

**Fw: [EXTERNAL]MTSBA Connect : 2021 MTSBA Membership Electronic Ballot**

Lacey Porrovecchio <lporrovecchio@bigfork.k12.mt.us>

Mon 7/12/2021 9:44 AM

To: Lacey Porrovecchio <lporrovecchio@bigfork.k12.mt.us>

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**From:** Tom Stack <tstack@bigfork.k12.mt.us>

**Sent:** Thursday, July 1, 2021 8:22 AM

**To:** Lacey Porrovecchio <lporrovecchio@bigfork.k12.mt.us>

**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL]MTSBA Connect : 2021 MTSBA Membership Electronic Ballot

This will need to be on the board agenda for July or August.

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**From:** Debra Silk via Montana School Boards Association <Mail@ConnectedCommunity.org>

**Sent:** Thursday, July 1, 2021 4:04 AM

**To:** tstack@clintoncougars.com <tstack@clintoncougars.com>

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL]MTSBA Connect : 2021 MTSBA Membership Electronic Ballot

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## MTSBA Connect

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2021 MTSBA Membership Electronic Ballot

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Jul 1, 2021 3:05 AM | [📎 view attached](#)

[Debra Silk](#)

### **2021 Ballot Montana School Boards Association**

To: MTSBA Member District Board Chairs  
From: Lance Melton, MTSBA Executive Director  
Re: Electronic Vote on Association Business  
Date: June 30, 2021

The Annual Meeting (held on June 10, 2021 virtually) is typically where the membership votes on the items that require a vote of the membership. Although we had great participation in this year's Annual Meeting, we did not meet the quorum requirements to conduct business of the Association.

The MTSBA Bylaws provides an alternative process for conducting voting on Association issues (other than at membership meetings) as follows:

*SECTION 7. VOTING BETWEEN MEETINGS OF MEMBERS. Voting at times other than at annual or special meetings shall be on ballots distributed by the Executive Director as authorized by the Board of Directors. Such ballots shall contain a full explanation of the question presented, shall indicate the number of votes to be cast by the member school district, shall instruct the manner in which the ballot is to be marked and shall be mailed to the chairperson of each member school board by the Executive Director at least thirty (30) days in advance of the deadline for returning the marked ballots. All ballots cast must be signed by the chairperson of the member school board and shall be tallied by the Executive Director. The results of the balloting shall be provided to the membership via mail and/or electronic means.*

*ARTICLE XII – CONDUCTING BUSINESS THROUGH ELECTRONIC MEANS. The Association may conduct any business via technology and/or other electronic means. Therefore, any reference in these Bylaws to written notice, mailings, signatures, distribution of information, conducting meetings or otherwise conducting any business of the Association shall be construed to specifically authorize such conduct in whole or in part through technological means. Such authority shall include but shall not be construed as being limited to: video and conference calls, electronic ballots, electronic meetings, and elections.*

The issues that require the MTSBA membership's attention at this time are as follows:

1. MTSBA Principles & Guidelines (NOTE: The Principles & Guidelines are voted on by the membership each year. Please review the Principles & Guidelines attached. The latest version of the Principles & Guidelines were approved by the membership in June 2020);
2. FY23 Dues Revenue Estimate (NOTE: This comes as a seconded motion of the MTSBA Board of Directors). Please review Lance Melton's memorandum (attached) providing your District with documentation of the estimate of revenue that will be generated by the dues formula for FY23, together with a recap of how dues are calculated.
3. Nomination of Scott Walter as MTSBA President-Elect (NOTE: This comes as a seconded motion of the MTSBA Board of Directors); and
4. Nomination of Tom Billteen as MTSBA Vice-President (NOTE: This comes as a seconded motion of the MTSBA Board of Directors).

The following is a live link for your Board of Trustees to cast its vote on these items:

[www.surveymonkey.com/r/...](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/...)

