



MSBA Advocacy Roadmap Cheat Sheets

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BE INFORMED

- **Know Your School District**
 - ✓ Complete Reference Guide for School Board Members:
<http://www.mnmsba.org/Portals/0/PDFs/BoardMemberReferenceGuide.pdf>
 - ✓ Develop your district's personal story and emphasize local concern. One of your biggest assets is that you understand how things work at the local level. Members are always eager to hear how state programs and funding are being implemented at the local level. This is your chance to relay this information. Lobbying with real-life experiences is your most persuasive tool.
- **Know Legislative Process**
 - ✓ How a bill becomes law: <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/howbill.aspx>
 - ✓ Bill tracker: <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/legis.aspx>
 - ✓ Education Committee members contact information:
<http://www.mnmsba.org/Advocacy/EffectiveAdvocacy/StateEducationCommittees>
 - ✓ Legislative Calendar: <http://www.mnmsba.org/LegislativeCalendar>
 - ✓ Committee hearing schedule: <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/sched.aspx>
 - ✓ How to testify in committee: <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/faq/faqtoc.aspx?id=117>
 - ✓ How to watch legislative television: <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/htv/htv.asp>

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

- **MSBA Day at the Capitol**
 - ✓ Annual conference is held during the early part of the legislative session to inform and engage board members to advocate for public schools and network with colleagues as well as other local government officials.
- **Regional Meetings**
 - ✓ MSBA holds annual regional meetings across the state.
- **Become a Delegate**
 - ✓ MSBA's legislative positions are adopted through what is recognized as one of the most grassroots approaches of any of the interests represented at the state Capitol. School board members from throughout the state are elected for a two-year term by their peers to serve as delegates. These delegates come together at the MSBA Delegate Assembly Conference (held each December) to discuss and vote on various legislative resolutions submitted by school boards and individual school board members.

- ✓ Those resolutions that receive a majority vote, as well as positions adopted during previous years, become the basis for MSBA staff lobbying efforts on behalf of all public school board members in the state.
- ✓ MSBA Legislative Policies:
<http://www.mnmsba.org/Portals/0/PDFs/MSBALegislativePolicies.pdf>
- **MSBA Events**
 - ✓ Summer Seminar: <http://www.mnmsba.org/SummerSeminar>
 - The Summer Seminar focuses on leadership issues and includes the latest information on legislation, curriculum and management topics. This seminar invigorates school leaders as they plan for the new school year.
 - ✓ Leadership Conference: <http://www.mnmsba.org/LeadershipConference>
 - The MSBA Leadership Conference is a two-day conference with no registration fee for MSBA members. MSBA provides this free conference every January as part of members' annual dues. The conference features nationally recognized speakers, workshops on a variety of topics, a Show and Tell exhibit and a trade show.
 - ✓ Professional Development
 - The Phase Orientation sessions cover all aspects of school board service, including the financial training mandated by state law (Phase II) and also delves into how board members can build community support for schools (Phase IV): <http://www.mnmsba.org/PhaseOrientationWorkshops>
 - MSBA Officers' Workshops for Board Chairs, Clerks and Treasurers are focused on board officers' responsibilities and basics/fundamentals of laws affecting school boards: <http://www.mnmsba.org/OfficersWorkshop>
 - Negotiations Seminars: <http://www.mnmsba.org/NegotiationsSeminars>
- **Attend a Political Caucus**
 - ✓ Bring forward MSBA adopted resolutions at your political caucus to rally statewide grassroots support for public schools.
 - ✓ MSBA Legislative Policies:
<http://www.mnmsba.org/Portals/0/PDFs/MSBALegislativePolicies.pdf>
 - ✓ Understand political activity boundaries school district resources may not used to promote or oppose political candidates — you may communicate your support for candidates or issues as an individual. You may inform voters, but cannot directly tell stakeholders how to vote while using public resources

STAY CONNECTED

- **Morning Coffee with Government Relations Team Conference Calls**
 - ✓ Call in on Mondays at 11 a.m. to learn about the week's upcoming legislative issues.

✓ Dial: 866-939-8416 Code: 3384568

- **Know your audience**

- ✓ Who represents me: <http://www.gis.leg.mn/OpenLayers/districts/>
- ✓ Do your research. Research your members' backgrounds, committee assignments and voting records on education issues.
- ✓ Sign up for your legislators' newsletters updates, Facebook and Twitter feeds.

- **Capitol Connections**

- ✓ During the legislative session, the MSBA Government Relations team posts regular updates on legislative activity.
- ✓ MSBA Capitol Connections: <http://msbacapitolconnections.com>
- ✓ Visit the Capitol Connections website and click "Follow" (in the lower-right corner) to receive immediate notifications of new posts.

- **MSBA Website**

- ✓ MSBA Advocacy page: <http://www.mnmsba.org/Advocacy>
- ✓ Blog: <http://msbacapitolconnections.com>
- ✓ Twitter: <https://twitter.com/mnmsba>
- ✓ Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/mnmsba>
- ✓ YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/mnmsbavideo>

- **Sign up for "Headlines from the Capitol"**

- ✓ On Fridays during the legislative session, MSBA sends out the weekly headlines from Capitol Connections posts, a list of bill introductions and a legislative calendar.
- ✓ Subscribe by sending an email to Bruce Lombard at blombard@mnmsba.org with your full name, title and school district.

