

Public Policy Committee Kicks Off New Year

The midterm elections are just around the corner and they're certain to bring change to Minnesota's state legislature. All 201 state House and Senate offices are on the ballot this year and we expect a very large freshman class, upwards of 70-80 new members to be sworn into office when they gavel into session on January 3rd. The race for Governor, in addition to all of the state's constitutional officers, will set the tone for education funding over the next four years. Governors drive the bully pulpit and budget debate, which promises great intrigue as the state is looking at a potential \$9+ billion surplus.



To stay on top of the state election and budget impact, MSNA's Public Policy Committee kicked off a new year of meetings and advocacy planning on October 13. We received a federal legislative update from Kathy Scheuart, SNA Staff Vice President of Government Affairs and Media Relations. Despite a strong 'pilot' project for universal meals during the pandemic, Scheuart noted Congress's lack of action this summer on renewing or improving the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act, which is over a decade old policy now. She noted Congress is out until late November for a lame duck session and unlikely to take up child nutrition reauthorization. In fact, if Congress flips majority status, with a likely GOP takeover during the midterm election, she noted it could take until next April for Congress to fully organize into a new committee structure.



In the meantime, we have heard loud and clear from you about the desire to continue with a universal meals program. Minnesota voters will determine the political feasibility of such a move in the state legislature. The potential budget surplus could afford such a program, but will the voters send representatives who desire and support the change? Or will we see continued scrutiny of nutrition programs in Minnesota in the wake of the Feeding our Future scandal? At a minimum, lawmakers will want to understand school nutrition finances, federal and state impacts, before committing taxpayer resources to this program area. To help educate the new crop of state legislators, we'll be hosting an MSNA legislative reception at the Capitol on February 21, 2023. You'll hear more from us about our advocacy reception in the months to come.

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