Below are the instructions for submitting your Board's vote on these issues:

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR VOTING ON PENDING ASSOCIATION MATTERS:**

1. Your Board should place these issues on your July or August meeting agenda(s), discuss the items referenced above and vote collectively on these issues. *NOTE: Again, be sure to review the attached memorandum providing background information on how dues are calculated and the FY23 Dues Estimates.*
2. Your Board Chair (or the Clerk of the District on the Board's behalf) must click on the link provided and fill out the ballot consistent with the Board Chair's directive. In that regard, you will need to provide:
  1. The NAME of your school district. *NOTE: DO NOT submit your District's Number,*
  2. The NAME of the individual submitting the ballot on the District's behalf. *NOTE: The individual submitting the electronic ballot on behalf of your District has to either be: (1) your Board Chair, or (2) your District Clerk;*

3. Fill out the electronic vote according to the position of your Board on each issue;
  4. Insert the Board Chair's name. By doing so, this constitutes and has the legal impact of your Board Chair's legal signature; and
  5. Submit your District's ballot.
3. Your District's electronic ballot needs to be submitted no later than **5:00 p.m., on Monday, August 16, 2021**. The link will be closed at that time.
  4. MTSBA will tabulate the electronic ballots submitted in accordance with the weighted votes of each District and inform the membership of the results of this vote on Connect2 on or before August 20, 2021.

Thank you!

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Debra Silk  
Assoc Exec Dir & General Counsel  
Montana School Boards Association  
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TO: MTSBA Board of Directors  
 FROM: Lance Melton, Executive Director  
 RE: Dues Revenue Estimate for FY2023  
 DATE: June 20, 2021

Pursuant to the MTSBA Bylaws, below is a dues revenue estimate for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2022.

**Requested Action:** The MTSBA Board of Directors is requested to approve the FY23 dues revenue estimate for presentation to our members for their approval through electronic ballot.

**Refresher Regarding How MTSBA Dues are Calculated:**

The MTSBA bylaws include a dues formula that is based on total current spending by each member three years preceding the year to which the dues apply. The lag between the year of spending vs. the year of dues to which such spending applies is to ensure that we are relying on audited data submitted by OPI to the National Center for Education Statistics.

The dues formula is largely sensitive to each member’s local funding, providing a decrease in dues when a member’s expenditures drop from year to year and providing an increase in each year when a member’s expenditures rise. If a member’s spending places them in one of the floors, caps or flat rates, the dues for such member change according to the total percentage change in expenditures by all members in the applicable year.

The percentage by which total current spending of all members increased from FY19 to FY20 was 1.71%. That inflation factor has been applied to all floors, caps and flat rates as well as to spending thresholds as required by the Bylaws.

The following is a chart that identifies the various assessment rates, floors, caps and flat rates as specified in the Bylaws. The chart below is in an adjusted form as specified in the Bylaws and is presented for your approval.

FY23 Dues Formula, Formula Change Per Bylaws				
FY20 Spending Low	FY20 Spending High	Assessment	Floor	Cap
\$0	\$392,605	Flat Rate	\$399	\$399
\$392,606	\$2,364,339	0.14%	\$399	\$2,609
\$2,364,341	\$4,716,230	0.11%	\$2,609	\$4,407
\$4,716,231	\$6,988,354	0.09%	\$4,407	\$5,422
\$6,988,355	\$11,049,867	0.08%	\$5,422	\$7,166
\$11,049,868	Above Floor, not 1 of 7 largest members	0.06%	\$7,166	\$14,013
Seven Largest Members	Flat Rate	Flat Rate	\$19,653	\$19,653
Coop Members	Flat Rate	Flat Rate	\$808	\$808

## **Estimated Dues Revenue Required by the MTSBA Bylaws:**

The MTSBA Bylaws provide that I am to “*estimate the financial impact of the formula above upon projected revenue from regular voting member dues for the Corporation in the subsequent year. In making such estimate, the Executive Director shall adjust the floors, caps and flat rates by the same percentage that spending of the membership overall has changed.*”

Once the revenue estimate is complete, it is subject to approval by the MTSBA Board of Directors. Once approved by the MTSBA Board, the dues revenue estimate is presented to the members for their approval.

