“The right to vote is the most basic right, without which all other things are meaningless.”

—Lyndon B. Johnson
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Message from MSBA Executive Director, Kirk Schneidawind

Every election is crucial, and this year’s will present new opportunities for our school boards and administrators. As in every election, education issues should be a primary consideration when voting. Newly elected legislators will be responsible for supporting public education and Minnesota’s 850,000 students through financial and policy decisions that impact school quality and stability. These officials will also work to reduce the persistent achievement gap by backing and initiating efforts like the Read Act.

As public education advocates, school boards must ensure candidates for public office understand the importance and valuable role our school districts play in the lives of our students, communities, and state. A dialogue built on mutual respect and understanding between school boards and legislators has never been more important. It is a core belief of our state’s school boards to ensure that our communities have a say in the way our schools are administered.

MSBA hopes the voter guide is another useful tool voters and school boards can use to be informed and supported as we enter the 2024 election. Our vision of “Strong School Boards, Stronger Minnesota” begins with our school boards advocacy efforts.

Take note - Vote!

Sincerely,

Kirk Schneidawind
Welcome
The Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) has created this voter guide to help our members actively participate in the upcoming election. Advocacy for education and public schools starts with elections and building relationships with those who are elected. Strong representation for our public schools is important in all levels of government. We strongly urge school board members meet with candidates, ask questions, and discuss the needs of Minnesota school districts. By getting involved, you can help ensure that Minnesota public schools and students receive the representation needed to thrive. Engaging with local candidates is crucial to obtaining the best possible representation. To understand where candidates stand on issues important to education, please refer to the questions for state and federal candidates listed on page 5 of this voter guide.

Make a Connection
One of the candidates in this election will soon represent your district as a lawmaker. It's crucial to engage with local candidates to obtain the best representation possible. Starting a discussion with candidates can take a variety of forms. Ideas include organizing a nonpartisan forum where community members can ask questions and candidates can build visibility or simply reach out and start a conversation around a few key questions you deem important. Elections present a valuable opportunity for school districts to forge new connections and strengthen existing ones. Below are a couple tools that can assist you in locating which candidates are running in your district.

Locate my district’s candidates
- Here is a list of candidates by district
- This tool can help you locate your district and polling places

What’s at Stake in Congress
From a national perspective, Congressional Republicans currently hold the majority of seats. In the Senate, Democrats and Independents who caucus with Democrats, currently hold the majority of seats with a narrow one seat margin. In contrast, the House Republicans hold a slim seven-seat majority. Additionally, the 2024 presidential election is on the ballot. These high-stakes elections have the potential to shift the balance of power significantly.
Federal House and Senate makeup

What’s at Stake in Minnesota

All members of the House of Representatives will be on the ballot in November. The Democrats currently hold a six-seat majority. If four seats were to flip from Democrat to Republican, the Republicans would gain the majority in the House. Due to a recent resignation, the Senate is currently tied between Democrats and Republicans. There will be a special election in that Senate district this November and whichever party wins will take majority in the Senate for the next two years.

State House and Senate makeup

By actively participating in the election process, you can help ensure that Minnesota public schools are well represented and supported at both the state and federal levels.
What is on my ballot in 2024?

All voters will have these races on their general election ballot:

- U.S. President
- U.S. Senators
- U.S. Representatives
- State Representatives
- Judicial seats

Voters may also have one or more of these races on their ballot:

- City officers
- School board members
- Township officers
- Local ballot questions
- District 45 Senate special election (Deephaven, Excelsior, Greenwood, Long Lake, Minnetonka Beach, Minnetonka, Minnetrista, Mound, Orono, Saint Bonifacius, Shorewood, Spring Park, Tonka Bay, Wayzata, Woodland)

Questions for state & local candidates

- Do you believe current funding levels for public education are adequate or inadequate and why?
- Would you be willing to add inflation on all general education formulas?
- Would you support lifting the cap on long-term maintenance facilities revenue?
- Would you support legislation to address student absenteeism?
- Are you familiar with the special education and English language cross-subsidies?
  - Are you aware of the specific cross-subsidy amounts in your school districts?
  - How would you propose eliminating the cross-subsidies in Minnesota?
- How would you support local school boards? Do you believe in their authority and local control?
  - Would you refrain from supporting statewide, unfunded mandates?
  - Will you support giving school boards the authority to reform and innovate student learning?
- What is your understanding of Minnesota’s student achievement gap and what measures will you as a legislator take to eliminate the gap?
- Do you support the use of public tax dollars for private education?
- Would you support utilizing the nationally recognized ACT exam as a substitute for MCAs?
Questions for federal candidates

- Would you support full funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)?
- Would you support funding rural broadband deployment to districts not currently meeting the FCC recommendations?
- Do you support legislation that uses federal funds to implement cybersecurity measures within school districts?
- Would you support legislation that addresses educator shortages and encourages workforce diversity?

Voter information

- **Absentee voting:** All registered voters can cast a no-excuse absentee ballot and vote from home in the August primaries and the November general election. Please note, you will need another registered voter or a notary as a witness. The application can be found at the following link: mnvotes.sos.mn.gov/abrequest/index
- **Early in-person voting:** Absentee ballots can be cast in person at the county office. This will occur 48 days prior up until the election.
- **In-person voting on Election Day:** Primaries are Tuesday, August 13, and the general election is Tuesday, November 5. In most of the state, polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Who can vote in Minnesota?

- U.S. citizens
- Individuals at least 18 years old
- Residents of Minnesota for at least 20 days
- Felons who have completed all parts of a sentence, including any probation, parole, or supervised release.

What do I need to register to vote?

Those who meet the above qualifications, may register to vote in Minnesota.

To register online, you will need at least one of the following:

- A Minnesota driver’s license
- A Minnesota identification card number
- The last four numbers of your Social Security Number
- Register to vote online here

To register by mail or in person:

- Send the paper registration to your county elections or Secretary of State office
- Complete a registration form at your county elections office
- Register in person on election day at your polling place
How do I vote absentee or early?
- June 28 through August 12 for the primaries and from September 20 through November 4 for the general election.
- Absentee ballots are online at the MN Secretary of State’s website or at your county elections office.
- Early voting is open during normal business hours. Additionally, locations offering absentee ballots for federal, state or county elections must be open:
  - The last Saturday before Election Day (10 a.m. – 3 p.m.)
  - The day before Election Day until 5 p.m.
  - This does not apply to school districts holding standalone elections.
- Some local jurisdictions may provide additional absentee voting days or hours beyond the above required days and times. Call your jurisdiction for more information.

Where can I vote?
- Every voter has at least one place where they can vote early in person with an absentee ballot.
- In person at your county election office.
- In addition to your county election office, some cities and towns offer in-person absentee voting. Check with your city clerk’s office for more information.

When can I vote?
The primaries are August 13th the general election is November 5th. Polls are generally open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. — towns with populations below 500 may not open polling places before 10 a.m. You should be allowed to vote if you’re in line before the polls close. Use the state’s voter information portal to find your polling location and hours. Every voter has at least one place where they can vote early in person with an absentee ballot.

Ways to get involved during the election
- Meet with legislators/candidates.
- Meet with school board members.
- Watch or promote the MSBA video on school board elections.
- Attend local candidate forums.
- If a candidate or campaign calls or knocks on your door, ask questions.
- Contact local candidates and ask for their positions on education issues.
- Stay informed during legislative sessions, and contact your representatives about issues you care about.
- Host a forum: This is a great guide on hosting a forum put out by the Wisconsin Association of School Boards.
**Election Resources**
Democratic Party Website: dfl.org
Independent Party Website: www.mnip.org
Republican Party Website: www.mngop.com

**Legislative Resources**
Minnesota House of Representatives: www.house.leg.state.mn.us/
Minnesota Senate: www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/
DFL House Caucus: dflhouse.com
DFL House Caucus: www.house.leg.state.mn.us/dfl/
DFL Senate Caucus: senedflcaucus.com
Republican House Caucus: www.mnhrcc.com
Republican House Caucus: www.house.leg.state.mn.us/gop
Republican Senate Caucus: www.mnsenaterepublicans.com
Republican Senate Caucus: www.senate.mn/departments/office_bio.php?office_id=1002

**Candidate Information**
MN Secretary of State: www.sos.state.mn.us/
Candidate Filings: candidates.sos.state.mn.us
League of Women Voters: www.lwvmn.org/

**Voter Information**
Vote 411: www.vote411.org

**Take note - Vote!**