

Briefly...

Mark your calendar!

April 9-10
Crowne Plaza, St. Paul
**Renewing the Partnership
Joint Legislative Conference
for Cities, Counties &
Schools**

Watch for registration soon!

This event replaces MSBA's annual Day at the Capitol.

Twin Cities Public TV to broadcast Legislature

Beginning this year, the Twin Cities Public Television's Minnesota Channel will begin broadcasting live statewide coverage of the 2008 Minnesota Legislative Session. Coverage will be from 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. with extensions as needed to cover high-profile debates of key issues. To find the channel providing coverage in your area, [click here](#).

Legislative Loggers

MSBA tracks all K-12 education bills, and you can, too. For a complete list of all the bills you need, [click here](#).

Lobby Line

Call 800-864-6722 or [click here to hear current and archived Lobby Lines](#) on our Web site. Lobby Line gives you the latest daily news from MSBA's Governmental Relations Director Grace Schwab and Associate Director Kirk Schneidawind.

2008 Session off to a jump-start

The 2008 legislative session kicked into high gear this week. The Senate and House have kept a promise to jump-start the session with a comprehensive transportation funding proposal.

Also on the fast track is the constitutional dedication of about 4 cents on every \$10 purchase for arts and environmental conservation.

Now that the arts and environment bill passed both the House and Senate, citizens of Minnesota will have an opportunity to vote on the proposed dedication in November.

The pace of the K-12 committees is less dramatic. The House K-12 Finance Committee has been focused on school district and library requests to be included in a larger bonding bill.

The elephant in the living room, however, is the budget crisis facing the state. The November forecast identified a \$373 million hole that needs to be filled.

The real work of the session will begin after the updated forecast that will be released the last week in February. It is estimated that the forecast will unearth a larger hole nearly two to three times the size of the one discovered in November.

The tools used by the Legislature and governor to plug this hole will be much of the story of the 2008 session. Expect attempts to shift the 90/10 school district payment schedule as one of the possible budget gimmicks. It is estimated that a 1 percent shift saves the state approximately \$70 million in the current year.

The state's economy has experienced a roller-coaster ride over the last eight years resulting in a very bumpy ride for school districts. The ride may not get any smoother after this session without some increase in revenues.

The economic issues facing the state Legislature feels a lot like a triage unit. Transportation, nursing homes and environmental issues appear to be at the front of line this year. This doesn't mean that the needs of our public school students have gone away. MSBA will continue to advocate for at least a 1 percent increase on the general education formula for school districts.

[Click here to access MSBA's 2008 Legislative platform](#), which includes the general formula increase and much more.

MSBA Board lobbies at the federal level

Your MSBA Board of Directors have just returned from Washington, D.C., where they met with Minnesota's congressional delegation and staff. The Board of Directors focused on three areas:

IDEA (Special Education Funding)

Appropriate funding levels in the area of special education have been an issue since the federal government enacted IDEA. The 2004 reauthorization of IDEA created a path to full funding by 2012. States and local school districts continue to pick up the tab for one of the largest unfunded mandates the federal government has ever created.

Fix and Fund NCLB

"A Common Agenda" to improve No Child Left Behind is a collaborative effort by MSBA and MASA to fix and fund NCLB. The present application of NCLB, while well-intentioned, needs to be fixed. Congress is presently going through a reauthorization process of the bill. And MSBA wants to be a part of the solution.

NCLB has helped schools through increased

MSBA's Federal Focus:

- ◆ Full funding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- ◆ Fix and fund No Child Left Behind (NCLB)
- ◆ Extend Medicaid reimbursement through Local Collaborative Time Studies beyond the 6-month window that exists in the federal State Children's Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP) bill.

accountability, disaggregating data to close the achievement gap, assisted in data-driven decision-making and created high expectations for achievement, yet there continues to be a disconnect between its intentions and real-world application. While neither the House nor Senate can demonstrate any constructive recommendations as the

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Loss of Local Collaborative Time Study funds will hurt schools

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reauthorization evolves, it is fairly clear that any changes will need to be approved by the administration, which, at the moment, seems unlikely. Meanwhile, proficiency requirements ramp up and an increasing number of Minnesota public school districts get dinged for not meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

Local Collaborative Time Study

Minnesota school districts in collaboration with other government agencies have created a model called a Local Collaborative Time Study. This was done under the Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act of 1988 that allowed school districts to receive payment from Medicaid for health services delivered to Medicaid-eligible children with disabilities who may need diagnostic, preventive and rehabilitation services. In addition, school districts may claim reimbursement for the administrative costs of providing school-based services such as outreach for enrollment purposes and coordination and/or monitoring of medical care.

Through federal rule-making by the Center for Medicare and



Your MSBA Board of Directors met with Congressional delegations from Minnesota to push for special education funding, changes in No Child Left Behind and an extension of Medicaid reimbursements for schools.

Medicaid Services (CMS) and audits, the CMS is trying to slow down and/or stop such funding. Presently, there is a six-month moratorium as enacted through the State Children's Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP). A permanent extension of this program is needed for Minnesota's school districts. The loss of these revenues will hurt school district budgets.

New members join state Legislature

Representative Steve Drazkowski (R-28B) has been elected to fill the term of Rep. Steve Sviggum after he was appointed Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Industry. Rep. Drazkowski represents House District 28B which includes the school districts of Lake City, Zumbrota-Mazeppa, Plainview Elgin-Millville and Wabasha. Rep. Drazkowski makes his home in Wabasha.

Senator Kevin Dahle (DFL - 25) has been elected to fill the term of Sen. Thomas Neville (R-Northfield) who was appointed District Judge in Rice County. Senator Dahle and his family live in Northfield.

Land Trust should live up to its purpose

Minnesota law historically reserved certain lands to dedicate dollars for schools and maximize the return from these lands.

But for years, these funds have been going into the state's general fund, with schools losing out on millions of dollars.

MSBA thinks these Land Trust funds should go to schools as supplemental funding above and beyond the money the state gives for general education funding.

How much additional money would that mean

for schools? In 2006, K-12 mineral rights generated \$11 million a year. And that amount could be 50 times more if the Department of Natural Resources used the same management techniques for K-12 as it does for university trust fund lands.

The DNR must enhance its management of K-12 lands. For example, the Department of Natural Resources has no full-time staff designated to managing the trust fund lands, yet the department claims costs of \$16.6 million a year for its work with the lands.

Looking AHEAD at the House

4 p.m. MONDAY, Feb. 18

Committee: Education Finance and Economic Competitiveness Finance Division

Room: 5 State Office Building

Chair: Rep. Mary Murphy

Agenda: Report from the Legislative Auditor on school district student transportation.

8 a.m. TUESDAY, Feb. 19

Committee: E-12 Education

Room: Basement State Office Building

Chair: Rep. Carlos Mariani

Agenda: HF2983 (Peterson, S.) Office of Early Childhood Education established.

HF2984 (Slawik) School age care modified

HF2785 (Gardner) Conflict of interest exception established for certain school contracts for

professional and other services.

HF2185 (Lanning) Healthy child development within communities grant program established, and money appropriated.

HF1642 (Peterson, A.) Wind energy conversion systems capacity increased for school ownership.

4 p.m. THURSDAY, February 21, 2008

Committee: Early Childhood Learning Finance Division

Room: 200 State Office Building

Chair: Rep. Nora Slawik

Agenda: Presentation by the Department of Education and three grantees on the after school program grants HF2920 (Murphy, E) A bill for an act relating to early childhood education; modifying developmental screening aid.