For purposes of estimating the dues revenue for FY2023, I have used OPI’s data set for total current spending for FY2020, which reflects an increase in total current spending by our members of 1.71% from FY19-20:

- FY19 Total Current Spending = \$1,699,679,379
- FY20 Total Current Spending = \$1,728,694,784
- Growth in Total Current Spending, \$\$, FY18-19 = \$29,015,404
- Growth in Total Current Spending, %, FY18-19 = 1.71%

Pursuant to the Bylaws, I have estimated the impact of this growth on our existing dues formula by adjusting the floors, caps, flat rates and spending classifications by 1.71% and by applying the Bylaws-adjusted formula to total current spending of the members from FY20.

On the basis of these referenced calculations, I estimate that MTSBA dues revenue would increase under the adjusted formula by approximately \$20,026, from \$1,054,575 in FY22 to \$1,074,587 in FY23.

1. The increase in dues represents approximately 0.4% of MTSBA’s budgeted revenues for FY22 and this increase, if approved, will help MTSBA meet the inflationary costs of operation in FY23 and continue to provide expanded dues based services to our members.
2. This projected increase represents estimated membership dues revenue growth of 1.9% and is based on 100% member retention and no member consolidating, dissolving, or quitting between now and FY23.
3. Provided that we experience average growth in overall revenues from FY22 to FY23, I estimate that the FY23 dues will represent approximately 21% of overall revenues.

## **Placing Dues in Context:**

The large majority, 79% of what we do, is funded through revenues other than dues. At approximately 21% of our \$5 million overall budget, our dues are among the lowest in the nation in terms of the percentage of revenues.

We have approximately \$1.7 million in expenses that don’t generate any revenues for MTSBA, and dues help pay for programs that do not generate revenues but that provide tremendous value for our members. Examples of the categories of expense that do not generate revenues include the cost of operating the MTSBA Board and engaging in NSBA, member outreach, the cost of

owning and operating the building, advocacy before the Legislature and Congress and the cost of corresponding staff that do not generate revenues but who provide valuable services that are core to our Mission. We make up the several hundred thousand dollar gap between dues revenue and non-revenue generating expenses through fees generated by voluntary member selection of MTSBA services, royalties, and contracts with our Insurance Programs that provide our members with access to extensive fee-free services, all of which have been extensively documented and transparently outlined to our members in the membership value infographic.

If you have any questions, please let me know. We will be working with the MTSBA Officers to determine how best to seek your approval of this dues revenue estimate, which will occur either through a Zoom meeting of the board or an electronic ballot, at the discretion of the officers.

Thank you in advance for reviewing this memo and let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lance Melton", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lance Melton, Executive Director

## **PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES**

**(as approved by the MTSBA Membership in June 2020)**

*The purpose of this document is two-fold. First, it is intended to provide a framework of governance for school districts throughout Montana. You, as school board trustees, can review these principles and guidelines and use them as a starting point for conducting business that fully develops the educational potential of each child in your district. Secondly, this document identifies key advocacy issues that MTSBA will pursue on behalf of trustees, school districts, and each student in Montana in the pursuit of educational excellence.*

### **Principle I**

**School boards should align their efforts and activities with the goal of fully developing the educational potential of all the state's citizens.**

#### **Relevant Guidelines for School Boards:**

School boards should:

1. Practice Excellence in Governance. MTSBA recommends consideration of the Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards, which is included as Appendix A of this document. Briefly summarized:
  - a. Set high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and set clear goals toward that end.
  - b. Develop strong, shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students to learn and achieve.
  - c. Focus on accountability through policy, not through micro-management.
  - d. Collaborate, communicate, and engage freely with staff and community members to set and achieve district goals.
  - e. Understand data and use it to drive improvement.
  - f. Promote professional development of administrators and staff even in the midst of financial challenges.
  - g. Ensure that the board and superintendent share the same vision of excellence and achievement.
  - h. Make individual and whole-board training a priority to build shared knowledge, values, and commitment toward excellence in education.
2. School boards should remain focused on the interests of children, including student achievement, in carrying out their statutory obligation to collectively bargain in good faith with their public employees in compliance with 39-31-305, MCA. Maintaining a focus on the interests of students will help ensure that limited resources are used in the most effective and efficient manner possible in pursuing the full development of each student's educational potential.
3. Employ staff who are highly qualified and engaging.
4. Embrace the concept of differentiated learning for all students. Meet each child on his or her own terms to ensure student success.

5. Create a safe environment for all that is conducive to learning, free from bullying, harassment, and intimidation.
6. Encourage and welcome parental and family involvement to help understand each child's needs.
7. Advocate in every possible manner the need for adequate school funding.

Relevant Guidelines for MTSBA Activities:

MTSBA must:

1. Advocate for adequate, rational funding for schools, sufficient to allow school districts to meaningfully comply with and provide an education worthy of the definition of the basic system of free quality schools in 20-9-309, MCA.

## **Principle II**

**School boards should recognize the shared authority for education between the community, locally elected school boards, the Montana Board of Public Education, and the Legislature.**

Relevant Guidelines for School Boards:

School boards should:

1. Strongly encourage the preservation of locally-made decisions within the community, rather than a "one-size-fits-all" approach from the state or federal government.
2. Conscientiously use local, state, and federal resources to successfully educate students.
3. Engage, educate, and enlist the support of community members regarding the public schools' charge of fully developing the educational potential of each child.

Relevant Guidelines for MTSBA Activities:

MTSBA must:

1. Advocate for preservation of decision-making at the local, community level.
2. Support and advocate for proper exercise of the Board of Public Education's and the Legislature's respective authority. The Board of Public Education is to exercise "general supervision" over the basic system of free quality schools, which should be exercised in a manner that does not intrude on the more specific and expansive authority of elected school boards to "supervise and control" education in each community. The Legislature is to define the basic system of free quality schools and fund it rationally, recognizing the Board of Public Education's accreditation standards as the foundation upon which the basic system of free quality schools is built.
3. Advocate for and enforce the constitutional guarantee and requirement that all publicly funded K-12 education in Montana be supervised and controlled by

publicly elected school boards as required by Article X, Section 8 of the Montana Constitution.

### **Principle III**

**School boards should ensure Equal Educational Opportunity for all students.**

*Relevant Guidelines for School Boards:*

School boards should:

1. Ensure that all students have full access to the programs and resources of their school district.
2. Position every child to succeed, regardless of any special circumstances.

*Relevant Guidelines for MTSBA Activities:*

MTSBA must:

1. Work to provide adequate and equitable funding so that local boards can provide student access to programs and services.

### **Principle IV**

**School boards should recognize and commit to the preservation of the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians.**

*Relevant Guidelines for School Boards:*

School boards should:

1. Implement and maintain programs to preserve and educate regarding the cultural heritage and language of American Indian peoples and tribes.
2. Collaborate with American Indian peoples and tribes to ensure that educational programming is culturally accurate and relevant and in harmony with the corresponding efforts of tribal governments, education departments and tribal colleges.

*Relevant Guidelines for MTSBA Activities:*

MTSBA must:

1. Work to provide adequate funding for and state-wide commitment to Indian Education for All.
2. Recognize the negative impact that concentrated poverty can have on cultural preservation and pride and advocate for legislation to address and mitigate these negative impacts, including but not limited to advocacy for resources to address poverty, such as impact aid legislation.

