current director: Deborah Pauly, Jordan

MSBA Delegate Assembly

Attention delegates: Reserve hotel, plan for Pre-Delegate Assembly meetings

Delegates can make their hotel reservations for the 2017 MSBA Delegate Assembly, slated for December 1-2, 2017, at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Minneapolis — Park Place.

See www.mnmsba.org/DelegateAssembly to access the reservation link. Also, see www.mnmsba.org/PreDelegateAssemblyMeetings to plan for a Pre-Delegate Assembly meeting option.

Delegates come together at the Delegate Assembly to discuss and vote on legislative resolutions submitted by school boards and individual school board members. Those resolutions that receive a majority vote, as well as positions adopted during previous years, become the basis for MSBA staff lobbying efforts on behalf of all public school board members in the state.
Is your website accessible by all? Law requires that individuals with disabilities are afforded equal opportunity, access

By Michelle Kenney, Knutson, Flynn & Deans, P.A.

At its core, website accessibility is about making sure that websites work for the widest possible audience. Most people do not have difficulty with browsing the web. They can review a page for the precise information they are seeking, listen to and watch video clips, and understand photographs and other images. However, for those with disabilities, all of these things can present barriers to access if the website has not been created with the right tools.

How people are affected by inaccessibility

Approximately 20 percent of the population — 55 million individuals in the United States — are affected in some way by a disability. Website accessibility barriers can be seen in each of the four main types of disabilities. An individual’s ability to use the web may be affected as follows:

- **Visual disabilities:** Many non-sighted individuals interact with computers using a screen reader. However, the screen reader works only as well as the webpage content and structure. If not created properly, the screen reader communicates a mix-match of numbers and letters as opposed to the words describing the content. Screen readers also review content in a linear format that is easier to follow, but the screen reader cannot do this alone and must be supported by the underlying website structure. Individuals who have low vision, are color-blind, or have photosensitivity issues can also be affected by inaccessible content. These individuals may have difficulty perceiving color differences or reading certain fonts.

- **Hearing disabilities:** Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing are unable to access multimedia content on a website. These individuals miss out on the information conveyed by sound on a video or the contents of an audio file.

- **Motor disabilities:** Many individuals with motor disabilities are unable to use a mouse, and they may use items such as a trackball, adaptive keyboard, mouthstick or headwand. Without a keyboard-friendly website, these individuals have little or no access.

- **Cognitive disabilities:** Website content can be difficult to navigate for individuals with learning disabilities, distractibility, decreased comprehension and dyslexia. Unorganized, disjointed, and unstructured web pages are not understandable or navigable for these individuals.

Laws regarding accessibility

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, protect individuals from being excluded from participation in, being denied the benefits of, or otherwise being subjected to
ACCESSIBILITY: What do I need to know about website accessibility?

(Continued from Page 5)

discrimination on the basis of disability by recipients of federal financial assistance or by public entities. These laws require that individuals with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity and access to a recipient’s programs, services, or activities unless doing so would fundamentally alter the nature of the programs, services, or activities or impose an undue burden upon the recipient. Additionally, individuals with disabilities must be afforded an opportunity to benefit from or be provided with aids, benefits, or services that are equal to the opportunity afforded to others, and provided with an equal opportunity to achieve the same result or the same level of achievement as others. Further, public entities must generally take steps to ensure that communication with people who have disabilities is as effective as communication with others. Thus a school district may not be meeting its legal obligations if an individual with a disability does not have an equal opportunity to participate in the school district’s programs, services, and activities and is not afforded effective communication necessary to fully participate in the school district’s programs, services, and activities due to an inaccessible website.

Why do I need to know about website accessibility?

Complaints have been filed with the United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights identifying school districts whose websites are not accessible to people with disabilities. Last spring, the Office for Civil Rights had 227 open investigations involving the issue of website accessibility, including online courses, distance learning, websites, and remote applications. At the end of June 2016, the Office for Civil Rights announced that it had entered settlement agreements with 11 parties. The most common accessibility issues were: failure of keyboard navigation, color combinations and fonts; and videos, which were either not accurately captioned or not captioned at all.

