Association of Metropolitan School Districts

One Voice initiative Questions/Answers

Do you have further information from the Gallup Poll that is cited in the handout? What are the specific issues that are driving the reduced support for public schools? What is the gap? The Gallup Poll is a national poll. Do we know if support has dropped as much in Minnesota? Perhaps Bill Morris and Peter Leatherman have some recent data on this?

The specific data point referenced in the presentation is from Gallup's annual rating of 31 aspects of the country, showing national satisfaction and dissatisfaction levels. The figure originally listed as 21% needs to be updated to 24%, reflecting the most recent 2025 data[1].

When reviewing this data and other national indicators, several important trends emerge:

Perception Gap: Gallup has consistently found that Americans rate public education nationally more negatively than they rate their local schools. This discrepancy is attributed to the influence of negative media coverage and a widespread perception that

1. public education is failing across the country—even when individuals report more positive experiences in their own communities.

National Satisfaction Levels: In a related Gallup measure, 43% of Americans say they are either somewhat or completely satisfied with K–12 education in the United States. While still under 50%, this reflects a nuanced and somewhat improved view

[1]See chart on last page of document.

2. from previous years. Gallup also notes that concerns about physical safety remain a significant driver of parental concern about public education.

Link to Gallup study: Americans' View of K-12 Education Improves From 2023 Low

Link to Pew survey/study: *https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/04/04/about-half-of-americans-say-public-k-12-education-is-going-in-the-wrong-direction/*

From a **Minnesota-specific perspective**, the 2024 Morris-Leatherman statewide survey highlighted key findings:

- 9% more respondents believe the quality of public schools in Minnesota has declined over the past three years.
- 8% fewer respondents say they trust school board decision-making compared to three years ago.
- Only 44% of respondents indicated they would support a property tax increase for their local public schools.

*Link to full survey:*amsd.org/shared-files/13346/

In summary, while public perception of schools in Minnesota remains stronger than national sentiment, the data still reflects a downward trend in support for public education both statewide and nationally.

One of the goals listed is to increase legislative support for public school funding. Will the campaign focus be broadly on enhancing public school funding or will more specific legislative goals be developed? If so, how will those specific goals be determined?

The short- and mid-term goals of the program are broadly centered on strengthening support for public education in Minnesota, with a particular emphasis on enhancing public school funding and no specific legislative goals. These goals will be advanced through several key strategic approaches:

- **Demonstrating the economic value of strong public schools** by highlighting their critical role in workforce development, community stability, and the long-term prosperity of the state.
- **Engaging legislators through localized outreach**, including strategic press coverage and community-based programming that showcases the successes and positive impacts of their local public schools.
- **Building public trust and awareness** by amplifying accurate, positive narratives about public education through earned media, social media, and community engagement efforts.
- **Establishing strong partnerships with business, civic, and nonprofit leaders** to create a broad coalition in support of increased and sustainable public school investment.
- **Monitoring public opinion and providing data-informed messaging** to align communications with evolving perceptions, concerns, and values of Minnesota residents.

While the program may eventually support or align with specific legislative goals, that is not a current strategic priority. Any pursuit of direct legislative action would need to be considered a potential offshoot of the broader strategy and organizational structure. At this stage, the focus remains on building awareness, public will and building the groundwork for political readiness to support long-term improvements in public education funding and perception.

Will the campaign include a targeted effort to build support in the business community?

Yes, absolutely. Businesses in Minnesota must be key supporters—and advocates—of strong public schools. A well-educated workforce is foundational to the state's long-term economic competitiveness, talent development, and community vitality. Public education is not only a social good; it is also a direct economic investment.

While deep engagement with the business community is likely to become a more central focus in the second year of the initiative, laying the groundwork for these relationships should begin early. In year one, the program can identify potential champions in the business sector, begin informal conversations, and explore shared goals around workforce readiness,

innovation, and community development. The Minnesota Business Partnership and Chamber are two options

The toolkits- are these templates that districts then fill in the data from their district or will have the data for each district be preloaded?

