Turning a New Page on Reading

2023 Legislative Session was a Mixed Bag for School Boards

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MSBA thanks Underwood High School Visual Art Teacher Jonathan Hartman for sharing his students’ art in this issue.

COVER ART: Dylan S.

Contact MSBA’s Bruce Lombard at blombard@mnmsba.org if you’d like to see your students’ art displayed in a future MSBA Journal magazine.
Fred Rogers, host of the PBS television show “Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood,” was a champion of kindness, compassion, and equality. He once wrote:

“We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It’s easy to say, it’s not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem. Then there are the people who see the needs and respond. I consider those people my heroes.”

Some days, the reality of “not my problem” prevails. Daily, we are barraged with stories of shootings, disputes, and racial unrest. Acts of kindness and compassion are overshadowed by tragedy and heartbreak. Yet, if we look into our districts, we will find innumerable acts of compassion and kindness and of people responding to the perceived needs. We will find students and faculty that have identified needs and taken action.

A few years ago, straight-line winds swept through Lake Crystal, causing significant damage. Trees were uprooted – and cars and roofs were damaged. As the football team assembled for practice shortly after the storm passed, the coaches announced that the team would be assisting with storm cleanup. The team members immediately pivoted and concentrated their time and energy assisting with the cleanup efforts. My heroes.

Recently, the LCWM student body listened to Emma Benoit speak about mental health issues and suicide prevention. Following the presentation, several students asked their counselors if LCWM could start a Hope Squad chapter. The Hope Squad is a peer-to-peer suicide prevention program with the goal of preventing suicide through public awareness and education, reducing stigma, and serving as a resource to those touched by suicide. Hope Squad members are nominated by their classmates and trained by advisors. This nationwide program that started in Utah has proven beneficial in reducing youth suicide. The counselors and students are moving forward with the project. The LCWM students recognized a need and identified a tool to address the issue.

Former baseball player Roberto Clemente offered the following challenge:

“If you have a chance to accomplish something that will make things better for people coming behind you, and you don’t do that, you are wasting your time on this earth.”

We never know when we will need assistance, but we all have the opportunity to make a positive impact on the lives of others. I am so proud of the students and staff that identified a need and worked together for the greater good. We can make a difference by recognizing and celebrating our local heroes, the students, teachers, and staff, who exemplify acts of kindness, compassion, and selflessness daily. Whether they know it or not, they have found ways of making things better for all of us and making sure that their time on earth is not wasted. As we get ready to welcome the students back to school, let’s remember to recognize our heroes.

Linda Leiding is MSBA President and a Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial School Board member. Direct questions to Linda at leidil@hickorytech.net.
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MSBA’s premier summer event is back with a new name. The Summer Leadership Seminar – formerly known as the Summer Seminar – is scheduled for Monday, August 7, 2023, at the Minneapolis Marriott Northwest in Brooklyn Park.

The theme of the 2023 Summer Leadership Seminar is “Learning to Read: The Science of Literacy.” Dr. Kim Gibbons – the Director of the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement at the University of Minnesota – will take a deep dive into literacy during her Opening Keynote address, “The Science of Reading: What Every Leader Needs to Know.” (See Dr. Gibbon’s preview article on Page 8 for details.)

Literacy will also be the focus of a literacy panel discussion (facilitated by Katie Pekel, Director of Educational Leadership at the University of Minnesota) and through an address from Closing Keynote speaker Eric Litwin.

Litwin is a best-selling author – known best for writing the first four books in the “Pete the Cat” series. See Page 10 for a short preview of Litwin’s presentation, “Early Literacy Immersion and Optimization!”

The Summer Leadership Seminar will also include important updates from MSBA staff members on policy and legislative issues and breakout sessions on timely topics. (See schedule on Page 11 for more information).

An Early Bird Session – “Civil Discourse and Dealing with Conflict” – will be held on the eve of the Summer Leadership Seminar from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday, August 6. Presented by MSBA staff member John Ward, this session examines what factors contribute to negative conflict and discusses some strategies board members can employ to get back to civil discourse which benefits students and the community.
MSBA is also offering three of its board member-oriented workshop sessions following the Summer Leadership Seminar. During the evening of Monday, August 7, MSBA staff will present the Learning to Lead — School Board Basics: Phase I Workshop. Great for both beginning and veteran board members, the Phase I Workshop covers the role of the school board, the role of the superintendent, the leadership team relationship, and common scenarios facing new board members.

Then, on Tuesday, August 8, MSBA staff will present the Leadership Foundations — School Finance and Management: Phase II Workshop and the Charter Board Member Workshop.

The Phase II Workshop — a state requirement for board members — covers core topics such as the budget, school finance, local levies, policies, significant laws affecting school boards, collective bargaining, and personnel issues.

The Charter Workshop offers all three state-required training components for charter school board members: Board’s Role and Responsibilities, Financial Matters, and Employment Matters.

MSBA members, please ask your school district office to register you in advance for these great learning opportunities. Please visit https://mnmsba.org/workshops-events/summer-seminar for more information.

Thank you to the MSBA Insurance Trust, InGensa, Marsh McClennan, Nexus, and PFM Asset Management for sponsoring the 2023 Summer Leadership Seminar.
The term Science of Reading has been at the forefront of recent literacy reform efforts, but confusion remains about how the term is defined. The most common misconception is that the Science of Reading is only about teaching students word recognition skills (i.e., phonics). In reality, the Science of Reading represents consensus from many related disciplines, including developmental psychology, educational psychology, cognitive science, neuroscience, and reading education about how students learn to read, what goes wrong when they are not proficient, and the type of instruction that works the best for most students.

Based on thousands of studies, supported by hundreds of millions of research dollars, and conducted across the world in many languages, the Science of Reading debunks methods of reading instruction (commonly referred to as “whole language” or “balanced literacy” approaches) built around two assumptions: (1) if children are read to a lot, reading will come easy for them; and (2) the teacher’s role is to guide students through setting up reading groups, reading with students, and helping them find books on their reading level.

The scientific community has achieved broad consensus on how children learn to read, what causes reading difficulties, the essential components of effective reading instruction, and how to prevent reading difficulties. The Science of Reading is not a single component of instruction, a one-size-fits-all approach, a political agenda, an ideology or philosophy, or a program of instruction. Rather, it is a body of evidence which clearly indicates that the best approach to reading instruction should incorporate explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, systematic phonics instruction,
methods to improve reading fluency, and teaching vocabulary and comprehension strategies. Researchers are no longer debating the importance of systematic, multyear phonics; word analysis instruction; and a large academic vocabulary.

