

2020 MSBA

VOTER GUIDE



**MINNESOTA
SCHOOL BOARDS
ASSOCIATION**

Where School Boards Learn to Lead

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Message from MSBA Executive Director, Kirk Schneidawind:

The Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) is celebrating its 100th year of serving school boards across Minnesota. Since 1920, MSBA has been a leading advocate for public education by supporting, promoting, and strengthening the work of public school boards.

All elections are important, and this year will bring challenges Minnesotans have never experienced before. MSBA has been involved in legislation and discussions to help ensure voter safety and participation.

As in every election, education issues should be one of the forefront considerations when going to the polls. Minnesota has more than 856,000 students enrolled in K-12 public education. Minnesota has a diverse student population that includes more than 144,000 students enrolled in special education, and more than 324,000 students eligible for free and reduced lunches.

Before the pandemic, Minnesota was already experiencing one of the worst achievement gaps in the nation. COVID-19's impact on education has been significant across the U.S. and here in Minnesota. Distance learning has placed a spotlight on children who already experience economic, social and health barriers. And, some students lack access to broadband and other technologies that make it difficult for them to participate in distance learning. We, as public education advocates, must ensure candidates for public office understand the importance of these urgent issues facing Minnesota school boards, students, and staff each day.

I hope you find this voter guide, which provides you with information on registration, election details, and questions to pose to candidates, as you navigate through this year's unique election cycle.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kirk Schneidawind'.

MSBA Executive Director

2020 Elections:

The pandemic and spread of COVID-19 have brought legislative changes to the 2020 elections. Concerns for public health and voter safety required the state of Minnesota to take decisive action. The legislature passed, and the governor signed, a bill that changes the way Minnesota will conduct upcoming elections, for this year only.

Some of the historic changes include:

- ***A governing body of a municipality or county must only use a school as a polling place when no other public or private location is reasonably available for use as a polling place.***
- Employees of healthcare facilities may be trained to administer the absentee voting process to residents or patients in those facilities.
- The county auditor or municipal clerk, and the applicable ballot board, must begin processing absentee ballots 14 days prior to the date of the election.
- The extension of the period during which absentee ballots are processed, to include no more than two days following the date of the election, along with any corresponding delay of the local canvassing dates necessary to accommodate the extension.

Voter Information:

What dates do I need to know?

- **Vote by mail or in person:** September 18 through November 2
- **Advanced registration:** Must be completed by October 13
- **Election Day:** November 3

Who can vote in MN?

- U.S. citizens
- Individuals at least 18 years old
- Residents of Minnesota for at least 20 days
- Felons who have completed all parts of a sentence, including any probation, parole, or supervised release.

What do I need to register to vote?

Those who meet the above qualifications, may register to vote in Minnesota.

To register online, you will need at least one of the following:

- A Minnesota driver's license
- A Minnesota identification card number
- The last four numbers of your Social Security Number

To register by mail or in person:

- Send the paper registration to your county elections or Secretary of State office
- Complete a registration form at your county elections office
- Register in person on election day at your polling place

How do I vote absentee or early?

- Absentee voting begins on Friday, September 18, 2020, and must be completed by Monday, November 2nd
- Register to have an absentee ballot mailed to you.
- Early voting is open during normal business hours. Additionally, locations offering absentee ballots for federal, state or county elections must be open:
 - The last Saturday before Election Day (10AM – 3PM)
 - The day before Election Day until 5PM
 - This does not apply to school districts holding standalone elections.
- Some local jurisdictions may provide additional absentee voting days or hours beyond the above required days and times. Call your jurisdiction for more information.

Where can I vote?

- Every voter has at least one place where they can vote early in person with an absentee ballot.
- In person at your county election office.
- In addition to your county election office, some cities and towns offer in-person absentee voting. Check with your city clerk's office for more information.

When is Election Day?

- Tuesday, November 3, 2020

What is on my ballot in 2020?

All voters will have these races on their general election ballot:

- President of the United States
- United States Senator
- United States Representative
- Minnesota State Senator
- Minnesota State Representative
- Judicial seats

Voters may also have one or more of these races on their ballot:

- County Officials
- City Officers
- School Board Members
- Township Officers
- Local ballot questions



Questions for Federal Candidates:

- Do you support full funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)?
- Do you support the Higher Education Act (HEA) reauthorization?
- Do you support the adoption of new incentives and investments focused on modernizing and building educational facilities that are designed to meet the needs of students, families, and communities?
- Do you support congressional action to increase the funding and flexibility of grants that are provided to states and local school districts to make school safety improvements?
- Will you oppose any legislation that diverts public funds from K-12 education directly through voucher programs, or indirectly through tax credits or related schemes to fund private, religious, or home school education?

Questions for State & Local Candidates:

- How will you help school districts with education funding when the state is experiencing a budget deficit?
- Do you support a change in the Constitution to read?: *PUBLIC EDUCATION. All children have a fundamental right to a quality public education that fully prepares them with the skills necessary for participation in the economy, our democracy, and society, as measured against uniform achievement standards set forth by the state. It is a paramount duty of the state to ensure quality public schools that fulfill this fundamental right.*
- Would you support “no cuts” to education given the projected budget deficit?
- Will you support giving school boards the authority to reform and innovate student learning?
- How would you propose working to continue reducing the special education cross subsidy?
- How would you support local school boards? Would you refrain from supporting statewide, unfunded mandates?
- What is your understanding of Minnesota’s student achievement gap and what measures will you as a legislator take to eliminate the gap?
- At the core of every education forum is the issue of funding. Do you believe current funding levels are adequate or inadequate and why? Do you support increases in the general education funding formula that at least keep pace with inflation?

Ways to Get Involved During the Election:

- Meet with Legislators/Candidates
- Meet with School Board Members
- Attend local candidate forums
- If a candidate or campaign calls or knocks on your door, ask questions
- Contact local candidates and ask for their positions on education issues
- Stay informed during legislative sessions, and contact your representatives about issues you care about
- VOTE!

Election Resources:

Democratic Party Website: dfl.org

Independent Part Website: www.mnip.org

Republican Party Website: www.mngop.com

Legislative Resources:

Minnesota House of Representatives: www.house.leg.state.mn.us/

Minnesota Senate: www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/

DFL House Caucus: dflhouse.com

DFL House Caucus: www.house.leg.state.mn.us/df/

DFL Senate Caucus: senatedflcaucus.com

DFL Senate Caucus: www.senate.mn/departments/office_bio.php?office_id=1003

Republican House Caucus: www.mnhrcc.com

Republican House Caucus: www.house.leg.state.mn.us/gop

Republican Senate Caucus: www.mnsenaterepublicans.com

Republican Senate Caucus: www.senate.mn/departments/office_bio.php?office_id=1002

Candidate Information:

MN Secretary of State: www.sos.state.mn.us/

Candidate Filings: candidates.sos.state.mn.us

League of Women Voters: www.lwvmn.org/

