

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Being a Voice for Students is an Important Task for Board Members

By Linda Leiding, MSBA President and Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial School Board Member

As I write this, the 2024 Minnesota Legislature has completed its business. Thank you to all the school board members, superintendents, students, and community members who advocated for Minnesota public schools during this legislative session. Our legislators indicated that they frequently heard from them regarding critical issues. Your voice was heard — your advocacy matters.

Advocating on behalf of public schools is an essential responsibility for school board members and one of the pillars of the MSBA strategic plan. It provides the opportunity to shape policy, secure resources, and give voice to the aspirations of our students, teachers, and community members. It offers the ability to meet needs and shape the future. It is our chance to effect change for the better and ensure that all students get a quality education.

MSBA is dedicated to equipping its members with information that enables school board members to deepen their understanding of legislative activities and improve their ability to advocate and discuss the effects of issues on school boards and public education. As elected officials, we are uniquely

positioned to influence educational policies and legislation. MSBA provides opportunities for school board members to learn about and understand the impact of issues. In turn, we can invite legislators to attend a meeting, send them an email or letter, and share our stories and data to help them understand the impact on our districts.

School boards are encouraged to develop resolutions regarding important issues. The resolutions are presented at the Delegate Assembly, where they are debated and voted on by the delegates. The resolutions become a critical tool for the MSBA Government Relations team to use as a guide to influence legislators regarding proposed legislation. School boards are encouraged to submit resolutions for consideration from June through September. Watch for upcoming information regarding elections for the Delegate Assembly.

Moving forward, it is crucial to maintain our momentum. MSBA provides the resources and opportunities to help board members expand their knowledge. Through our advocacy efforts, we can secure necessary resources and drive meaningful

change. School board members are encouraged to stay engaged by participating in MSBA workshops, attending Coffee & Conversation meetings, participating in webinars, and staying informed through newsletters and updates.

Martin Luther King Jr. wrote, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter." Silence in the face of critical issues affecting public schools is not an option for school board members. Advocacy is about giving a voice to those who cannot advocate for themselves — our students. It is about ensuring that educational policies and practices reflect the best interests of our communities. Thank you for your continued engagement with MSBA and your advocacy efforts. Together, we will continue to make a difference in the lives of Minnesota students. Let's keep working towards a brighter future for our schools and our communities.

Linda Leiding is the MSBA President and a Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial School Board member. Direct questions to Linda at linda.leiding@mnsmba.org.