One of the most research-supported models of reading is the “simple view of reading” (Hoover & Gough, 1990; Castles, Rastle, & Nation, 2018), which asserts that students need skills in two areas: (1) **decoding**, the act of reading each word in tests accurately and fluently and (2) **comprehending the meaning** of texts being read. While the simple view of reading does not specify how word recognition and language comprehension should be taught, it does make clear that the first task of a beginning reader is to learn how to decode words. Children need to be explicitly taught direct sound-spelling relationships following a systematic scope and sequence that allows them to form and read words early on. When children get off to a good start learning how to decode words, they can read the words they know how to say and begin deducing the meaning of words they have never heard before. However, many children have difficulty learning to decode without explicit and systematic instruction. Oftentimes these students get labeled as struggling readers.

Students who have difficulty with decoding and/or comprehension tend not to read much; consequently, they miss out on opportunities to learn the meaning of new words. Studies have estimated that fifth grade students who read at the 90th percentile encounter about 2 million words every year in text read outside of school, while students who read at the 10th percentile encounter just 8,000 words. The end result is often described as “the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer”: children who are still struggling with reading at the end of first grade rarely catch up to those who enjoy reading, read often and increase their vocabulary. It’s not uncommon for children who don’t learn to decode in the early grades to grow into adulthood without knowing how to read.

Good word recognition skills only make up half of the equation. Once students know how to decode, their ability to understand what they read is determined by their language comprehension. Language comprehension involves all the words you know the meaning of and understanding how language works. In addition, a child’s ability to comprehend what they read is linked to their prior knowledge. Some have speculated that the correlation between reading comprehension and family income stems from families with larger incomes providing children with a greater number and variety of opportunities and experiences that build knowledge of the world.

The Minnesota Read Act, passed into law during the 2023 Legislative Session, aims to improve literacy outcomes and implement the Science of Reading. During the MSBA Summer Leadership Seminar in August, I will unpack the Read Act and bring educational leaders up to speed on key elements of the bill that will support statewide literacy reform aligned with the Science of Reading, including:

- The process that will be used to identify core curriculum and intervention materials aligned with the Science of Reading;
- The most common literacy curricula, interventions, and assessments used across MN based on a study done by CAREI between March and June 2023;
- Approved assessments that align with the Minnesota Multi-Tiered System of Support framework and the Science of Reading;
- The approved professional learning that will be required of all reading intervention teachers, literacy specialists and other teachers defined in section 120B.12 by July 2, 2025 and to other teachers in the district (prioritizing special education teachers) by July 1, 2027;
- The instructional coaching and technical assistance that will be provided to districts through CAREI and MDE to ensure that knowledge gained from professional learning will translate to classroom observation; and,
- The support provided by CAREI and MDE on the MnMTSS framework during the upcoming school year.

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**Dr. Kim Gibbons** is the Director of the University of Minnesota’s Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI). Direct questions to Kim at kgibbons@umn.edu.
Closing Keynote Presentation

Eric Litwin: “Early Literacy Immersion and Optimization!”

By MSBA staff

During his fun “Early Literacy Immersion and Optimization!” presentation, author Eric Litwin shares how we help prepare early childhood students for successful reading instruction by immersing them in joyful and engaging early language and reading experiences throughout the day. This transforms our classrooms into “reading playgrounds” where children read along to, sing to, dance to, and celebrate sounds, letters, words, and texts.

Litwin will also explore how joyful engagement with language and reading helps promote social emotional wellbeing for our students.

Summer Leadership Seminar attendees will walk away understanding the importance of joyful reading experiences for all children and how to advocate for them in their districts.

Litwin is a song-singing, guitar-strumming, best-selling author who brings early literacy and music together. A former third-grade teacher, Litwin is the co-author of “The Power of Joyful Reading” and the original author of “Pete the Cat” (writing the first four books of the series).

Also, he has written “The Nuts,” “Groovy Joe,” and several other books. Litwin’s books have sold more than 13 million copies, been translated into 17 languages, and won 26 literacy awards – including a Theodor Geisel Seuss Honor Award.
Summer Leadership Seminar Event Schedule

All events will be held at the Minneapolis Marriott Northwest in Brooklyn Park

Schedule subject to change

Sunday, August 6
7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Early Bird Session: “Civil Discourse and Dealing with Conflict”
Presented by: John Ward, MSBA Associate Director of Strategic Governance

Monday, August 7
Summer Leadership Seminar
8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.
Opening Keynote — “The Science of Reading: What Every Leader Needs to Know”
Presented by: Kim Gibbons, Director of the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI), University of Minnesota

9:45 a.m. to 11 a.m.
MSBA Updates
Featuring: MSBA Executive Director Kirk Schneidawind (General Updates), MSBA Director of Legal and Policy Services Terence Morrow (Policy Updates) and MSBA Government Relations staff Denise Dittrich and Kimberley Dunn Lewis (Legislative Updates)

11 a.m. to noon
Literacy Panel Discussion: “Where Do We Go From Here?”
Facilitated by: Katie Pekel, EdD, Director of Educational Leadership, University of Minnesota
Panelists include: Kim Gibbons, Thor Didrickson (Roseau School Board Member and parent), Julie Domogalla (MSBA Board of Director and East Central School Board Member), and Melissa Sonnek (Roseville Area Assistant Superintendent)

Lunch will be served from noon to 1 p.m.

1 p.m. to 1:45 p.m. and then 1:55 p.m. to 2:40 p.m.
Afternoon Breakout Sessions (All five sessions will be repeated in second time slot)
- North Star Therapy Animals
- Assessment and Data Dashboard from the Minnesota Department of Education
- Fahrenheit 2023: Book Challenge, Censorship, and the First Amendment
- MSBA Idea Exchange
- Requirements of the World’s Best Workforce and Your Strategic Plan

3 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Closing Keynote — “Early Literacy Immersion and Optimization!”
Presented by: Eric Litwin, Best-selling Author

6 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Learning to Lead — School Board Basics: Phase I Workshop
Presented by: MSBA staff

Tuesday, August 8
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Leadership Foundations — School Finance and Management: Phase II Workshop
Presented by: MSBA staff

9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Charter School Board Workshop
Presented by: MSBA staff
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The 2023 Minnesota legislative session adjourned on May 22, with two hours to spare. The Legislature will reconvene on February 12, 2024. Already there is much speculation about what the DFL-controlled Legislature – also known as the “trifecta” – will have on their political agenda next year. MSBA is starting to look forward to our legislative platform for the second year of the biennium.