- **Sign up for the MSBA News Clipping Service**

- ✓ MSBA delivers the News Clipping Service via email on weekdays with education-related articles from across the state: <http://www.mnmsba.org/NewsClippingService>
- ✓ Subscribe by sending an email to Greg Abbott at gabbott@mnmsba.org with your full name, title and school district.

TAKE ACTION

- **Host a Site Visit**

- ✓ Invite your legislator to visit your schools or attend special school events. Ask for the name of the person who handles scheduling requests for the member so that you can follow-up with a formal invitation.

- **Make Phone Calls**

- ✓ Contact your legislators: <http://www.mnmsba.org/ContactYourLegislators>
- ✓ Follow the steps below for a more effective phone call to your representative:
 1. State your name and address, and indicate whether you are a constituent or not.
 2. Give the name and House or Senate File number of the legislation, or clearly explain the issue.
 3. State whether you oppose or support the legislation and how you want your legislator to vote. Include a statement on how the issue affects your district. You will usually be speaking with a legislative aide who is checking pro or con and the call will last a very short time. Keep the phone call under five minutes unless the aide or legislator prolongs the conversation.
 4. Listen to the legislator's point of view.
 5. Take down the name of the aide with whom you spoke so that you will have a contact person in case you need to contact the legislator again.
 6. Thank them for their time, both on the telephone and with a note of thanks for the conversation that includes a concise summary of your opinion.
 7. Do not try to talk your way around questions to which you do not know the answers. Say that you will get back to the legislator or aide, and then do so.
- **Visit Capitol**
 - ✓ Make an appointment: <http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/faq/faqtoc.aspx?subject=14>
 - ✓ Select a spokesperson. If you are in a group of people, you should select a spokesperson. Although everyone should contribute to the conversation, you should have one person who will begin the discussion. Generally after introductions are made you might be asked why you meeting. The spokesperson should be prepared to briefly explain and then highlight the main issues that the group members want to discuss. Decide in advance who will discuss each issue so that your visit will run smoothly.
 - ✓ Ask directly for your members support. If supportive, ask him/her to lobby other members of Congress to support your position. If your member of Congress disagrees with your position, hear him/her out politely, express respectful disappointment, and rebut the argument if you have the facts to do so.
 - ✓ Write a follow-up letter. Send the member a follow-up letter thanking him/her for meeting with you. This is an excellent opportunity to reiterate the issues that were discussed during the meeting.
- **Identify Legislative Champions**
 - ✓ Develop relationships your legislators, parent groups and other members of the community.
 - ✓ Go to town meetings and other gatherings and introduce yourself.
 - ✓ Identify individual(s) who can make a direct contact with legislators to clearly state support or opposition to legislation and how you want the legislator to vote.
 - ✓ Constituents will be able to have direct contact with their own legislators, and their input has significant impact on the responsiveness of the leaders in their own district.
 - ✓ If others are already working on this issue and position, it may be best strategy to join their efforts and expand the overall support for the policy goal.

- **Write Letters**

- ✓ Contact your legislators: <http://www.mnmsba.org/ContactYourLegislators>
- ✓ Take the following steps to write a more effective letter to your representative.
 1. Use the correct address and salutation (i.e., Dear Senator name, or Dear Representative name, or Dear Governor name). While the legislature is in session, send letters to Senate or House offices.
 2. Describe the bill by popular name and by House or Senate file number, or clearly describe the issue.
 3. Be brief and clear. Write about one issue per letter, and state the issue and how you want your elected official to vote in your first sentence. Letters should be no longer than one page, however longer letters may be appreciated if you have some new information on the subject.
 4. Be specific. If possible, give an example of how the issue affects your district.
 5. Be timely. Make sure your legislator will have sufficient time to consider your request.
 6. Know your facts.
 7. Demands, or threaten defeat at the next election. You will want to have future contact with the legislator.
 8. Use your own words and stationary rather than form letters or postcards when possible.
 9. Be constructive. Explain an alternative or better solution to the problem and offer to be a resource on the issue.
 10. Send a note of appreciation when your elected official supports your issue.
 11. When he or she does not support your issue, explain why you think a different decision should have been made. It might make a difference the next time.

- **Complete Surveys**

- ✓ MSBA Government Relations team periodically sends out surveys via email to all members to gather information about their district experiences.
- ✓ Respond to MSBA legislative alerts

WORK WITH US

- **MSBA Government Relations Team Contact Information**

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- **MSBA 2015 Legislative Agenda**
 - ✓ Legislative Agenda: <http://www.mnmsba.org/Portals/0/PDFs/2015-MSBA-LegislativePlatform.pdf>
 - ✓ Legislative Updates: <http://www.mnmsba.org/Advocacy>

- **MSBA Legislative Policies**
 - ✓ <http://www.mnmsba.org/Portals/0/PDFs/MSBALegislativePolicies.pdf>

Notes: