



MINNESOTA EDUCATOR

A publication for the members of Education Minnesota

April 2018

Fight for your rights

In the face of a U.S. Supreme Court decision that could limit the rights of workers, educators joined in with their public-sector union brothers and sisters from across the state to say, "We will not go down without a fight."

Read more about the Working People's Day of Action and how activism is increasing after the oral arguments in Janus v. AFSCME took place on page 3.

Read about how locals can be preparing for the Janus decision on page 11.

Legislature pushes academic balance, school rating bills

The Minnesota Legislature has been in session for a month, and two of the biggest focuses of education-related legislation have been on school safety and a bill that would require school districts to create and enforce policies requiring "academic balance" in their educators' instruction. A bill to adjust teacher pension plans has also passed out of committee.

Read more about the school safety legislation and the activism from educators and students around it on page 6.

Education Minnesota and other education advocates oppose the Academic Balance

Policy bill, SF2487, and its House companion HF3739, arguing it is unnecessary, unworkable and very likely unconstitutional.

SF2487 is sponsored by Sen. Carla Nelson, R-Rochester, and Sen. Paul Anderson, R-Plymouth. The House companion is HF3739, sponsored by Rep. Sondra Erickson, R-Princeton.

Educators are already required to observe laws and policies prohibiting discrimination against students based on their race, religion or other characteristics. We believe the bill will also inhibit good teaching and critical thinking

by prohibiting educators from encouraging students to attempt, defend or see the merit in a viewpoint different from their own.

Another bill being heard would set up a system in which schools would be assigned a star rating based on test scores and other criteria.

The bill, SF2816 and its companion HF3178, would require the state education commissioner to create a rating system from one star for the "lowest performing schools and districts" to five stars for the "highest performing."

Criteria for the ratings

include percentage of students scoring proficient on statewide math and reading tests, academic growth rates for those math and reading tests and the gap in scores between low-income students and students of color and their peers.

"Ratings systems do not compare apples to apples," said Shakopee Education Association President Dale Anderson, testifying before the Senate E-12 Policy Committee March 13. "They give that appearance, but only lead to false conclusions. We expect teachers to personalize learning and students to be well-rounded,

yet we want to base school ratings on test scores? This is just another attempt to make public educators look bad and talk about our 'failing' public schools."

The proposal to adjust teacher pension plans was unanimously approved by the bipartisan Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement and is now moving through the necessary Senate committees.

The bill, SF2620, maintains defined-benefit pension plans for current and future generations without putting an undue financial

Legislature, page 5

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Read the article about our new digital ad campaign. Then answer the question, "What is your 'Believe in 'We'' moment? How does having the collective voice of your union directly affect your work, your students and public education in this state?" and send it to us via email, Twitter or Facebook to be entered to win a \$25 Target gift card.

Email us at educator@edmn.org or post on Twitter or Facebook using #MNEducator. Find us on Facebook at Education Minnesota and on Twitter @EducationMN. Answers will be run in next month's Minnesota Educator.

Congratulations to last month's contest winner, **Michelle Shaw** of Minneapolis. See a selection of answers to last month's question on page 2.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

St. Paul, Inver Grove Heights educators win grants from NEA Foundation. **Page 4**

Lac qui Parle Valley, Dawson-Boyd teachers receive national honors. **Page 4**

School safety bills move through Legislature as student activism continues. **Page 6**

Believe in We ad campaign moves to an all-online presence for the spring. **Page 6**

Technology in Schools series. Fab Labs bring technology right to student's fingertips. **Page 7**

Locals share success stories from the bargaining table. **Page 8**

Chaska local uses history to remind members of the power of collective action. **Page 9**

Volunteers needed for the National Education Association Representative Assembly in Minneapolis this summer. **Page 10**

Register to attend the 2018 American Federation of Teachers convention. **Page 10**

Legal brief. How local unions can prepare for Janus decision. **Page 11**

The Education Minnesota Foundation now offers collaborative professional development programming for school districts and their educators. **Page 12**

Legislature considering ban on classic technique for teaching critical thinking

President Barack Obama took the commencement day stage at Howard University nearly two years ago and shared great advice for the new graduates, the mostly African-American crowd and, although he didn't intend it, educators everywhere.

"We must expand our moral imaginations to understand and empathize with all people who are struggling, not just black folks who are struggling – the refugee, the immigrant, the rural poor, the transgender person, and yes, the middle-aged white guy who you may think has all the advantages, but over the last several decades has seen his world upended by economic and cultural and technological change, and feels powerless to stop it," he said. "You got to get in his head, too."

The president had spoken before about the "empathy deficit" in our country, but this was an especially eloquent version. He challenged us to really study and understand our neighbors and to think critically about our own preconceptions.

Unfortunately, his good advice will become harder to follow if a few members of the Legislature get their way. As I write this, there's a bill in the Minnesota Senate, SF2487, which would severely



Denise Specht, president

limit how educators can teach both critical thinking and empathy.

The most objectionable part of the bill says administrators must prohibit teachers from requiring students to express specified social or political viewpoints for the purposes of academic credit or extracurricular participation.

The bill also directs districts to prevent teachers from introducing "controversial matters" unrelated to the subject taught, and it requires "caution" from teachers when expressing personal views.

Republican Sen. Carla Nelson of Rochester is the lead author of the bill, which states, "Public education courses are not for the purpose of political,

ideological, religious or antireligious indoctrination."

Nelson is running for the U.S. House in the First Congressional District along the southern border of the state. The district includes Austin, Albert Lea, Mankato and Rochester.

Her bill fits into a national trend of politicians using partisan politics to control what educators teach and how we teach it. These bills hijack the deliberative process for determining standards and insult the professionalism of teachers everywhere.

Educators are fighting, right now, to retain the freedom to teach about climate change or evolutionary biology in Ohio, Texas, West Virginia, Tennessee and Idaho, according to the National Center for Science Education.

At the local level, there are similar struggles to preserve, or add, diverse voices and perspectives to social studies and language arts curricula.

We cannot prepare students for an interconnected world by continuing to erase dissenting voices from history, ignoring the multicultural future and denying accepted science.

Instead, we must equip our students with the facts and the tools they will need to succeed. To do that we must

block this bill, which seeks to prevent educators from using a common technique for teaching critical thinking in Minnesota classrooms.

Assigning a student to study an issue from another person's point of view and report back has been a basic pedagogical technique for longer than any of us can remember.

It is not indoctrination, which literally means to teach someone to accept a set of beliefs uncritically. In fact, it is the very opposite and has been good pedagogy since teachers wore togas.

"It is a mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it," Aristotle once said.

The state has embedded the technique in the state standards in different subjects and different grade levels. The mental skill combining research, analysis, empathy in communication is essential for AP and other high-level classes.

How can our schools even have competitive debate teams if students can refuse to argue a side they may not personally agree with?

Paranoid fears of indoctrination, which has come to mean ideas you don't like, could deprive our students of the cognitive skills they will need in higher

education and their careers.

Informed empathy and critical thinking will be important whenever our former students discuss, negotiate or interact with people from other cultures.

Of course, we can all agree teachers shouldn't teach only one side of any controversial issue (which is not the same as issues of empirical fact) but we don't need this bill.

Discrimination against students based on their race, religion or other characteristics is already against the law. The codes of ethics for teachers already says, "A teacher shall not deliberately suppress or distort subject matter."

If you care as much about defending our profession, or giving our students all the skills they need for the next stages of their lives, please visit the Policy Action Center on the Education Minnesota website and follow the prompts to join with other educators to defend the teaching of critical thinking and empathy in our schools.

Together,

Denise

Twitter: @DeniseSpecht

Last month's 'we want to hear from you': What do you think is needed to improve recruitment and retention of educators?

In last month's Minnesota Educator, we continued the "we want to hear from you" contest and received responses from all over the state via email and Twitter. Here is a selection of the answers. Look on page 1 for this month's question and how to submit an answer. Your answer enters you into a drawing for a \$25 Target gift card!

"In order to improve recruitment and retention of educators, they need to feel validated in what they are doing, as well as feel supported by parents and administration. Time is needed for them to collaborate with other staff members in order to gain knowledge in best practices that can help them become a better and stronger teacher that can withstand the ups and downs of the profession."

– Jodi Prchal, New Prague Education Association

"To improve recruitment and retention of educators, schools should be adequately funded so that they can maintain reasonable class sizes and employ sufficient support professionals. Teacher salaries should be comparable to other professions that require similar education and training. The profession should not be devalued by allowing people to obtain licensure without adequate training."

– Melissa Williams, Education Richfield

"I believe tuition tax relief and education debt relief would go a long way toward improving the recruitment and retention of educators."

– Jill Nysse, Winona Education Association

"To recruit and retain educators revolves around the idea of making a positive difference in a child's life. If a teacher can experience the element of love and joy in teaching children without being overwhelmed by the negative elements created by those who see K-12 education as a way to push a child through a maze of tests and requirements without any true humanity, then maybe a prospective teacher will desire to teach and make it their life's work."

– Dan Rassier, Education Minnesota – ROCORI

"As someone who's been in education since I graduated from college in 1992, I've seen a number of things happen. But the main thing is that teachers need to feel supported. We need support from families, colleagues and administrators."

– Michelle Shaw, Education Minnesota Reserve member

MINNESOTA
EDUCATOR

To reach the newspaper for queries, story or commentary ideas

Email: educator@edmn.org

Mail: Minnesota Educator
41 Sherburne Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55103

To report a change of address or end duplicate mailings, contact the Education Minnesota membership department.

Email: susan.lynskey@edmn.org

Phone: 651-292-4805

By web: www.educationminnesota.org and choose the Contact Us link to send a change of address.

April 2018 – Volume 20, No. 8

The Minnesota Educator publishes each month. It is one of the union's print and digital publications to educate, inform and organize the community of members. The Educator is reported, edited and designed by union staff members. The paper is printed in RR Donnelley Co.'s union shop in Long Prairie, Minn. Find copies of the Educator online at www.educationminnesota.org. Go to the News menu, then Minnesota Educator.

To inquire about advertising in the Educator or on the website

Email: ilissa.morrow@edmn.org

Phone: 651-292-4864

For general inquiries and business at the state headquarters

Phone: 800-652-9073 or 651-227-9541

For information about union activities, work and resources, go to www.educationminnesota.org.

Follow Education Minnesota on Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest.

[www.facebook.com/
EducationMinnesota](http://www.facebook.com/EducationMinnesota)

[www.twitter.com/
EducationMN](http://www.twitter.com/EducationMN)

[www.pinterest.com/
EducationMN](http://www.pinterest.com/EducationMN)

THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

Denise Specht
President

Paul Mueller
Vice President

Rodney Rowe
Secretary-Treasurer

Sara Gjerdrum
Executive Director

Brandon Rettke
Director of Public Affairs

Kieren Steinhoff
Editor

Eric Widi
Art Director

Hundreds attend rally for workers' rights

Education Minnesota members from all over the state joined hundreds of their public-sector union brothers and sisters at a rally billed as the Working People's Day of Action on Feb. 24.

The rally was part of a nationally organized effort to bring union members together prior to the U.S. Supreme Court hearing the oral arguments in the *Janus v. AFSCME* case on Feb. 26.

"The intention of this case at the Supreme Court is to weaken unions by saying that you can benefit from the work a union does ... but you don't actually have to contribute to the work it takes," said Mary Cathryn Ricker, executive vice president of the American Federation of Teachers and a former St. Paul teacher and union president.

The rally was put on by Minnesota's Public Sector Union Alliance, which includes Education Minnesota.

"For decades, teachers, nurses, police officers, firefighters and many others who provide the public services we rely on have joined together to speak up for themselves, their families and their communities," said Mary Falk, an AFSCME member who works at Anoka Technical College, who spoke at the rally. "But those behind the *Janus* case do not want working people to have that freedom."

St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter kicked off the rally by reflecting on the strong history of unions and their impact on the civil and women's rights movements.

"When people try to divide us, we know that unions are one of the critical tools for how we say we are united," he said.

Education Minnesota members Dennis Draughn and Verlena Bradley spoke about the impact their union has had on their work and home lives.

"Higher education shouldn't be available to certain Americans. It should be accessible to all

Americans," Bradley, an elementary teacher, said, talking about the union's work to make higher education affordable and education debt loan forgiveness available. "We need to come together now and fight for what is right so people can have better lives in communities by accessing higher education. Together, we can do it."

Draughn, a member of the Minnesota Army National Guard and high school teacher, spoke about the need to listen to union members, especially when it comes to legislation that affects our work, like the proposal to arm educators as a way to keep schools safe.