By now, you have heard the 2023 session characterized as “historic,” “transformational,” and the “end of gridlock.” The other side of the aisle might use phrases such as “government overreach,” “loss of local control,” and “new unfunded mandates.” Regardless of how the session outcomes align with your viewpoint, the truth be told, this session produced some of each. We will highlight some of each.

One thing can’t be denied: Minnesota started the session with a historic surplus of $17.5 billion. This surplus resulted in a historic increase in education spending of $2.5 billion for the upcoming FY24-25 biennium and $3.3 billion for FY26-27 biennium.

History was made in other areas as well. There were a record number of new bills introduced with over 6,700 in total – 3,342 in the House and 3,363 in the Senate. The 2023 Legislature was the most diverse ever, reflecting and implementing an unstoppable DFL agenda.

Now is the time to reflect, dust off our platform, and measure the session outcomes against our legislative priorities for 2023. MSBA was steadfast with three of our priorities, which do not reflect the entire scope of our legislative activity by any means.

**Priority 1: Increasing the General Education Formula**

Our top priority was to increase the general education formula, as it provides the most flexibility to school districts. We made a bold ask to increase the general education formula by 5 percent each year of the biennium and index it to inflation for stability in future
budgeting. Our request was realistic given the need. Our members said anything short of 5 percent each year would result in budget reductions and increased levies.

The Legislature responded with an increase to the formula allowance of 4 percent and 2 percent. Beginning in FY26, the formula will increase by the rate of inflation measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), with a minimum increase of 2 percent and a maximum increase of 3 percent. This is a significant win, as formula increases have historically fallen short of inflation.

Despite this historic funding, the reality is the formula increase in year two of the current biennium (FY25) falls short of what is needed to address inflation and short-term funding stability. We anticipate this will continue to be a priority during the 2024 legislative session.

**Priority 2: Decreasing the Special Education Cross-Subsidy**

Decreasing the special education cross-subsidy has been a top priority for MSBA and other educational organizations for years. Our voices have been heard, and we knew we had to continue the momentum gained last session to reduce the special education cross-subsidy. We made significant gains this year, increasing the aid factor from 6.4 percent to 44 percent for FY24-26. In FY27, the aid factor increases to 50 percent.

**Top Legislative Priorities Receive Significant Funding**

When the special education funding and the formula increases are added together, 54 percent of the FY24-25 education budget target was allocated to MSBA members’ top two priorities. Looking forward to FY26-27, 66 percent of the education budget target is already allocated to those two priorities.

**Referendum Renewal**

The third MSBA priority has also been part of our platform for many years. School boards have long asked to be on a level playing field with other local units of government. The Legislature responded this year by authorizing school boards a one-time renewal of an operating referendum previously approved by the voters.

**The READ Act**

There are times at the Legislature that MSBA is invited to participate at the ground level to collaborate on bill language. The READ Act was such a bill. The READ Act will transform the way districts teach reading in Minnesota and how colleges instruct new teachers to teach reading. A reading redesign was a universal priority. Governor Tim Walz and all four political caucuses supported this initiative, resulting in the following:

- Starting July 1, 2023, when a district purchases new literacy curriculum or other materials, it must be evidence-based.
- In FY24, $35 million in one-time money will be available to reimburse school districts for approved evidence-based structured literacy curriculum and supporting materials and intervention materials purchased after July 1, 2021.
- Approved reading screeners must be used for students K-3 within the first six weeks of the school year and again within the last six weeks of the school year. Students in grades 4 and above who are not reading at grade level must continue to be screened.

The READ Act requires school districts to provide teachers with department-approved training on evidence-based reading instruction. The state appropriated an additional $35 million to help school districts with the following:

- Train intervention literacy specialists by July 1, 2025, and other teachers by July 1, 2027.
- Employ or contract a literacy lead by August 30, 2025.
**Labor Bills**

There were, of course, bills at the Legislature that were not on MSBA’s platform. The 2023 session drew a multitude of labor bills. These bills were introduced in numerous committees and had strong support from various labor unions.

One of these bills made all unlicensed hourly school employees eligible for unemployment insurance for the summer months, effective May 28, 2023. We strongly advocated delaying the implementation date to allow districts to plan, react, and preserve summer school programming. However, the unions were blatantly opposed to delaying the implementation date, even by one month. After several bill versions, many that left funding for school districts out, in the end, we were successful in getting $135 million in one-time state aid to cover summer unemployment costs. These funds are available until June 30, 2027, or until funding runs out.

In addition, there is $64 million per year, starting in FY26, for special education summer unemployment insurance costs. Looking ahead, without additional funding or expanded levy authority, summer unemployment will become another unfunded mandate. School districts will be forced to use general fund dollars to cover the cost. We will address ongoing funding in the next legislative session.

After extensive bill tracking and multiple hearings in various committees, the final provisions of the Public Employee Labor Relations Act (PELRA) ended up in the Omnibus Jobs, Economic Development, Labor, and Industry Finance and Policy Bill. From an advocacy perspective, this one will be etched in our minds and the minds of others into the future. This bill clearly diminishes the role of locally elected school boards and administration. Unfortunately, it was clear that Governor Walz and the DFL majority had decided this was a high priority on their agenda – and the changes were going to pass.

Together, we fought this one every step of the way. MSBA members voiced their concerns in many ways, including through more than 5,000 emails to legislators asking them to retain local control and trust their locally elected school board officials. We appreciate all of you who contacted your local legislators. It was clear that your voices were heard. Several legislators read emails from their local superintendent or school board member on the floor and commented that they had received dozens of emails from their local school leaders.

The “terms and conditions of employment” have been expanded to include adult-to-student ratios in classrooms, student testing, and student-to-personnel ratios – these topics will now be subject to collective bargaining. “Number of personnel” was also removed from MS 179A.07, which defines inherent managerial policy – the matters that public employers are not required to meet and negotiate on. Like the changes in the “terms and conditions of employment,” this change weakens the local control of elected school board members.

