

LEADER

You can count on MSBA staff to help you during this current health crisis

“Do the best you can, with what you have, where you are ...” is a simple motto that I use when I find myself in a challenging situation. President Theodore Roosevelt, who is famous for this quote, certainly never faced a challenge that he did not meet head on. Our public school districts are confronted with a public health challenge that I am confident will be met head on with the same courage, spirit, and determination that will help their communities, state, and country overcome.

As our school boards work through the challenging governance, leadership, and management issues, I have been in awe of the genuine concern our members have for children who are impacted by these decisions and the creativity and dedication of our districts in meeting these challenges.



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Your MSBA staff are ready and available to support and strengthen your work during this challenging time. Providing a balance of outstanding service, while maintaining the health and safety of our staff during this time, is a challenge for which we are prepared. We look forward to continuing our strong support for our school boards and school districts, especially in these times of uncertainty. For the sake of safety and wellness, most of our staff will be working remotely yet will be available to provide timely support. The MSBA staff stand

COVID-19 Information

- Page 2 — Sign up today for MSBA’s new “School Board Meetings and COVID-19” webinar
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ready to help and support your efforts. Visit our website’s staff directory page at <http://www.mnmsba.org/MSBAStaff>. I would encourage you to reach out to our staff to share your questions and allow them to help you in the weeks and months ahead.



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COVID-19

School Board Meetings and COVID-19 Webinar

Watch MSBA's School Board Meetings and COVID-19 Webinar for information about conducting school board meetings during a pandemic.

The Open Meeting Law allows school boards and other governing bodies to utilize a different set of tools when faced with a health pandemic or emergency declaration.

MSBA staff members Terry Morrow and Amy Fullenkamp-Taylor will review this portion of the Open Law Meeting and will address questions MSBA has received.

SIGN UP: Visit <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/1705703580136107265> to sign up for this free webinar.



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COVID-19 Information and Resources

- **Reminder:** According to the Minnesota Department of Education, school districts are not to start distance learning until March 30. Access MDE's guidance at <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/health/covid19/index.htm>.
- Visit MSBA website at <http://www.mnmsba.org/COVID-19> to access key resources from state and federal agencies.

Minnesota public schools ordered closed through Friday, March 27

On Sunday, March 15, Governor Tim Walz and Minnesota Department of Education Commissioner Mary Cathryn Ricker announced that Minnesota's public schools and charter schools must close by Wednesday, March 18, and remain closed through Friday, March 27, in light of the COVID-19 situation.

- [Access Governor Walz's Executive Order 20-02](#)

Schools are to use this time to plan for equitable distance learning in the event that a longer school closure may be necessary. All school staff are expected to participate in the planning process except for school staff who are vulnerable to COVID-19 exposure as explained by the Minnesota Department of Health.

School plans must include arrangements for the elementary school children of health care workers, first responders, law enforcement, and firefighters.

MSBA will continually monitor the situation and will update our website regularly. Please contact MSBA if questions or concerns arise.

School Board Work

Focus on student-centered leadership

Across our nation, school communities are facing the most unprecedented time in the 21st century. There are no district policies or even state statutes that can provide all the answers that are being asked. While there are numerous factors that currently lie beyond our control, there is one element boards can control, and that is how they lead.

Focusing on what is best for our students' academic, social, and emotional wellbeing should always be top of mind, but is arguably now more important than ever before. School districts are undoubtedly hearing from families who are feeling anxious, scared, and unsure of what to do. During these times of such uncertainty, our students and families need and deserve a high-functioning, high-performing school board team who has a laser-sharp focus on the needs of all learners.

Get back to the basics

1. Trust one another — This isn't a time to doubt the decisions of your fellow board members, your superintendent, and staff. You hire good people and you don't take on the position of school board member for fun (or the money!), but for the students and your community.

2. Put away the baggage — We all have times of disagreement. Let's set it aside and work towards what's best for all. You don't have to hold hands and sing songs around



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the campfire, but decide what is most important right now and focus. For teams that have been struggling, this is going to test you and can bring out the best or worst in you. You decide.

3. Communicate, communicate, communicate — Keep one another informed and along with your superintendent, move forward with a consistent message. These times are confusing and uncertain for everyone. Clarity builds trust with your team, staff, and community.

Your leadership is being tested. Now is the time for all school board members to work with their superintendents in the most collaborative, supportive, and positive way possible. Let's set an example.

Learn to lead with the best YOU.

Your MSBA staff is here to assist you in any way we can. Thank you for the critical work you do for Minnesota's students.

