

## STRAIGHT TALK



# Matching Services to Board Members' Changing Needs is a Major Goal to Engage our Membership

*By Kirk Schneidawind, MSBA Executive Director*

Just as school districts need the right people, funding and systems in play to help students, MSBA needs the right people and resources to help school board members.

As part of our strategic plan, and our continuous improvement process, your MSBA staff is taking a hard look at how and what we offer board members. We will also ensure we have the necessary funding and resources to deliver and meet the needs of our school boards.

To be at the top of our game, MSBA is looking to:

1. Review all the board development workshops we offer – and how we offer them. Can we make them more useful, more concise? Can we offer them in alternative ways – virtually, in-person, and online modules that board members can take on their own time?
2. Take a deep dive into our resources and funding. Do we have the people to help districts with superintendent searches, strategic planning, policy services and board member personal development?

Do we have appropriate resources to make these services meaningful and successful?

3. Engage our membership. In today's association world, more than ever, services and development opportunities need to match or exceed the needs of our members. We will be intentional and purposeful in our engagement efforts to demonstrate how and why our board development workshops, our advocacy programs, our policy services – all make YOU a better board member and your board a high-performing board.

Our goal in the “operational efficiency” area of our strategic plan is to find ways we can engage and deliver value to an ever-changing membership. After our last board elections in 2023, we saw that 62% of our membership are in their first term as a board member.

That means MSBA must keep showing how participating in our conferences, free webinars on K-12 issues, our online chats, our workshops, and advocacy opportunities can make you a champion

for your school district's students.

New board members may want new ways to engage. They may want to be informed of events, conferences, and other opportunities by text instead of email. They may want their information to be concise or choose what specific information they'd like to receive. We will also be more intentional about our outreach, communication, and data usage to ensure we are meeting the needs of our school boards.

Throughout the next few years, MSBA will be focused on the how and why we offer opportunities for school boards to grow in their effectiveness. Our strategic mission of building strong school boards for a stronger Minnesota will guide MSBA's efforts in our quest to ensure Minnesota's public schools deliver on their goals of student success.

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