There are other significant changes impacting probationary periods, negotiations and relationships unions have with their members.

**Paid Family and Medical Leave**

Over the past few years, and since the first days of session, we have been sharing information on Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML). We knew early on this was the year it was going to happen. The Legislature set aside $770 million as startup money to create this new statewide insurance program to provide all workers with up to 12 weeks of paid family leave and up to an additional 12 weeks of paid medical leave per year, with an annual cap of 20 weeks. Workers will receive partial payment of wages if they need to take time off because they have a baby, get sick or need to care for a loved one. Under the plan, workers and employers will split a 0.7 percent payroll tax that will fund the state program. Funding is not provided to cover the employer’s cost. Benefits and payments will start in 2026. It’s an expansive and expensive proposal.

**Earned Safe and Sick Time**

A much simpler bill that is now law is the new Earned Safe and Sick Time. Employers must provide all employees with one hour of paid sick and safe time for every 30 hours worked. Workers may earn up to 48 hours per year. Workers may carry over up to 80 unused hours from year-to-year starting January 1, 2024.

**Summary**

The DFL trifecta came into session with a list of at least 20 high priorities to pass this year. A few of those have been highlighted here. Was it a transformational, historic year? Were unfunded mandates imposed? There is probably truth in both. There are so many more bills passed with historic impact on school districts. Please see the 2023 MSBA Legislative Summary on the MSBA website for more details on the new provisions that passed and are now law.

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Denise Dittrich is the MSBA Director of Government Relations and Kimberley Dunn Lewis is the MSBA Associate Director of Government Relations. Direct questions to Denise and Kim at ddittrich@mnmsba.org and klewiss@mnmsba.org, respectively.
What motivates you at work?
The fabulous people I work with and the people we are privileged to support.

What were the last books you read?
“A Place Called Freedom” by Ken Follet, and “A New Kind of Diversity” by Tim Elmore.

What’s your favorite film of all time?
“On Golden Pond” with Henry Fonda, Katherine Hepburn, and Jane Fonda.

What song would you say best sums you up?
“What a Wonderful World” by Louis Armstrong.

What’s an essential part of your daily routine?
Breakfast with my husband, a morning latte, and time to prepare for the day.

What skill would you most like to learn?
So many! I want to learn to be better at rosemaling, playing the guitar, and learn to speak a foreign language fluently.

What makes you the most proud?
Our family and watching our grown children parent their children.

What was one new experience you’ve tried that was completely unknown or uncomfortable to you at the time you tried it?
Spelunking. I was afraid that I would be claustrophobic and worried about the absolute dark, but it turned out to be a great experience.

What was on your bucket list?
Traveling. I would love to go to the Galapagos Islands.

What song would you say best sums you up?
“What a Wonderful World” by Louis Armstrong.

What’s your favorite film of all time?
“On Golden Pond” with Henry Fonda, Katherine Hepburn, and Jane Fonda.

What book would you recommend?
“Annie Dillard: Pilgrim at Tinker Creek.”

What’s your favorite food?
I love seafood—especially crab—so my favorite meal is a seafood boil.

If you could only eat one meal for the rest of your life, what would it be?
I’m kind of a foodie, so this is a tough one! I would eat a meal that includes bacon, which is my favorite food.

What’s on your bucket list?
Traveling. I would love to go to the Galapagos Islands.

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Kinect Education Group is a women- and Black-owned diversity education organization that focuses on helping P-20 institutions learn more about how to create an inclusive learning environment. Our unique approach focuses on the critical diversity needs of educational institutions and presents opportunities to achieve belonging and inclusion. The changing demographics of our school systems makes creating a safe place for all students to learn a necessity rather than a nicety. Turn to us for strategic planning, school board training, continuing education for teachers and administration, and training tools for ongoing inclusion work.

A transformational difference

Kinect Education Group works with all members of the school community. From the playing field to the boardroom, you’ll find that we know how to help everyone learn about belonging and inclusion. Kinect ED has provided training for school boards, teachers, administrators, and students from coast to coast. We also provide critical problem-solving and intervention services. If you are faced with a trying situation that evokes an emotional response from your school community, turn to us to help you work through the strategies that will make your district stronger. Many districts use Kinect ED for customized training. Our three-step process involves diagnosing your
needs, implementing transformational educational programs, and providing an ongoing prescription for continued growth and development. Connect with Kinect ED to experience the difference.

“We were at a crossroads of conflict in our school and in our community. Kinect ED eased our anxiety by helping us see a clear path forward. The team that worked with our district was professional and really brought us together as an entire school community.” – School administrator in California

One size never fits all

The experts at Kinect ED understand that equity can be a scary word to some. We teach that equity is really like this: You can’t just provide shoes to everyone, you have to provide shoes that fit. We believe that each child has unique needs and that as school communities, we must meet those needs with specialized understanding and connections. To that end, Kinect ED offers the opportunity for school districts to engage in specialized learning and planning. Our trademarked Equity Rubric is just one of the tools in our toolbox. This rubric helps districts assess where they are and determine where they want to go as an inclusive learning environment.

You can also turn to Kinect ED for student-based training. Afterall, students are at the heart of why we all do what we do. Kinect ED has developed a specialized curriculum for teachers to use to help students learn more about respecting one another. Kinect ED will work with your teachers to help them learn more about how to create an inclusive classroom and leave them with a complete curriculum of how to help students learn what they can do to work as a team.

“I never realized how important involving students in belonging education would be in my effort to create a welcoming and inclusive classroom. The curriculum from Kinect ED had it all: learning goals, complete directions, reproducible worksheets, and processing questions. After a year of working with these belonging activities, I am so grateful for the difference it made.” – Middle school teacher in Minnesota

It’s a marathon, not a sprint

Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging work must be embedded into the everyday work of a school district. It can’t be confined to one single training or cultural celebration. The districts that have engaged in this work with Kinect ED understand the importance of weaving diversity and belonging into the fabric of the institution. Kinect ED understands that pushback is a reality, but we know that ALL students benefit from a district that is committed to the success of each student that is enrolled.

