



May 3, 2021

Via Email to Omnibus Tax Conference Committee

Sen. Bakk – sen.tom.bakk@senate.mn

Rep. Davids – rep.greg.davids@house.mn

Rep. Her – rep.kaohly.her@house.mn

Rep. Lislegard – rep.david.lislegard@house.mn

Rep. Marquart – rep.paul.marquart@house.mn

Sen. Miller – sen.jeremy.miller@senate.mn

Sen. Nelson – sen.carla.nelson@senate.mn

Sen. Rest – sen.ann.rest@senate.mn

Sen. Weber – sen.bill.weber@senate.mn

Rep. Youakim – rep.cheryl.youakim@house.mn

Dear Conferees,

On behalf of the Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) and Minnesota School Business Officials (MASBO) we write to express our concerns on Minnesota Taxpayers Day provision in the House Omnibus Tax Bill, Article 2, Sections 22 through 24 (House), which makes changes to the current Truth-in-Taxation hearing process and notification requirements.

This provision replaces the Truth-in-Taxation process by establishing a uniform annual Minnesota Property Taxpayer's Day meeting date for cities, counties, and school districts. This meeting would be held on the first Wednesday following the first Monday in December to allow the public to provide input on proposed property tax levies for school districts. Our concerns are as follows:

Meeting Times (Article 2, Section 24)

The meeting date and time is prescriptive, counties must begin their meetings at 6:00 p.m., cities at 7:00 p.m., and school districts at 8:00 p.m. Each jurisdiction would be required to broadcast the meeting virtually and provide a method for public input both in-person and remotely.

Access and transparency are important, but we have concerns that the MN Property Taxpayer's Day, one size fits all meeting date and time may have the opposite effect. School districts are concerned about the 8:00 p.m. start time since school districts are the taxing jurisdiction that primarily serves families with young children. The late start time may discourage meeting attendance and participation. Having a hard limit of 20 minutes to present proposed levy and budget information may prevent the taxing jurisdictions from adequately informing the public.

Budget Timeline (lines 144.25-144.26 of House bill)

To summarize, school district budget development does not begin in earnest until after January 1, and it must be completed on or before June 30. Providing estimates before the process truly begins risks the transparency that is being sought. The provision requiring school districts to hold this meeting prior to the final budget levy determination does not work for our school district budgeting timelines which do not occur until spring at the earliest, and mid-summer at the latest.

We appreciate Rep. Marquart's willingness to work with us on this provision, but the bill language does not address all of our concerns.

Sincerely,

Denise Dittrich
Minnesota School Boards Association

Julie Cink
Minnesota Association of School Business Officials

cc: Legislative Administrators and Assistants:

jennifer.goblirsch@house.mn

urszula.gryska@house.mn

katie.hirsch@house.mn

madeline.hoy@senate.mn

tyler.kline@senate.mn

nathan.jesson@house.mn

eric.petersen@house.mn

lamont.pyykkonen@senate.mn

robin.schmidt@house.mn

kalyn.schroeder@senate.mn

larissa.shea@senate.mn

brian.steinhoff@senate.mn