The tool kits will be prefilled with state level data, but will not be prefilled with district level data, as it would be hard to find a common set of data points that are favorable to all districts in the state. However, it is important to work together to figure out what district data can be useful, how district data can be deployed in a useful way, and how One Voice can help facilitate this.

Can a district modify the template- add or delete sections/content? Customized metrics?

The sample newsletter shared was simply one example of the type of communication that could be created for individual districts. We're excited to further explore what formats, and content would be most useful and impactful for each district's unique needs.

We're not limited to a single style of newsletter or marketing piece and are open to developing a set of materials that best support local goals and priorities.

Would you be open to adding a guest article in the MSBA magazine benefit to the founding five?

Absolutely.

Will the quarterly meetings involve decision making or will MSBA retain decision making authority?

Yes and no. We envision these meetings as opportunities for strategic discussions focused on budget priorities, overarching goals, and the broader approach to programming and communications. These sessions are intended to engage stakeholders in meaningful dialogue about direction, priorities, and overall strategy.

While we absolutely value feedback and input, we would intentionally avoid group decision-making on specific marketing pieces or tactical communications. The creative and production process for those materials requires flexibility, timeliness, and alignment with broader messaging goals that may not be suited to a group-approval format.

That said, we do plan to share drafts and key themes for input when appropriate, particularly when they have broad application or require alignment across entities. Our goal is to strike the right balance: ensuring transparency and collaboration at the strategic level, while maintaining efficiency and consistency in execution.

Is Education Minnesota being considered as a partner?

At this point a final decision has not been made. We have had preliminary conversations about our initiative with EM, but we have not sought an official partnership.

MSBA has led the One Voice initiative for nearly a full school year. What key insights or learnings have emerged that you believe will most benefit the initiative as it moves forward?

The first year of the One Voice initiative can best be described as a period of internal foundational work, preparing for a broader launch to partners and audiences. During the first six months, we focused on strategic development in collaboration with our governing board and team, culminating in the concept introduction at our annual January leadership conference.

Given the significant investment MSBA is making in this initiative, we recognized the importance of first ensuring our own association's excitement and alignment around the concept. After gathering feedback and closely examining the program's goals, we concluded that before expanding to a wider audience, it was crucial to pause, refine, and recalibrate our approach to maximize impact and reach.

During this phase, we made three key strategic shifts:

- We transitioned from a focus on collecting and sharing videos and testimonials to a comprehensive marketing strategy. This new approach includes defined target audiences, integrated statewide messaging, and district-level support.
- We developed a new brand concept and identity, broadening and better articulating the vision of One Voice.
- We expanded our focus from primarily board members and administrators to a broader emphasis on students and the value of our public schools.

Additionally, we recognize that One Voice is a comprehensive and essential program that will require strong partnerships and collaborative effort to ensure its success.

Financial Investment and Decision-Making

How will decisions be made regarding the financial contributions or investments from partner organizations that join the One Voice initiative? Will there be a shared governance model, and how will transparency be ensured?

From a transparency perspective, all One Voice funds—including both investments and expenditures—will be maintained in a dedicated, separate account to ensure clear and accurate financial tracking. A comprehensive list of all expenditures will be provided to investors on a quarterly basis (or more frequently upon request) to promote openness and accountability.

In addition, organizations participating as part of the "Founding Five" model will be invited to quarterly meetings. During these meetings, these organizations will have the opportunity to review and discuss the overarching strategy and provide input on key areas, including concepts, approaches, priorities, and the overall direction of the initiative. Their feedback and insights will be highly valued and thoughtfully considered to ensure that the initiative remains inclusive and responsive to diverse perspectives.

It's important to also note that while financial contributors will have the opportunity to review ideas and provide feedback, decision-making authority regarding operations and implementation will rest with the team implementing the programming. This approach allows for meaningful engagement and transparency while maintaining a clear and streamlined decision-making process to ensure the initiative's goals and vision are effectively realized.

We've heard mention of a communications toolkit to help school districts engage with and promote the One Voice initiative. Can you share what components you envision this toolkit including (e.g., messaging templates, graphics, FAQs, talking points), and how it will be distributed?