School board leaders play one of the most critical roles in student success. Kinect ED understands that school board leaders come from many different positions in their community. Some are experienced educators and others care deeply about the school system, but have little or no experience in school policy work. Our goal is to guide school board leaders along their journey to make policies that benefit all students. Some school boards call upon Kinect ED to provide singular training experiences that focus on self-awareness and team togetherness and others are looking for a long-term “consulting” experience. Kinect ED is focused on building inclusive connections that transcend peripheral training and dig deeper into building strong infrastructures that serve the entire community.
“I wasn’t sure what to expect from the Kinect ED training. Admittedly, I was a little apprehensive about something that seemed like another one of those diversity trainings. I was surprised at what I got out of our time with the consultants. Not only did I learn more about myself, but we came together as a team, and I know that we will make change and be better because of what we experienced together.” – School board member in Wisconsin

**Who we are and what we can do**

Now that you have a better idea of who Kinect ED is and what we do, consider how we can join your effort in creating an inclusive school community. Check out our training tools in our online store at www.kinecteducationgroup.com. Contact us to schedule a consultative meeting or book a customized training session at opportunity@kinecteducationgroup.com. Let us know if your district is facing a crisis by calling 507-271-5881. We are ready to assist you with all your diversity, equity, and inclusion needs.

Dr. Kelly S. Meier is a Senior Partner at Kinect Education Group. Direct questions to Dr. Meier at kmeier@kinecteducationgroup.com.

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**Stanton Adams Consulting and the Diversity Institute**

Stanton Adams Consulting and the Diversity Institute are leading organizations dedicated to promoting inclusive excellence in workplaces and communities. Founded by Cecilia Stanton Adams and her wife Malissa Adams – both renowned experts in diversity and inclusion – Stanton Adams Consulting has been driving positive change for more than 15 years. Their expertise lies in helping organizations cultivate diverse talent, enhance cultural competency, and establish inclusive practices.

With a deep understanding of the challenges faced by school districts and businesses, Stanton Adams Consulting offers tailored strategies, training, and practical solutions to help organizations embrace diversity and create an inclusive environment for all. From leadership development to talent acquisition and employee engagement, they assist in developing comprehensive DEI strategies that go beyond compliance.

Stanton Adams Consulting and the Diversity Institute are at the forefront of fostering inclusive excellence. Their comprehensive consulting services, research initiatives, and educational programs empower organizations and individuals to embrace diversity and create inclusive environments. With their expertise and unwavering commitment, Stanton Adams Consulting and the Diversity Institute pave the way towards a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive future.

Visit https://www.stantonadams.com to learn more about the Stanton Adams Consulting and the Diversity Institute.

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**YWCA Minneapolis**

YWCA Minneapolis helps organizations of all kinds — business, government, and nonprofit — transform performance through the power of inclusion. Inclusivity is the bedrock of any successful workplace, and is a guiding principle that nurtures understanding, opportunity, and harmony between employees. By appreciating the differences and commonalities of its people, your team can create a more productive, innovative, and positive work environment that drives better business results.

The YWCA Minneapolis’ Inc.lude™ Diversity and Inclusion Consulting empowers your organization to build more inclusive and productive workplaces for all your employees. Through diversity, equity, and inclusion training programs, the YWCA Minneapolis will work with you to help improve employee dynamics — delivering improvements to your bottom line in the process. Making a Difference.

Together, you and your YWCA Minneapolis diversity and inclusion consultant can craft a custom solution to achieve your organization’s diversity and inclusion goals, whether those include simple assessments or the development of new inclusivity initiatives.

Visit https://www.ywcampls.org to learn more about YWCA Minneapolis.
In March 2023, Governor Tim Walz and Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan appointed Dr. Stephanie Burrage to serve as the first Chief Equity Officer for the state of Minnesota and to build the Office of Equity, Opportunity, and Accessibility. This role was created to serve all communities across the state of Minnesota and to connect external stakeholders with state government partners for the purpose of achieving equity and opportunity for everyone. Dr. Burrage will be collecting input from community members and will make recommendations to the state’s leaders on budget, policy, and executive actions targeted at eliminating disparities across race, geography, ability, gender, sexual orientation, and economic status.

In this role, Dr. Burrage will work to advance state agency initiatives to address disparities in and outside of state government. This work is within her DNA as Dr. Burrage has been a leader in education with more than 35 years as a teacher, principal, and superintendent. Dr. Burrage has spent her career working and connecting with diverse communities in rural, suburban, and urban areas.

Prior to her appointment as Chief Equity Officer, she served as Minnesota’s Education Deputy Commissioner and helped lead an agency with more than 450 employees serving over 890,000 students in 554 schools. Dr. Burrage worked to promote educational policies and initiatives focused on closing the achievement gap with the mission of improving educational achievement for children from pre-K through grade 12, adult education, and library services. Dr. Burrage believes in providing all students with equitable access to high-quality programming immersed in academic rigor, supporting the social emotional development of the whole child, and providing students with multiple pathways to success. Her connections with community and families through meaningful conversations, amplifying their voices and advocating for a bold future for all can be seen through Mind, Body, and Soul™ Convenings.

The Mind, Body, and Soul™ Convenings started as a series of work sessions hosted by Dr. Burrage, connecting key leaders to discuss priority issues with Governor Walz, Lt. Governor Flanagan, and commissioners and leaders of key state agencies. Through the planning and implementation, the convenings have been an important way for the Office of the Governor to engage state agencies and leaders.

Since April 2022, each Mind, Body, and Soul™ Convenings included presentations on research, programs, and key policy items. Community members found the proposals and information to be comprehensive of important priorities covering topics interconnected to one another, including education (birth to adult education), business and workforce development, public safety, homeownership and affordable housing, children and families, and health.

Each session included rounds of small-group discussion where leaders – including Governor Walz, Lt. Governor Flanagan, and commissioners – participated as listeners. The feedback received helped shape budget proposals and policies focused on addressing disparate outcomes or innovation policy ideas in our state.

“I want to ensure Minnesotans are seen, heard, and represented in our government,” Dr. Burrage said. “Connecting communities and families through meaningful conversations, amplifying their voices, and advocating for a bold future for all is my most rewarding work.”

She is currently using the Mind, Body, and Soul™ Convenings in school and district settings and is working on expanding Mind, Body, and Soul™ Convenings to other community groups across the state of Minnesota.