## **Principle V**

**School boards should preserve the separation of Church and State.**

*Relevant Guidelines for Trustees:*

School boards should:

1. Ensure an appropriate balance between freedom of religion and avoidance of endorsement of a particular religion.
2. Comply with the test set forth in *Lemon v. Kurtzman* (1971) in addressing issues of religion in the public schools:
  - a. The action of the district must have a secular purpose.
  - b. The primary effect of the district's action must neither advance nor inhibit religion; and
  - c. The action must not excessively entangle the district in religion.

*Relevant Guidelines for MTSBA Activities:*

MTSBA must:

1. Oppose vouchers, tuition tax credits, and other forms of proposed direct or indirect support for sectarian education that MTSBA believes violates Article X, Section 6 of the Montana Constitution.
2. Advocate for continued support of religious freedom.

## **Principle VI**

**School boards should work to collaborate, solve challenges and resolve disagreements with other school boards locally whenever possible.**

*Relevant Guidelines for Trustees:*

School boards should:

1. Recognize the shared bond among and autonomous authority of area school boards in exercising supervision and control of their respective school districts pursuant to Article X, Section 8 of the Montana Constitution;
2. Recognize the value of outreach to and collaboration among area school boards and school districts;
3. Recognize and respect the potential for divergence in the interests of different area school boards when each are exercising supervision and control of their respective school districts;
4. Recognize the dilution of effectiveness in MTSBA's advocacy when based on simple majorities rather than broad consensus among member school boards.
5. Ensure open lines of communication among the constitutionally empowered trustees in areas throughout the state.
6. Work to resolve differences among area school boards and school districts through local solutions whenever possible.

7. Work to isolate the impact of division among school districts in a given area on overall unity and resulting effectiveness within and among state associations representing local school boards and their staff.

*Relevant Guidelines for MTSBA Activities:*

MTSBA must:

1. Understand, respect and equitably balance the interests of its member school boards while ensuring that the voices of all its members are heard and acknowledged in MTSBA's advocacy.
2. Maintain a focus on and reserve its resources to address issues of statewide impact and concern in its advocacy and maintain neutrality on issues of limited statewide impact that divide its members. When issues of limited statewide impact involve division among its members, MTSBA advocacy must be limited to providing information to all of its affected members on an equitable and neutral basis.
3. Identify and attempt to resolve division within the membership whenever possible through neutral facilitation of dialogue and transparent provision of information to its members.

## **Appendix “A” To MTSSBA’s Principles and Guidelines Eight characteristics of effective school boards: At a glance**

What makes an effective school board – one that positively impacts student achievement? From a research perspective, it’s a complex question. It involves evaluating virtually all functions of a board, from internal governance and policy formulation to communication with teachers, building administrators, and the public.

But the research that exists is clear: boards in high-achieving districts exhibit habits and characteristics that are markedly different from boards in low-achieving districts. So what do these boards do? Here are eight characteristics:

1. **Effective school boards commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and define clear goals toward that vision.** Effective boards make sure these goals remain the district’s top priorities and that nothing else detracts from them. In contrast, low achieving boards “were only vaguely aware of school improvement initiatives” (Lighthouse I). “There was little evidence of a pervasive focus on school renewal at any level when it was not present at the board level,” researchers said. (Lighthouse I)
2. **Effective school boards have strong shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students and their ability to learn, and of the system and its ability to teach all children at high levels.** In high-achieving districts, poverty, lack of parental involvement and other factors were described as challenges to be overcome, not as excuses. Board members expected to see improvements in student achievement quickly as a result of initiatives. In low-achieving districts, board members frequently referred to external pressures as the main reasons for lack of student success. (Lighthouse I)
3. **Effective school boards are accountability driven, spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement.** In interviews with hundreds of board members and staff across districts, researchers Goodman, Fulbright, and Zimmerman found that high-performing boards focused on establishing a vision supported by policies that targeted student achievement. Poor governance was characterized by factors such as micro-management by the board.
4. **Effective school boards have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community and establish a strong communications structure to inform and engage both internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals.** In high-achieving districts, school board members could provide specific examples of how they connected and listened to the community, and school board members received information from many different sources, including the superintendent, curriculum director, principals and teachers. Findings and research were shared among all board members. (Lighthouse I; Waters and Marzano) By

comparison, school boards in low-achieving districts were likely to cite communication and outreach barriers. Staff members from low-achieving districts often said they didn't know the board members at all.

