School Board Work

Chair is the key to setting board climate

By MSBA Board Development Staff

Congratulations! Your school board has selected you to lead the team for the next year. Some of you wanted the position and others were persuaded. No matter how it happened, you have a responsibility and the chair is key to setting the climate of the school board team. Consider the following tips in your new leadership role:

- Set the tempo and tone of the meetings: If you don’t care for discussion, meetings will be quick. If you prefer detailed discussion, meetings will be longer, until your board tells you differently.
- Focus the attention of school board members, staff, and community on the district’s agenda and board governance work that is focused on student achievement for all.
- Set an example of respectful and civil leadership. Treat school board members with respect and consideration.

Register today for one of MSBA Officers’ Workshops

The MSBA Officers’ Workshop focuses on board officers’ responsibilities and basics/fundamentals of laws affecting school boards. Visit www.mnmsba.org/OfficersWorkshop for registration and more information. Elected board officers, superintendents, staff who support the board, and all interested school board members are encouraged to attend.

2020 Officers’ Workshop Schedule

- Wednesday, February 12 | St. Peter (FULL)*
- Friday, February 21 | Bemidji
- Saturday, February 22 | Staples
- Thursday, February 27 | Maple Grove (FULL)*
- Friday, February 28 | Marshall

* The St. Peter and Maple Grove locations are currently full. There is no space available for walk-ins. Please call the MSBA office at 800-324-4459 to be placed on a waitlist.
Help celebrate the dedication of our public school board members!

Visit http://www.mnmsba.org/SchoolBoardRecognitionWeek to access a School Board Recognition Week Kit and certificates.

BOARD WORK: “Responsibilities of the School Board” guide available for members on the MSBA website

(Continued from Page 1)

and the public fairly and equally.

- Understand basic parliamentary procedure. Just the basics and keep it simple.
- Mediate and seek areas of compromise for differences of opinion. Keeping the meetings and conversation respectful is important for good conduct and ethics, at and away from the board table.
- Manage human energy. This one is tricky; understand the group dynamics and areas of contention. Let everyone express their questions, concerns, and explore all perspectives, respectfully.

Each and every member of the school board team is important. State statute has specified duties for the chair, clerk, and treasurer. You can find the link to a guide on the MSBA website at http://www.mnmsba.org/Portals/0/ResponsibilitiesOfTheSchoolBoard.pdf.

To learn more about the duties of each of the officers of the school board, attend the MSBA Officers’ Workshop. Take this opportunity to educate yourself.

Workshops have been scheduled at various locations throughout the state in the month of February. Find the location and date that works for you. Contact your district office to register. Your MSBA staff is here to help you Learn to Lead.

Visit http://www.mnmsba.org/OfficersWorkshop or see box on Page 1 for more information.

Meeting Management

Learn about paperless board meetings through BoardBook demo

Learn how your school board can incorporate BoardBook to streamline preparation, distribution, and publishing of agenda packets for board meetings.

BoardBook is an MSBA-endorsed product. Visit www.mnmsba.org/BoardBook to schedule a private online demo.

Also, read the “Top 5 Reasons to Go Paperless for Board Meetings” at www.boardbook.org/Resources.aspx.
Want to engage students? Engage the staff

Last week, the “Journal of Educational Psychology” published a study on the effect teachers’ patterns of praise and reprimands have on student behaviors.

Spoiler alert — the study found that the more praise was used by the teacher, instead of punishment, the more focused the children were on their schoolwork (Caldarella et al., 2020). The students became engaged in their learning; increases in academic scores and social outcomes followed.

The same can be said for employees. When employees are engaged, their performance is positively impacted.

Engaged employees are passionate, emotionally connected, and go above and beyond in their work. Organizations with engaged employees report less absenteeism, lower employee turnover, higher productivity, and, in the private sector, higher profitability. In education, we don’t measure profits, but those “higher profits” show themselves as student achievement. Depending on the study one reads, the number of actively engaged employees ranges from 5% to 15% of the workforce.

On the other end of the spectrum, disengaged employees are unproductive, disruptive, and critical of the organization and of leadership. Their work quality is low, and they tend to create and promote negativity and drama in the workplace. Unfortunately, the number of actively disengaged employees also ranges from 5% to 15% of the workforce.