Direct questions to Dr. Burrage at stephanie.burrage1@state.mn.us or Project Manager Nichol Sutton at nichol.sutton1@state.mn.us.
This year, MSBA has awarded two $3,000 scholarships to student school board members Danielle Dake, of Shakopee, and Zachary Groh, of Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton. Of the state’s 331 school districts, 126 have a student school board member to bring a student voice to the board table. A committee of MSBA Board of Directors narrowed 33 applications down to two winners for the Robert E. Meeks MSBA Student School Board Member Scholarship.

**Danielle Dake (Shakopee)**

Danielle credits her parents for teaching her how important it is to learn about issues in the world around us and how she could try to make effective change. Whether it was race, gender, or historical issues, all have an effect, and she wanted to see how she could help make change.

That led her to public service and into the role of a student school board member. Her work the past year earned her one of two MSBA Robert E. Meeks Student School Board Member scholarships.

**Empathy to see another point of view**

Though she’s not a Muslim, she has many friends who are. Some of them mentioned how tests fell on Eid and how tough it was for them to be at their best when they hadn’t eaten because of fasting.

“I put myself in their shoes and saw how that would be a big disadvantage,” she said. So, when other Muslim students reached out to her, she joined an effort to bring the issue to the Shakopee School Board and make Eid a holiday for the school calendar.

Danielle was the first student school board member that the Shakopee School Board had, so she had to develop what her role was going to be with the board. She established a student engagement committee to help bring information
Danielle is planning to attend Harvard University this fall. She was originally thinking about going into a health field. But as she looked into the majors, she is looking toward law and how that can impact global health.

“One thing serving on a board has taught me is that many of the issues surrounding health are based on policies,” she said. “To be effective, I have to know how those policies work. So, whether in health care or law, I’m going to focus on global health.”

A deeper understanding of what a school board does

Danielle said she really didn’t understand the complexities of public education and all the work that goes into ensuring a school runs smoothly — until she saw it up-close as a student member.

“Now, I comprehend the intricate process of becoming a school board member, how policies are approved and how they are created to benefit a district,” she said.

That understanding, she said, will help her as she goes off to college and continues her effort to make positive change.

A passion to work on global health issues

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Zachary Groh (Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton)

Zachary joined his board as a student school board member his junior year. He was expecting to be involved in adding input to the board as they made major decisions in the district. Instead, he saw the student representative giving a “student update” during the meeting and not being heard from again.

He worked with his board chair, Laura Seys, and the district set up an internship for him to work with Superintendent Jeremy Erler to see how he could increase student voice at the board table.
“Now, I’m able to give more input at the table on issues that affect students,” he said. One example was his push to have weighted grade point averages. And as the district looked for solutions when it lost its food service director, Zachary was there to give student input on what was happening with school lunches.

“I want them to feel that they can ask questions of me,” he said. At his request, the board also put him on some board committees.

Diving into learning about leadership

Zachary was selected to participate in a small Leadership Academy course through Riverland College. He met weekly to study and practice leadership skills and brought those skills to the board table.

“He is simply a person who gets things done and leads by example,” said Erler.

Seys said she met with Zachary to outline three projects he wanted the board to consider: a bigger student voice at the board table, honoring the class valedictorian, and implementing weighted grade point averages.

By the end of the year, all three of the goals were moved forward.

“Board members have begun asking Zachary his opinion when issues arise that affect the students, such as our lunch program,” Seys said. Zachary’s guidelines for a student board member will help future students who take the position.

She said Zachary was instrumental in bringing up concerns about weighted grading. Without it, students might be discouraged from challenging themselves and taking harder classes for fear that it will affect their grade point average. The board is still working on the issue and hopes to have a system in place for next year.

“I’ve been on the board for over 10 years now, and Zachary is the first student representative who has shown the initiative to participate and incorporate change,” Seys said.

Zachary not only shows leadership as a student board member, but he is also the president of the National Honor Society, Student Council, Future Farmers of America, and has earned an Eagle Scout honor.

MSBA Board Director Mike Pfeil said the selection committee was also impressed with his community work at the Rotary, Toys for Tots, the local nursing home, food shelf and community events like Hay Daze.

Zachary will be attending the University of Minnesota this fall in its honors program, hoping to earn a degree in entrepreneurial management.

Greg Abbott is the Communications Director for the Minnesota School Boards Association. To comment on this article, email him at gabbott@mnmsba.org.
Students on Board
Conference gives student board members a chance to network

By Emma Bute, Columbia Heights Public Schools Communications Coordinator

Columbia Heights Public Schools Board of Education has valued having a student school board member to hear issues from a student perspective.

Vice Chair Laura Palmer wanted to take that participation and input one step further by organizing a Student Board Member networking event for students across the Twin Cities metro area.

The Columbia Heights Public Schools Board of Education and Superintendent Zena Stenvik reached out to MSBA to bring students together for a first metro-wide networking event in April.

“As part of our district goal to elevate student voice, we were delighted to co-host with MSBA such a dynamic and impressive group of students,” Stenvik said. “It was a fun and interactive day which ended with a World Café-style conversation. We look forward to opportunities for this group of young leaders to gather again in the future.”

There was time for the students to work by themselves and with the adults present to come up with ideas for their schools and programs. Columbia Heights Public Schools Board of Education student representatives Anoosha Ali and Caroline Raleigh were involved not just in the event, but the planning and execution of the event.

“I am extremely fortunate that I was able to participate in and host this conference for student school board representatives,” Ali said. “I’m beyond excited to continue this type of networking because it made me realize that we are all working toward the same goal: equitable education across all districts in Minnesota. Meeting with students who are just like me gave me the courage and motivation to be more invested in the solutions to the similar issues that we all discussed.”

Raleigh said she liked to see how all the planning for the event turned into reality. “It was also cool to see students from all around the state are facing the same issues we are here in Heights, and see how they have/are planning on fixing them,” Raleigh said. “Lastly, I felt like I was able to make some genuine connections with other students in my same position in many different ways, not just being a board of education representative.”

The district had an opportunity to show off Blooming Heights Edible Schoolyard and Outdoor Classroom. School Agriculture Specialist Wes Nugteren talked about the importance of caring for the planet and how he discusses that with students during every lesson in the garden.

MSBA Executive Director Kirk Schneidawind reflected on the event, stating: “This was a great day for our student school board members from across the metro area to connect, learn, and share some outstanding ideas for future programs/training opportunities for these student leaders.”