Standards for website compliance

The most widely accepted standards for accessibility are the Website Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (WCAG) Level AA (2008) which are published by the World Wide Web Consortium. The U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board) recently finalized a regulation that will make the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (WCAG 2.0) Level AA the design standard when interpreting and implementing Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The standards are based on four principles:

- **Perceivable:** Information and user interface components must be presentable to users in ways they can perceive.
- **Operable:** User interface components and navigation must be operable.
- **Understandable:** Information and the operation of user interface must be understandable.
- **Robust:** Content must be robust enough that it can be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of user agents, including assistive technologies.

What steps can a school district take now?

Don’t pretend that the issue does not exist or that the school district will not be the next recipient of a complaint letter from the Office for Civil Rights. It will be less expensive and easier to fix a website accessibility problem without the time pressure or the threat of a lawsuit, or during a period that conflicts with the school district’s budgetary and time capabilities. Also, being proactive communicates that the school district is committed to website accessibility for all individuals.

Some initial steps may be taken toward ascertaining and addressing website accessibility issues. One step is to conduct an internal audit of the website by running website pages through an accessibility checker tool to identify issues. If the school district utilizes a third-party website management service, don’t be lulled into a false sense of security that the website is accessible. The page templates may be accessible, but content added by the school district may not be. Contact the website management service and inquire about accessibility.

Another step is to begin correcting

Michelle Kenney’s article originally appeared in the May-June 2017 edition of the MSBA Journal magazine.

See ACCESSIBILITY, Page 7
ACCESSIBILITY: Staff training is an important step

(Continued from Page 6)
some of the more commonly found barriers to accessibility. For keyboard accessibility, it is important to allow users to follow along with the keyboard focus, navigate to all interactive elements, and bypass the navigation if there are many links.10 Also, synchronized captioning which is “verbatim” of the spoken word can be added to videos, or a full transcript of the video or audio contents may be provided.

Staff training will also be an important step. Identify a website coordinator who can receive training in areas of website accessibility. The website coordinator can then provide training for other individuals in the school district who post information on the website.

Adding a clear notice on the first page of the website with the name, phone number and email address of the website coordinator who can be contacted in the event of accessibility issues is another step to consider. Also, referencing the school district’s commitment and plans for accessible content provides notice of the steps being taken toward full accessibility.

Finally, if the school district receives a letter from the Office for Civil Rights, is served with a summons and complaint, or is contacted by some other means about website accessibility issues, inform the school district’s legal counsel right away, as there may be a short response time that needs to be met. The school district’s legal counsel can also assist with navigating through the particular process that has been initiated.

The requirement of an accessible website is not going away. Getting started is perhaps the most difficult part. However, even small steps amount to progress.

Note: This article is intended to provide timely information and does not constitute legal advice.

Footnotes

1 U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 2008
2 34 C.F.R. ' 104.4 and 28 C.F.R. ' 35.130.
3 28 C.F.R. ' 35.164.
4 34 C.F.R. ' 104.4(b)(1)(ii) and (2); 28 C.F.R. ' 35.130(b)(1)(ii) and (iii).
5 28 C.F.R. ' 35.160(a)(1).
6 https://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/wcai (WCAG Standards).
8 https://www.w3.org/WAI/WCAG20/glance/.
9 See WebAIM WAVE web accessibility evaluation tool (http://wave.webaim.org/).

MSBA website under construction next two weeks

The MSBA website (http://www.mnmsba.org) will undergo some minor upgrades later this week and into next week. All pages will still be accessible to members while we complete the update. Thank you in advance for your patience.

Minnesota Teacher of the Year

Education Minnesota accepting nominations for teacher of the year

Education Minnesota is accepting nominations for its 2018 Minnesota Teacher of the Year award. The program is now in its 54th year. Do you know an educator who deserves recognition? You can nominate a top teacher through Wednesday, November 15, at https://www.educationminnesota.org/news/awards/teacher-of-the-year/nomination-form. Learn more about this program at https://www.educationminnesota.org/news/awards/teacher-of-the-year.
Send letters to veterans by November 24 as part of Veterans and Service Member Appreciation Month

November is Veterans and Service Member Appreciation Month. At the state level, we will be honoring those men and women who have bravely fought for our country, and I am hoping you and your students can help show how much Minnesota appreciates their service.