MSBA Workshop and Event Cancellations

Due to concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, MSBA has decided to cancel the following workshops and events:

- **March 23:** MSBA Day at the Capitol (St. Paul) — Scheduled to be offered as a webinar (see Page 4 for details)
- **March 25:** Community Resilience Roundtable (North Mankato) — co-sponsored by MSBA
- **March 27-28:** The Trust Edge Workshop (Winona)
- **March 29-30:** The Trust Edge Workshop (Bemidji) — postponed to a date to be determined
- **April 8:** Community Resilience Roundtable (Marshall) — co-sponsored by MSBA
- **April 29:** Community Resilience Roundtable (Fergus Falls) — co-sponsored by MSBA

Potential Cancellations

MSBA will keep members posted about the status of the following upcoming workshops:

- **April 9:** Officers' Workshop (Burnsville)
- **April 14:** Building a High-Performance School Board Team: Phase III Workshop (St. Peter)
- **April 15:** Representing Your Community Through Policy and Engagement: Phase IV Workshop (St. Peter)
- **April 23:** Building a High-Performance School Board Team: Phase III Workshop (Staples)
- **April 24:** Representing Your Community Through Policy and Engagement: Phase IV Workshop (Staples)

Advocacy

MSBA Day at the Capitol reconfigured as a webinar for Monday, March 23

Due to concerns about COVID-19 and gatherings of groups of people, MSBA is taking your safety into consideration and has decided to cancel the March 23 in-person Day at the Capitol this year. Instead, we will be having a **free Day at the Capitol Webinar** that morning from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

MSBA's Denise Dittrich and Kimberley Dunn Lewis will go over the big education issues for the session.

Anyone who registered for the in-person event will not be billed for registration. If members have already paid, their registration will be refunded.

MSBA Day at the Capitol Webinar

- **When:** 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Monday, March 23, 2020
- **Registration:** <https://attendeegotowebinar.com/register/608986657805433356>



The Day at the Capitol Webinar will be presented by MSBA's Government Relations staff members Denise Dittrich (left) and Kimberley Dunn Lewis.

Minnesota Association of School Administrators

Amoroso receives Distinguished Service Award

The Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) has named **Dr. Gary Amoroso** as the recipient of its **Distinguished Service Award**.

Amoroso has been serving as MASA's Executive Director since 2011.

Amoroso has received this award for his support of the children of Minnesota and for his contributions in activities that have improved Minnesota's public education system.

"Gary has consistently provided outstanding leadership as an educational statesman and served as an articulate and eloquent spokesperson for educational leaders across our state and the causes that are important to all of us," said Dr. Chris Richardson, a retired superintendent of the Northfield

Public Schools. "He also championed our priorities with the Legislature, nurtured partnerships with other educational organizations, and implemented a powerful strategic plan to support our association's mission."

Per the direction of the MASA Board of Directors, he has worked to expand partnerships with organizations within the education arena as well as those outside of education to create new partnerships which serve to benefit the children of Minnesota. Under Amoroso's leadership, MASA adopted a strategic plan in 2011 that truly articulated the future direction of the



organization. The strategic plan was most recently updated in 2017 and continues to serve as the guide for the areas of emphasis for MASA staff and members.

As a MASA member, Dr. Amoroso served as the organization's president (2009-2010).

Amoroso's background includes a wide range of experiences at both the school district and state level.

Amoroso has been a teacher, assistant principal, principal, director of educational services and human resources, and for 15 years, a school superintendent.

Visit <https://www.mnasa.org/cms/lib/MN07001305/Centricity/Domain/218/Amoroso%2020DS.pdf> to learn more about Amoroso's award.

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National School Boards Association terminates its annual conference

The **National School Boards Association** terminated its upcoming Annual Conference scheduled for April 4–6, 2020, and the COSA School Law Seminar (April 2–4, 2020), in Chicago, due to the circumstances of COVID-19 pandemic. After a careful evaluation of currently available information, the NSBA Board of Directors voted to terminate the conference. For additional information, visit <https://www.nsba.org/Events/NSBA-2020-Annual-Conference-and-Exposition/termination-statement-faq>.

MSBAIT Matters

COVID-19 — risk management responsibility, proactivity, and resiliency

The risk management (and other) challenges from COVID-19 over the past few weeks certainly have tested the mettle of Minnesota's public schools.

With the announcement of school closures this week by Governor Tim Walz's **Emergency Executive Order 20-02** and the **guidance of the Minnesota Department of Education**, some of those challenges may grow even bigger in the days and weeks ahead.

Throughout this COVID-19 crisis, the Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) and the MSBA Insurance Trust (MSBAIT) is continuing to work diligently with a wide range of public and private authorities, experts, and resources — including MSBAIT's Participating Insurers, Marsh & McLennan Agency (MSBAIT's endorsed property, casualty, and workers' compensation agency), and National Insurance Services (MSBAIT's endorsed group life and LTD provider) — to help school leaders protect their most precious assets.