In a World Café setting, the group talked about what their role was, what some of the issues the schools are facing, and brainstormed possible solutions – some that included:

• “Student-based” budgeting, instead of budgeting based on what is getting attention from parents.
• Meeting with legislators.
• Instagram accounts for the student body for outreach.
• And better preparation for student representatives.

Other school districts that had representatives present were Brooklyn Center Community Schools, Eastern Carver County Schools, Farmington Area Public Schools, Mahtomedi Public Schools, Minneapolis Public Schools, North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale Schools, Richfield Public Schools, and West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan Area Schools.

Emma Bute is the Communications Coordinator for Columbia Heights Public Schools. Direct questions to Emma at butee@colheights.k12.mn.us.
The Minnesota Healthcare Consortium, a coalition of seven Minnesota Service Cooperatives, provides hundreds of school districts, cities and counties with robust, flexible and affordable health care. In addition to a comprehensive health care offering, MHC offers a best-in-class spending account administration service, featuring industry leading return rates and account fees. Contact your local Minnesota Service Cooperative representative to learn more.

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What, it’s election season again? While many people think of odd years as “off years” for elections, 31 school districts across Minnesota will still be holding school board elections. And 2024 is just around the corner, with a busy presidential election that begins with early voting in January as part of the new presidential primary election in Minnesota.

The good news: the League of Women Voters is here to help! The League of Women Voters of Minnesota (LWVMN), founded in 1919, works through our 35 local Leagues representing more than 2,200 members throughout the state, to plan and conduct hundreds of candidate forums in local communities every election year.

Our trusted nonpartisan brand is respected as the “gold standard” for producing candidate forums that put the needs and interests of voters first, by ensuring that forums are fair, respectful, and address questions of top interest to the community – with no “gotcha” questions or political theater. The League’s forums are rooted in our strong nonpartisan tradition, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government, but always working on vital issues of concern to members, and the public. We believe voters are best served when they can be fully educated on the candidates and issues they are voting for. We train our moderators, and question facilitators and event planners to use proven best practices to conduct candidate forums that are successful for both voters and candidates.

Don’t have a League of Women Voters in your school district? The League is now able to partner with school districts to bring our trusted brand to your community, to help plan and produce a successful candidate forum with your candidates this fall. Our trained volunteer teams are ready to partner with school districts to make sure that voters have all the information they need, and that candidates have a neutral ground in which to share their views on how they would like to govern.

Unfortunately, many other platforms for candidate sharing often focus on political or ideological story telling. The League’s school board forums are designed to emphasize the
true roles and responsibilities of a school board member, where their decisions must reflect what is best for ALL students. As MSBA’s Running For School Board Brochure states, “school boards put the PUBLIC in education … and this demands a strong commitment to serving your community.”

I will confess, my commitment to ensuring all Minnesota communities have the benefit of hearing from candidates in a forum is personal. I served on my local school board for South Washington County Schools for five years. It was difficult and rewarding at the same time. But at the heart of it, it was humbling, realizing my decisions affected 19,000 students, 11 employee bargaining units, and 90,000-plus taxpayers. It was also a time for true leadership, and I worked with my fellow board members and our community to run four different levy and bond referendums in our district.

What I learned was that it was indeed my responsibility to make sure our schools were well funded. And it was also my responsibility to work with my fellow board members to make sure we were all fully educated on the issues ourselves, and that we were good stewards with our roles. It’s OK and even appropriate for school board members to help create a culture of service, collegiality, and governance on the school board. And one of the best ways they can do this, is by asking the district to support a candidate forum during elections, so that candidates have a neutral platform to share their vision for governance, and the public has an opportunity to ask questions that will help them make their voting decisions.

One last rah-rah for why you should work with the League of Women Voters in planning a school board candidate forum in your community: the forums can be taped by your district or local cable news channel, and made available to the entire community, on demand, throughout the election. This is a great equity opportunity, benefiting candidates and voters alike. Successful forums that are also taped and made available for future viewing were often viewed thousands of times in our previous forums, especially in communities without local newspapers anymore. We want to help you make that happen for voters in Minnesota! We can also connect candidates and your community to our Vote411 one-stop-shop voter guide at https://www.vote411.org/lwvmn for both voting and candidate information for elections across Minnesota.

Still not sure? Check out our dozens of linked candidate forums from 2022 at https://www.lwvmn.org/candidate-forums-2022, and local articles from just a handful of the candidate forums our local Leagues conducted throughout the state last year. We are also very open to working with other partners such as the Chamber of Commerce in your area to co-sponsor forums. Our brand and methods are tested, trusted, nonpartisan, and successful, and we hope to hear from you to start planning for this fall! Please email me at mwitte@lwvmn.org to discuss the possibilities!

- Brainerd: https://lptv.org/league-of-women-voters-helps-sponsor-forum-for-brainerd-school-board-candidates/

Michelle Witte is the Executive Director for the League of Women Voters of Minnesota. Direct questions about this article to Michelle at mwitte@lwvmn.org.

### School Districts with Odd-Year Elections

- Anoka-Hennepin
- Barnesville
- Bloomington
- Duluth
- East Central
- Edina
- Fridley
- Hastings
- Hinckley-Finlayson
- Holdingford
- Hopkins
- Inver Grove Heights
- Minnetonka
- Mounds View
- Mountain Lake
- Ogilvie
- Richfield
- Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan
- Roseville Area
- Rothsay
- Rush City
- South Washington County
- Spring Lake Park
- St. Anthony-New Brighton
- St. Louis Park
- St. Paul
- St. Peter
- Wayzata
- West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan
- Westonka
- White Bear Lake Area
Laws passed during the 2023 legislative session resulted in many changes that will impact school districts, including continuing contract/tenure.

Question: What is continuing contract? What is tenure?

Answer: Continuing employment for licensed K-12 teachers in Minnesota’s public schools is outlined in MS 122A.40 and MS 122A.41. MS 122A.40 addresses the “continuing contract” rights of all teachers in public schools, except those who teach for school districts in cities of the first class, which includes Minneapolis, St. Paul, Rochester, and Duluth. The tenure rights of those teachers are addressed in MS 122A.41.

The terms “continuing contract rights” and “tenure rights” are often used interchangeably.

Question: Do teachers have a probationary period?

