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# Fall Advocacy Tour Zooming to You in Your MSBA Director District

*By Denise Dittrich and Kimberley Dunn Lewis, MSBA Government Relations staff*

September is synonymous with the start of school. Each of us probably feels the excitement of a new school year – the school supplies in stores and in advertisements, the change of seasons, and of course the governance work of school board members.

As your MSBA Government Relations team, we also sense the start of another year. Our fall Advocacy Tour provides us the opportunity to hear from school board members from the 13 MSBA Director Districts. We look forward to the discussions – the stories of what is working, what isn't, and what is needed. The insight into the different districts' needs and issues help provide school board members with ideas of resolutions, or policy ideas, for the annual Delegate Assembly and build MSBA's annual legislative platform. We will get back to resolutions and the Delegate Assembly later in this column.

In September 2021, the MSBA Government Relations team will be Zooming to you with a virtual fall Advocacy Tour in each MSBA Director District. You can look forward to an hour or so of discussion with Denise and Kim as well as fellow Director District members. Thanks to you and your voice, some great things came out of the 2021 Legislature. And there were quite a few policies that did not become law and will most likely be up for discussion again in 2022. We want to continue sharing your voice at the legislature on important issues. On Page 24 of the 2021 MSBA Legislative Summary is a list of legislative items we believe

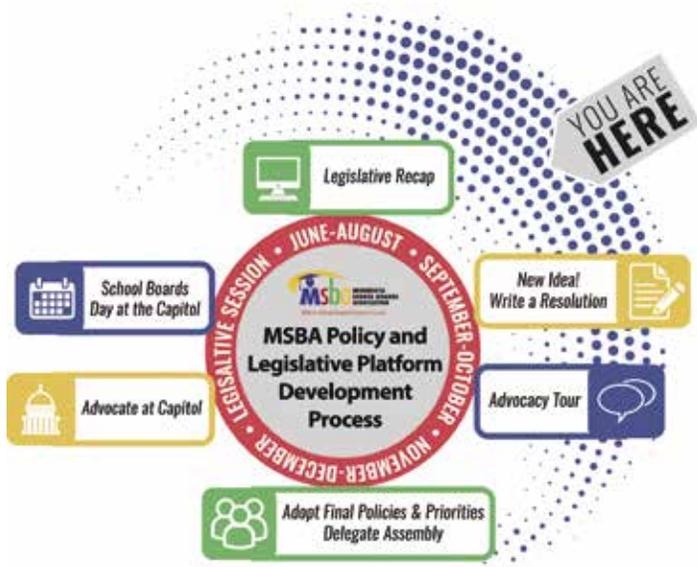
will return in 2022. Besides this list, there are policy or fiscal items impacting your district that need legislative help. Between now and when we see you, please ponder the following questions:

- Are your school district's enrollment projections steady? Low? High?
- Does the 2.45% and 2% increase in the education formula adequately meet your school district's needs? If not, what is still needed?
- Is your school district experiencing any staffing issues?
- Does your school district offer distance learning options?
- What is the most pressing issue facing your school district in the 2021-22 school year?

We look forward to a robust discussion during our Advocacy Tour meetings. This is the beginning of our legislative process. Watch your inboxes for dates and times of when we will Zoom into your MSBA Director District's virtual Advocacy Tour meeting. Visit [www.mnmsba.org/AdvocacyTour](http://www.mnmsba.org/AdvocacyTour) for more information.

## **You participated in the Advocacy Tour. Now what? – write a resolution**

Almost every school board member has experienced a conversation around the board table contemplating legislative requirements and as a result asked themselves,



- Be fully understood as a stand-alone statement.
- Contain a single issue.
- Be specific enough to get your point across, yet flexible enough to be relevant for the long-term.

### Background/Rationale

Recognizing that if your school district has a concern or idea, chances are other districts have contemplated or would like to see a change too. Understanding how the issue impacts school districts is very helpful. Background information can include:

- Commentaries
- Survey information
- Statistics
- Reports
- Analyses

Rationale statements should paint a picture of why the issue should be addressed by MSBA and what the “Be it resolved” statement is intended to address. The rationale should:

- Describe the problem or need for action.
- Explain how the “Be it resolved” statement will correct the problem.
- Address the timeliness or urgency, with its effects on school districts.
- Provide reasonable support in a logical order.

### I wrote my resolution. Now what?

Proposed resolutions should be submitted to [jebert@mnmsba.org](mailto:jebert@mnmsba.org) by Thursday, September 30.

Once received, each proposed resolution is researched further by MSBA’s Government Relations team. The resolution is then presented to the MSBA Board of Directors and then moves on to be debated and voted on by school board delegates at the Delegate Assembly meeting in December.

We hope you will get involved and help make a difference statewide. As school board members, you are the closest to the issues that affect our schools and students. You are in the best position to identify issues and help provide solutions.

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“If only we were able to...” or “Wouldn’t it be great if we didn’t have to...”. One of the most fulfilling and powerful privileges of membership in MSBA is the opportunity to participate in the policymaking process. Good grassroots policymaking begins when a school board or school board member, just like you, identifies an issue that needs to be resolved or a new idea to be considered, and submits a proposed solution to MSBA in the form of a resolution.

Authoring a resolution is a great way to get involved and create awareness of issues that need the attention of MSBA and the state policymakers – our legislators. During the legislative session, elected officials often ask for MSBA’s resolutions or policies because they respect who school board members are and what members think.

Writing a resolution is not difficult. However, there is a format and process that must be followed to ensure the issue is represented and recorded accurately. MSBA has created an easy-to-use form that can be downloaded or printed. Completed forms may be submitted until September 30 for consideration at the 2021 Delegate Assembly.

### What should my resolution statement be?

A resolution is a proposal that suggests MSBA take a certain position or action on an issue. Either individual school board members or the entire board may submit a resolution.

Start by asking, “Does the proposed resolution have a statewide impact?” “Does the proposed resolution help more than just my school district?” “Is the proposed resolution timely?”

### “Be it resolved...” clause

The “Be it resolved that MSBA urges the legislature to...” is the most important part of the resolution, since it will become the policy if adopted. A strong “resolved” statement should:

- State the topic and the desired action or policy.