We are planning to send letters of appreciation to the veterans residing in Minnesota’s veterans homes at the end of November. Throughout the month, state government workers will be writing letters of appreciation, and we would love to include notes from your students. Whether it is in the form of a letter, a drawing, a card signed by an entire class or school; any creative way your students can think up to say thank you is welcome. All we ask is that it is able to be folded up for mailing purposes. All letters will be evenly divided and sent the state veterans homes.

We just need whatever you have to be sent in by Friday, November 24, so we can include it in our mailing.

Send letters to: Anna Long, Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs, 20 West 12th Street, St. Paul, Minnesota 55155.

For more information, visit https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNMDE/bulletins/1c1657f to read the special notice for superintendents and directors that was sent October 31.

World’s Best Workforce summary available on MDE website

Under Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.11, school districts are to develop a World’s Best Workforce (WBWF) annual report and report summary for each school year.

The district annual report and summary include the WBWF student achievement goals that were established last year, the strategies and initiatives that the district engaged in to meet the goals, and the subsequent progress made on those goals by the end of the school year. Districts post their annual reports on the district website, and submit the summary report to the Minnesota Department of Education each year.

A template format for districts to use to create their 2016-17 WBWF summary has been posted to the WBWF website at http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/dse/wbWF.

Summaries using this template should be submitted to mde.worldsbestworkforce@state.mn.us by December 15, 2017.

The WBWF website also has a rubric that the department will use to review the summaries and provide feedback to districts. Districts should use this rubric as a guide when completing the summaries. Direct any questions to mde.worldsbestworkforce@state.mn.us.

MDE produces new state Principal Development and Evaluation model

Seventeen Minnesota school districts piloted the state’s example principal evaluation model during school year 2012-13. An independent researcher, FHI 360, was funded by the Bush Foundation to produce recommendations from the pilot based on surveys and interviews with principals and evaluators in pilot districts.

In 2015, with funding from the Bush Foundation, MDE began revisions to the pilot state model based on recommendations from the model pilot study, current principal development and evaluation research, guidance from Minnesota stakeholders, and assistance from New Leaders, Inc. The revised state model is now available at the Principal Development and Evaluation State Model webpage at http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/dse/prev/model.

The new model is much more comprehensive and approaches evaluation from a growth perspective, built around a five-step continuous improvement process. With it comes new forms and resources. Regardless of what system a district is using now, this model has things to offer. The model is in Word format to make it easy for you to adapt any part.

In addition, the new Principal Development and Evaluation web page at http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/dse/prev has a number of new resources available to principals and to superintendents for their developmental work with principals.
**Program**

PeaceMaker Minnesota offering funding to help reduce bullying in schools

To help reduce bullying in schools, PeaceMaker Minnesota has announced that it can provide scholarship funding so that up to 600 school personnel receive essentially free training on how to recognize, respond to and prevent bullying behavior.

Up to 30 individuals from a school or district can participate in a single 2.5 hour training. PeaceMaker Minnesota can provide up to $10,000 in scholarship funding to help 20 or more schools pay for training.

For more information, contact PeaceMaker Minnesota Executive Director Dan McNeil at 651-631-1604 or 651-285-7087, or dmcneil@peacemakermn.org.

Visit www.peacemakermn.org for more details.

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**Meeting Management**

Learn about paperless board meetings via BoardBook webinar on November 15

MSBA is offering an ongoing series of FREE webinars on how to incorporate BoardBook to streamline preparation, distribution, and publishing of agenda packets for board meetings. The next BoardBook webinar is set for 10 a.m. Wednesday, November 15.

Visit www.mnmsba.org/BoardBook to access the registration link.

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**Find your next school leader with MSBA’s Executive Search Service**

The MSBA Executive Search Service provides a collaborative and efficient search process that supports school boards in fulfilling one of their most important school board responsibilities — hiring a superintendent. For details, please visit www.mnmsba.org/ExecutiveSearchService or contact Sandy Gundlach at sgundlach@mnmsba.org.

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**Job Openings**

**Other Administrators**
- Anoka-Hennepin — director of labor relations and benefits (application deadline: November 16, 2017)

Visit www.mnmsba.org/DistrictJobOpenings for application information.

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**In Memory**

Former Spring Lake Park School Board member and MSBA Board Director Stan Kowalski passed away October 20.

MSBA sends its condolences to Stan’s family, friends and colleagues.

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Job openings, Marketplace notices and other information can be emailed to blombard@mnmsba.org or faxed to 507-931-1515.
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