In total, those extremes account for 10% to 30% of the workforce, leaving a majority of employees somewhere in between. Where do your school’s employees land on that spectrum and what impact do you think it’s having on your students? How can districts increase employee engagement? A Google search for “how can you engage employees” yielded 6,740,000 results!

Below are some common themes:

- **Communication:** Communication is necessary in any and all aspects of an organization. Expectations of students and staff should be clearly communicated. The goals and mission of the school district should be clear to staff, students, and community members.

- **Create and promote a culture of listening:** The superintendent and other administrative staff should be creating and promoting a culture of listening within the district and individual buildings. Likewise, the board should listen to the superintendent.

  Listening does not mean there will be agreement. Being heard does not mean getting your way. However, when people know they are heard, an environment of trust is created.

- **Trust and respect:** Create a culture of honesty, integrity, and respect. Create the conditions where people can be their authentic selves. Creating an environment of trust will help create effective teams. Whether that team is the school board, the leadership team, the staff in one of the district’s buildings, or the district staff as a whole, establishing trust and respect is important.

  - **Share the credit ... not the blame:** In his book, “Good to Great,” Jim Collins outlined what he believes are the keys to bringing organizations to a higher level. He wanted to know how “good” organizations became “great.” One leadership pattern that he noted in “great” organizations was what he called the window and the mirror. Leaders in those high-performing organizations “look out the window to apportion credit to factors outside themselves when things go well” (Collins, 2001, p. 35). He continued, “at the same time, they look in the mirror to apportion responsibility, never blaming bad luck when things go poorly.” In contrast, leaders from the comparison organizations did the reverse. They looked to others to place the blame, and attributed the credit to themselves.

  Create an environment where employees are engaged. Engaged employees will go above and beyond ... for the district, for the community, and most importantly, for the students.

References


What does it mean to be resilient during changing times?

In addition to day-to-day work, local officials need to find ways to stay resilient in the face of aging populations, changing technology, economic volatility, workforce challenges, and more.

During this roundtable workshop, you will have the opportunity to connect with colleagues from cities, counties, school boards, and townships as speakers from the Center for Rural Policy Development and the University of Minnesota Extension’s Rural Stress Task Force facilitate discussions surrounding these tricky topics.

Find more information and register: www.lmc.org/resilience20

DATES & LOCATIONS:

MARCH 5
Staples

MARCH 12
St. Paul

MARCH 25
North Mankato

APRIL 8
Marshall

APRIL 29
Fergus Falls
**MSBA Student School Board Member Scholarship**

**MSBA scholarship applications due in March**

MSBA knows there is no better civics lesson than having a student serving on your public school board. To recognize the work of those students, applications for the *2020 MSBA Student School Board Member Scholarship* are now available at [www.mnmsba.org/MSBAScholarship](http://www.mnmsba.org/MSBAScholarship).

Students who serve on the school board can apply if they are in their senior year and are planning to be enrolled in college this fall. Two $3,000 scholarships will be awarded.

The applications must be sent to MSBA by postal mail by Saturday, March 14, or sent by email to MSBAs Greg Abbott at gabbott@mnmsba.org by noon Monday, March 16.

Along with the application form must be a student essay indicating what the student learned from their time on the board, as well as what they contributed to their board or school.

The application also requires two recommendation letters — one from a school board member and one from the superintendent or district employee who can talk about the student’s service on the board. This year, the application will have recommended writing prompts for those asked to write a letter of support.

Nearly 100 public school boards (out of 333) have a student school board member who participates in board meetings and issues. A committee from the MSBA Board of Directors will go through the applications and select two winners. Please pass along the application to your student school board member and have them send it to MSBA.

---

**Sign up for the MSBA Weekly Advocate to learn what’s happening at the Capitol**

Stay current on news from the state Capitol by subscribing to The MSBA Weekly Advocate email. Each Monday morning during the legislative session, the MSBA Government Relations staff sends The MSBA Weekly Advocate to get members caught up with the latest legislative news and provide a look forward to what is happening at the Capitol.