5. **Effective school boards are data savvy: they embrace and monitor data, even when the information is negative, and use it to drive continuous improvement.** The Lighthouse I study showed that board members in high-achieving districts identified specific student needs through data, and justified decisions based on that data. Board members regularly sought such data and were not shy about discussing it, even if it was negative. By comparison, board members in low-achieving districts tended to greet data with a "blaming" perspective, describing teachers, students and families as major causes for low performance. In these districts, board members frequently discussed their decisions through anecdotes and personal experiences rather than by citing data. They left it to the superintendent to interpret the data and recommend solutions.
6. **Effective school boards align and sustain resources, such as professional development, to meet district goals.** According to researchers LaRocque and Coleman, effective boards saw a responsibility to maintain high standards even in the midst of budget challenges. "To this end, the successful boards supported extensive professional development programs for administrators and teachers, even during times of [fiscal] restraint." In low-achieving districts, however, board members said teachers made their own decisions on staff development based on perceived needs in the classroom or for certification.
7. **Effective school boards lead as a united team with the superintendent, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust.** In successful districts, boards defined an initial vision for the district and sought a superintendent who matched this vision. In contrast, in stagnant districts, boards were slow to define a vision and often recruited a superintendent with his or her own ideas and platform, leading the board and superintendent to not be in alignment. (MDRC/Council of Great City Schools)
8. **Effective school boards take part in team development and training, sometimes with their superintendents, to build shared knowledge, values and commitments for their improvement efforts.** High-achieving districts had formal, deliberate training for new board members. They also often gathered to discuss specific topics. Low-achieving districts had board members who said they did not learn together except when the superintendent or other staff members made presentations of data. (Lighthouse I; LFA; LaRocque and Coleman)

Though the research on school board effectiveness is in the beginning stages, the studies included in this report make it clear that school boards in high-achieving districts have attitudes, knowledge and approaches that separate them from their counterparts in lower-achieving districts. In this era of fiscal constraints and a national environment focused on accountability, boards in high-performing districts

can provide an important blueprint for success. In the process, they can offer a road map for school districts nationwide.

## **Appendix “B” To MTSBA’s Principles and Guidelines References for MTSBA Principles & Guidelines**

### Principle I --

- Montana Constitution, Article X, section 1
- Core Purpose of MTSBA, Strategic Plan
- Core Purpose of the basic system of free quality schools, K-12 Vision Group

### Principle II –

- Montana Constitution, Article X, Section 8, elected trustees
- Montana Constitution, Article X, Section 9, Board of Public Education
- Core Values, MTSBA
- Core Values, K-12 Vision Group

### Principle III –

- Montana Constitution, Article X, Section 7
- MTSBA Core Values (balance in treating and addressing needs of members)

### Principle IV –

- Montana Constitution, Article X, Section 1(2)
- MTSBA Core Values
- K-12 Vision Group Core Values

### Principle V –

- Montana Constitution, Article X, Section 6 (applies to school districts, the state and public corporations)
- MCA, 20-5-109
- Lemon v. Kurtzman (1971)
- Kaptein v. Conrad

### Principle VI –

- Montana Constitution, Article X, Section 8, elected trustees
- MTSBA Core Value: “Understanding, respecting and equitably balancing the interests of every public school system in Montana.”
- MTSBA Board of Directors Goal Area 1 - Engaged and United Advocacy for Increased Student Achievement.
- Objective 2: We will increase member unity on key advocacy initiatives.