The One Voice communications toolkit is currently in the conceptual development stage, but several key components are already under discussion. At a minimum, the toolkit will include messaging templates, branded graphics, talking points, and frequently asked questions (FAQs) designed to help districts effectively communicate the value they are bringing to their individual communities.

Beyond these essential components, there are numerous additional ideas under consideration to broaden the toolkit's impact and adaptability. These may include billboard designs and placements, sample newspaper articles

tailored for local media outlets, data visualization tools and support for data-driven messaging, customized social media images and templates, and other creative content that aligns with each district's unique needs and goals.

The final composition of the communications toolkit will be informed through ongoing dialogue and collaboration with district stakeholders and our association partners. We will actively engage to understand their specific challenges, preferences, and opportunities, ensuring that the toolkit's contents are practical, impactful, and aligned with real-world needs.

Additionally, the scope and scale of the toolkit will be determined based on the available budget. The goal is to create a flexible and scalable set of resources that can empower districts of varying sizes and capacities.

If videos are created as part of the initiative, who will have access to them, and how are they intended to be used? Will there be different versions for different audiences (e.g., parents, educators, legislators)?

When videos are created, all partners will have access to them. We envision having them all available on either the One Voice website and/or via YouTube so they can be downloaded and shared.

Part of the strategic plan is to have targeted messaging for all key stakeholders, which does include parents, educators, legislators, and many others. However, what has not been identified yet is if individual videos as a medium will be targeted for each different audience as a strategic approach. This would need to be determined when building the detailed communications plan and determining a more detailed budget.

What specific metrics or indicators will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the One Voice initiative? How will progress be tracked, and how often will results be communicated to stakeholders?

One of the first and most critical steps in Year One is to define a clear set of success metrics that will guide One Voice and measure its effectiveness over time. While these metrics are still being worked on and finalized, several key

performance indicators have been identified and can be grouped into two primary categories:

Public School Success Metrics
These metrics focus on measuring changes in public perception and support for public schools across the state and within local districts:

- Incorporate annual public perception questions into the statewide Morris Leatherman survey to assess Minnesotans' views on public education.
    - Establish baseline metrics in Year One and set clear benchmarks for year-over-year improvement in key areas such as trust, satisfaction, and perceived quality.
- Track local district survey data (from Morris Leatherman or other partners) for improvements in district-level perception and favorability.
- Analyze pupil enrollment trends to monitor changes in:
    - Transfers to other public districts (open enrollment)
    - Homeschooling rates
    - Enrollment in private or charter schools
- Monitor bond and levy approval rates, including:
    - Overall passage rates
    - Percentage increases in support compared to prior election cycles

Marketing and Communications Success Metrics
These metrics are designed to measure the reach, engagement, and effectiveness of the communications strategy—ensuring a strong ROI:

- Digital reach:
    - Social media impressions, shares, and engagement rates
    - Follower growth across platforms

- Website engagement:
    - Unique visitors
    - Page views
    - Time on site
    - Click-through rates (CTR) from campaigns or social content

- Email marketing metrics:
    - Open rates
    - Click-through rates
    - List growth

- Media coverage:
    - Number of earned media placements
    - Media sentiment (positive, neutral, negative)
    - Reach and circulation of coverage

- Video and storytelling impact:
    - Video views, shares, and average watch time
    - Surveyed impact of stories on perception (pre/post engagement)

These metrics will guide both strategic and tactical decision-making and help ensure alignment with the overall goal: improving the perception, support, and sustainability of Minnesota's public schools. Availability of results will depend on the type of metrics themselves. Certain metrics have quicker turnaround times, such as marketing and communication success metrics, and these can be reported on a quarterly basis through the quarterly strategic update meetings. The overarching success metrics will take years to measure progress and will have to start by establishing baseline metrics.

Americans' Satisfaction With 31 Aspects of the Country, 2025

Shown in order of % satisfied; ^ Asked of a half sample
The % satisfied and dissatisfied reflect the sum of "very" and "somewhat" satisfied/dissatisfied responses.

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GALLUP