**Subscribe**

Subscribe to The MSBA Weekly Advocate email by contacting Bruce Lombard at blombard@mnmsba.org and include “Weekly Advocate” in the subject line.

---

**Board meeting restrictions for Presidents Day and Precinct Caucus Day**

MSBA members should be aware of two dates with meeting restrictions in February:

- **No meetings allowed on Presidents Day (Monday, February 17, 2020).** Note: If determined a school day and so reflected in the teacher’s contract, at least one hour of the schoolprogram must be devoted to a patriotic observance of the day. For more information, please see M.S. 120A.42 (Conduct of School on Certain Holidays).

- **No meetings or activities after 6 p.m. on Precinct Caucus Day (Tuesday, February 25, 2020).**

PUT THIS ON YOUR CALENDAR!

Registration/hotel information coming soon! Check [www.mnmsba.org/DayAtTheCapitol](http://www.mnmsba.org/DayAtTheCapitol) for updates.

Day at the Capitol

Monday, March 23, 2020 | St. Paul
MSBA Centennial

Share your vision about education in 2040

During the year, MSBA's Journal magazine will celebrate the Association's Centennial by featuring essays on how various people envision education in the year 2040.

MSBA Executive Director Kirk Schniedawind will kick things off in the March-April 2020 edition, along with web links to other MSBA staff essays.

For our future issues, we will feature a school board member, a superintendent, a teacher and a student.

Along with those essays, we will also feature digital versions of any board member or superintendent who wants to share their vision about what education will look like in 2040, whether it focuses on what school board members will do in 2040 and how will it change, to what the job of a superintendent will be like 20 years from now. Will high schools only run through 10th grade with college AP classes in junior or senior years? Will there be virtual school that students attend by technology from the comfort of their home? Will there be universal preschool? Will we close the achievement gap? Send your essays in a Microsoft Word format to Greg Abbott at gabbott@mnmsba.org, and we'll link them to our Journal essays online throughout the year and on our social media sites.

Referendums

“School Tax Elections” workshop set for April 1 in St. Paul

The Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) and Baker Tilly Municipal Advisors are presenting a workshop — “School Tax Elections: Planning for Success in the New Normal” — Wednesday, April 1, 2020, at the MASA office in St. Paul.

“School Tax Elections: Planning for Success in the New Normal” is a workshop based on the book of the same title co-authored by presenters, Dr. Don Lifo and Barbara Nicol. The workshop’s content represents a marriage of research and successful practice, emphasizing systems and strategies rather than specific campaign tactics, allowing school administrators to elevate their thinking to a more comprehensive and long-range vision of election planning.

For more information and to access registration, visit https://events.resultsathand.com/finance/1129.

More than 130 candidates up for 2020 Minnesota Teacher of the Year

The 2020 Minnesota Teacher of the Year will be announced Sunday, May 3, at the Saint Paul RiverCentre.

This year’s program will name the 56th Minnesota Teacher of the Year, celebrating the tradition of excellence in teaching in Minnesota. Eligible candidates include pre-kindergarten through 12th grade, Early Childhood Family Education, and Adult Basic Education teachers, from public or private schools.

Visit http://bit.ly/2020-MNTOY-Candidates to view the 134 candidates and to learn more about this award. These candidates have accepted their nominations and completed the required materials to become eligible for the honor.

New version of employment eligibility verification form is available online

Coronavirus information for schools

By Wright Specialty Insurance

Any school with students in China, that engage in student exchange, will be accepting new students, or hosting prospective students from China should consider taking precautions to protect your students and staff from the Coronavirus. The U.S. State Department has been issuing various warnings. The latest warning (as of February 5) shows the warning level now at “Warning Level 4 — Do Not Travel.”

The CDC has issued a travel notice that provides up-to-date information on the spread of the Coronavirus and what travelers can do to protect themselves and others. Lastly, should there still be students or staff in the primary affected areas, the U.S. State Department is coordinating evacuations and providing information on how to proceed.

What can you do to protect yourself:

■ You should avoid close contact with anyone that is showing symptoms of a respiratory illness. According to the World Health Organization, visible signs of a respiratory illness include coughing and sneezing. Other symptoms may include fever and shortness of breath. Extreme cases may lead to pneumonia, kidney failure and possible death.