Consistent with the **Emergency Executive Order 20-02**, the Minnesota Department of Education, the Minnesota Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control, and other expert guidance, the MSBA and the MSBAIT encourage the entire



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school community to continue to be responsible, proactive, and resilient in managing the risks and exposures to harm from COVID-19:

1. Students, teachers, staff, parents, and others

School districts should strongly embrace social distancing, aggressive hygiene, and stay-at-home (self-quarantine) principles and guidance **per the CDC** to help mitigate third-party liability, workers' compensation injury, occupational disease, disability/income loss from illness, and potentially other risks as a result of a COVID-19 infection being contracted at or while attending school.

2. Facilities maintenance, management, and cleaning/disinfecting

COVID-19 appears to be highly contagious (i.e., with prominent risk of person-to-person spread) through respiratory droplets and touching contaminated surfaces. As such, additional cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces, door knobs, plastic materials, etc., within school facilities may now be



“easier” while school districts are closed — given the lower student census, and the opportunity to collectively/collaboratively “level set” among school leaders, staff, teachers, and others within (and using) school facilities.

3. Social distancing and distance learning

Providing Minnesota school children (particularly those with special needs, as well as those from low-income families or experiencing homelessness) with a quality, accessible public education remains necessary. In response to COVID-19 and the **Emergency Executive Order 20-02**, schools are seeking solutions for access to and delivery of such education through distance learning. Effectively doing so may lessen their risks of exposure to claims and lawsuits alleging, for example, a “failure to educate.”

MSBA and MSBAIT will continue to assess and evaluate COVID-19 risks. In the interim, school districts are encouraged to visit the **MSBA website** for additional details and updates.

Marsh & McLennan Agency: Addressing the coronavirus outbreak

Visit <https://mma.marshmma.com/coronavirus-outbreak-resource-page> for information and guidance from sources Marsh & McLennan Agency trust about the current pandemic. The **MSBA Insurance Trust (MSBAIT)** endorses Marsh & McLennan Agency LLC as its insurance broker for property, casualty and workers' compensation insurance and risk management products and services. Learn more at Marsh & McLennan at www.marshmma.com/industries/education.



Job Openings | Visit <http://www.mnmsba.org/DistrictJobOpenings> for application information.

Superintendents

- Adrian — superintendent (application deadline: April 14)
- Deer River — superintendent (application deadline: April 18)
- Eastern Carver County — superintendent (application deadline: April 25)
- Farmington Area — superintendent (application deadline: March 20)
- Henning — superintendent (application deadline: March 31)
- Kenyon-Wanamingo — part-time superintendent (application deadline: April 3)
- LeRoy-Ostrander — part-time superintendent (application deadline: March 30)
- McGregor — superintendent/elementary school principal (application deadline: April 13)
- Nicollet — half-time superintendent (application deadline: March 20)
- Rockford Area — superintendent (application deadline: March 26)
- St. James — superintendent (application deadline: March 23)
- Tri-City United — superintendent (application deadline: March 22)

Principals

- Anoka-Hennepin — eight assistant elementary school and five high school principals (application deadline: March 19)
- Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose — elementary school principal (application deadline: March 18)
- Minnewaska Area — E-3 elementary school principal (application deadline: March 27)
- Minnewaska Area — high school principal (application deadline: March 27)
- ROCORI — secondary school principal (application deadline: March 22)
- South Koochiching-Rainy River — K-12 principal (application deadline: open until filled)

Other Administrators

- Aitkin — business manager (application deadline: open until filled)
- Alexandria — assistant superintendent of teaching and learning (application deadline: April 3)
- Columbia Heights — executive director of educational services (application deadline: March 31)
- Hiawatha Valley Education District — human resources manager (application deadline: open until filled)
- Minnesota Department of Education — assistant school finance director (application deadline: March 31)
- Minnetonka — executive director for human resources (application deadline: March 23)
- Walker-Hackensack-Akeley — business manager (application deadline: open until filled)



Visit <https://www.msdlaf.org> to access the current Minnesota School District Liquid Asset Fund Plus rate. The Fund was established for the purpose of allowing Minnesota public school entities and districts (collectively “school districts”) to pool their investment funds to seek the highest possible investment yield, while maintaining liquidity and preserving capital.



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



Minnesota School Boards Association Insurance Trust

Life and Long-Term Disability



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

Risk Protection Program



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 Program

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

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- Cyber/Data Breach**
- Drones**
- International Travel**
- Tenants User Liability Program (TULIP)**

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



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