Answer: Yes. A newly licensed teacher has a three-year probationary period. During this probationary period, school districts have considerable discretion on whether to renew a teacher’s individual teaching contract. Once a teacher completes three continuous years of teaching in one Minnesota school district, they have completed their probationary period. If the teacher leaves the school district after three continuous years, that teacher has a one-year probationary period with any subsequent school district.

Statute allows for this three-year probationary period to be interrupted for military, maternity, paternity, or medical leave.

Question: When does a teacher earn continuing contract/tenure?

Answer: Once a newly licensed probationary teacher completes three years of continuous employment, they have completed their probationary period. If the teacher continues employment for a fourth year, they have continuing contract/tenure with that school district.

If the teacher leaves the school district after three years of continuous employment and successfully completes a one-year probationary period with a new school district, they have continuing contract/tenure in the new school district if they come back to teach for a second year.

Question: Can a continuing contract/tenured teacher be terminated?

Answer: Yes. In some cases, staff reductions are necessary due to “discontinuance of position, lack of pupils, financial limitations, or merger of classes caused by consolidation of districts” (MS 122A.40, Subd. 10 and MS 122A.41, Subd. 14); when these reductions involve continuing contract/tenured teachers, they are called unrequested leaves of absence (ULA). Language that outlines the ULA process must be negotiated with the exclusive representative of the teachers; refer to your school district’s teachers’ Master Agreement for information on the process.

However, to terminate a continuing contract/tenured teacher for cause, a school district must abide by statutory process requirements. MSBA recommends that school districts work with legal counsel when considering termination for cause.
Question: Did the 2023 legislative session change the continuing contract/tenure process?

Answer: Yes. Laws passed during the 2023 legislative session changed what teaching experience can be credited toward completing the probationary period, shortened the number of teaching days required, and aligned the probationary period years of service language in MS 122A.41 with said language in MS 122A.40.

Prior experience: Prior to the 2023 legislative session, previous teaching experience in charter schools and school districts outside of Minnesota did not count toward completion of a teacher’s initial three-year probationary period. For collective bargaining agreements effective July 1, 2023, school districts must now consider teaching experience in charter schools and school districts outside of Minnesota when calculating a teacher’s probationary period.

Required number of days: Legislative action also reduced the number of days required for a year of teaching experience to count from 120 days to 90 days. School districts should keep in mind that, per statute, “days devoted to parent-teacher conferences, teachers’ workshops, and other staff development opportunities and days on which a teacher is absent from school do not count as days of teaching service” for the purposes of determining whether the year counts toward meeting the probationary period (MS 122A.40, Subd. 5(e) and MS 122A.41, Subd. 2(d)).

Alignment of MS 122A.40 and MS 122A.41: Prior to the 2023 legislative session, all teachers in public schools within cities of the first class had an initial three-year probationary period, regardless of previous teaching experience. Effective August 1, 2023, all teachers in public schools within cities of the first class have the following probationary period: the first three consecutive years of a teacher’s first teaching experience in Minnesota in a single district is deemed to be a probationary period of employment, and the probationary period in each district in which the teacher is thereafter employed shall be one year.

Tiffany Gustin is the MSBA Associate Director of Management and Insurance Trust Services. Direct questions to Tiffany at tgustin@mnmsba.org.
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Cole P.
School district policies, like laws, can be challenging to write and enforce. Of course, some are simple, clear, and objective. A rule requiring that an educator have a required license, for example, is relatively easy to determine (admittedly, one could conjure a remote situation in which even this becomes complicated).

As every school board member knows, objective and clear policies and laws may be rare when it comes to serving students who range from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade and their families. Individual circumstances are often key to determining whether intervention (including discipline) is necessary. Accounting for the facts in a specific case, however, can mean that the policy or law must be written in broad terms.

Dress codes represent an ongoing problem when it comes to the goal of creating clear rules while recognizing that the specific circumstances matter greatly. This analysis becomes especially complex in light of the fact that the First Amendment protects individuals’ right to express themselves through clothing. This right extends to students, provided that their clothing choice does not substantially and materially interfere with the educational process or violate a law or policy (such as those prohibiting obscenity, defamation, or discrimination).

An objective dress code policy is possible. Minnesota law permits school boards to adopt a uniform requirement for students (Minnesota Statutes 123B.36). Indeed, the word “uniform” illustrates that this approach requires relatively little judgment when it comes to enforcement.

Moving from a uniform requirement, school policies have historically tried to create objective, clear rules when it comes to the length of student clothing. This approach can be seen in the ruler test or “fingertip rule” with which many of us are familiar. In addition to the practical issues involved having school staff measure student clothing, the ruler approach addresses only length of clothing, leaving other dress code matters unanswered.

To respond objectively to non-length issues concerning student clothing, some school policies attempt to list the types of clothing that are not permitted. MSBA Model Policy 504 contains language that may suggest this route: the policy prohibits “‘Short shorts,’ skimpy tank tops, tops that expose the midriff, and other clothing that is not in keeping with community standards.” Even this is only a partial list, perhaps intended to provide some guidance on clothing that violates “community standards.” Clearly, it is a practical impossibility to list each and every type of clothing that would violate the policy.

The situation becomes more complicated as one turns to content that appears on the clothing itself, such as an image, a phrase, or other symbols. One cannot list the messages embedded within clothing that would offend community standards or be inappropriate. Again, the model policy offers broad parameters of inappropriate clothing content:

- Objectionable emblems, badges, symbols, signs, words, objects or pictures on clothing or jewelry
communicating a message that is racist, sexist, or otherwise derogatory to a protected minority group, evidences gang membership or affiliation, or approves, advances, or provokes any form of religious, racial, or sexual harassment and/or violence against other individuals.

In the end, dress code policies — like much of the law itself — must rely upon terms that invoke judgment and discretion. Some person or persons must determine whether clothing is inappropriate, violates community standards, is objectionable or derogatory, and so forth. It is better that the decision not use a subjective standard (“I find this inappropriate”), but rather attempt to use a broader perspective (which may be the intent of focusing upon community standards).

Ultimately, the goals are to ensure that the educational environment is free of substantial and material disruption and to maintain a safe environment in which students and staff are not subjected to harassment, discrimination, or violence.

Terence Morrow is the MSBA Director of Legal and Policy Services. Direct questions to Terence at tmorrow@mnmsba.org.
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