■ The general public should continue to do what is done every cold and flu season. Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and if you are feeling sick, cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze and disinfect objects and surfaces that you touch.

■ If you are planning to travel to China, it is recommended that you visit your health care provider to make sure you have all of the necessary vaccinations and travel medications. You should also continue to monitor all warnings and alerts that are issued by the U.S. State Department. Additionally, American citizens should register with the U.S. Embassy or consulate prior to any travel to China.

With age comes ability: Productive aging in the workplace

By SFM Mutual Insurance Company

Supporting your aging workforce is not only beneficial to employees, but it can ensure a good balance of skills for your workplace.

The concept of “productive aging” is not new. Robert Butler, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author and founding director of the National Institute on Aging, first coined the term in the early 1980s.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health has since adopted it and defines productive aging as “an approach that emphasizes the positive aspects of growing older. In the context of work, productive aging involves providing a safe and healthy work environment for everyone through comprehensive strategies that allow workers to function optimally at all ages.”

Visit https://www.sfmic.com/productive-aging-in-the-workplace to read the complete article at the SFM Mutual Insurance Company website.
Job Openings

Superintendents
- Big Lake — superintendent (application deadline: February 7)
- Farmington Area — superintendent (application deadline: March 20)
- Hastings — superintendent (application deadline: March 15)
- Jennings Community School — executive director (application deadline: February 14)
- Lewiston-Altura — superintendent (application deadline: March 16)
- Minnewaska Area — full-time or part-time superintendent (application deadline: March 2)
- Mora — superintendent (application deadline: March 2)
- Sauk Rapids-Rice — superintendent (application deadline: February 9)
- St. Peter — superintendent (application deadline: February 24)
- Tri-City United — superintendent (application deadline: February 25)
- Warren-Alvarado-Oslo — superintendent (application deadline: March 16)

Principals
- Mankato Area — K-5 principal (application deadline: February 10)
- Pillager — middle school principal, grades 5-8 (application deadline: February 23)
- Sartell-St. Stephen — high school principal (application deadline: March 2)
- Sauk Rapids-Rice — middle school principal (application deadline: February 17)
- Spring Grove — K-12 principal (application deadline: February 15)
- STRIDE Academy — K-8 principal (application deadline: February 18)
- Tri-City United — K-8 principal (application deadline: February 25)
- Underwood — PreK-12 principal (application deadline: February 28)

Other Administrators
- Aitkin — business manager (application deadline: open until filled)
- Bemidji Area — director of business services (application deadline: February 24)
- Minnetonka — assistant superintendent for instruction (application deadline: March 3)
- Minnetonka — executive director for human resources (application deadline: March 23)

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

In Memory
- Marcia Jones — a former Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial School Board member — passed away December 28. MSBA offers its condolences to Marcia’s family, friends and colleagues.
- Jim Price — a former Rochester School Board member — passed away January 24. MSBA offers its condolences to Jim’s family, friends and colleagues.
Minnesota School Boards Association Insurance Trust

Life and Long-Term Disability

NIS
National Insurance Services

MSBAIT endorses National Insurance Services as the preferred provider for life and long-term disability insurance.

Risk Protection Program

MARSH & McLLENAN AGENCY

The MSBAIT Risk Protection Program — developed in collaboration with Marsh & McLennan Agency — offers property, casualty, and workers’ compensation insurance and risk management products and services to eligible MSBA member school districts through select, participating insurers and other providers.

Property/Casualty Insurers

Workers’ Compensation Insurers

Advanced Protection Plan

The Advanced Protection Plan features insurance coverage enhancements designed specifically to protect schools.

- Builder’s Risk
- Cyber/Data Breach
- Drones
- International Travel
- Tenants User Liability Program (TULIP)

Minnesota School Boards Association Insurance Trust
Managing Member Risk Since 1972

Call 800-324-4459 to speak with a MSBAIT representative or visit http://www.mnmsba.org/MSBAIT today!

Denise Drill
dden@mmsba.org

Gary Lee
glee@mmsba.org