"If you say otherwise, you are not listening to veterans," he said. "As an educator, I know great preparation creates great teachers and teaching licenses must be earned the hard way. If you say otherwise, you are not listening to experts."

"The only way the people in power listen to the people who do the work, like you and me, is if we band together. Together we will make them hear us."

Members from other unions also spoke about the impact their union has on their daily lives.

"Before we started organizing our union in 2009, most of us were paid the state minimum wage of \$6.15 per hour," Deb Howze, a personal care attendant and member of SIEU Healthcare MN. "We won paid time off. And in my union, we won paid training, paid holidays and more."

"It's the Teamsters that have my back when I'm working," said Brett Ohnstad, a corrections officer and member of Teamsters 320. "They're the ones making sure I've got a good living wage so I can take care of my family. Everyone here deserves that. Everyone here needs that. They're also making sure I can retire with dignity and still be able to support my family."

Educators stand up for union rights



"Our collective voice in the workplace has resulted in the kind of wages that allow us to own homes in the communities in which we work. Our collective voice fights for the public schools our students deserve. And that is why the powerful special interests behind the Janus case in the Supreme Court are out to stop us at all costs. They are no match for our collective voice. We are here for good."

– Mary Cathryn Ricker, executive vice president of the American Federation of Teachers and former St. Paul teacher and local union president



"Don't you dare try to discredit or disband my union, because raising up the teaching profession is the first step to attracting students of color into the greatest profession in the world—education. And unions build strong families and strong communities. An attack on a union is an attack on those strong families and communities. We're all in this together."

– Dennis Draughn, high school social studies teacher, Dakota County United Educators



"Education loan debt is out of control and crippling our students and working families across this country. However, my union, Education Minnesota, is working to make college more accessible and affordable for everyone. My fellow teachers and I are able to come together and fight for a system that is fair for everyone, not just the wealthy and powerful."

– Verlena Bradley, elementary teacher, St. Paul Federation of Teachers



"Unions include hundreds of thousands of Minnesotans who work for the public good every day."

– Denise Specht, president, Education Minnesota

Fight for your rights

Unions speak out as Supreme Court hears Janus arguments

On Feb. 26, the U.S. Supreme Court heard the oral arguments in the *Janus v. AFSCME* case.

Janus v. AFSCME is a lawsuit filed by Mark Janus, an Illinois state employee. The suit challenges the authority of AFSCME and other public-sector employee unions to collect fair-share fees from all employees they represent.

The decision is expected sometime between April and June. If decided in Janus' favor, the case would make the entire public sector "right-to-work" in one fell swoop.

At the same time as the arguments, members of public-sector unions in Minnesota were speaking out, reminding everyone what was at stake with the case, as well as the real motives behind it.

"An adverse ruling in this case will cause real pain for real working families," said Education Minnesota President Denise Specht.

Dennis Frazier, a St. Louis County child protection worker and AFSCME Local 66 president, said, "The history of unions is about striving for protections we take for granted today. A union is about people working together for the common good, so we all have the things in life that matter. No billionaire will take away our union."

A recent article in The Guardian highlights how this case is part of a blatant multi-million dollar campaign to "defund and defang" labor unions because they know that labor unions are the best vehicle working people have to level the economic playing field for all Americans.

"The billionaires and corporations attacking

our unions aren't in schools listening to our stories. They aren't working to improve lives. They just want more for themselves," said Mike Poke, a Wayzata schools custodian and SEIU Local 284 member.

"This case is about taking away the freedom of working people to join together in strong unions and fight for the values all workers share. We will not stop fighting to improve the lives of all workers and their families," said Lina Jamoul, MAPE executive director.

All of the union members said that while this court case is a direct attack on workers and unions, it will not silence the labor movement.

"We will not let *Janus v. AFSCME* destroy the labor movement because our struggle is the struggle of millions of families in Minnesota. Whatever the future brings, we won't let them down," said Specht.

"I want every family to have what I have," said Frazier, when speaking about a secure retirement.

State epidemiologist Dr. Jenna Bjork's union, MAPE, fought for paid parental leave for state workers, and won.

"This is what unions are for—to make everyone's lives better," she said.

"No court case will stop us from coming together to address the racial gaps in our schools and our state. No court case will stop us from fighting for our families," said Poke. "As we say at SEIU, 'Together, we rise.'"

St. Paul, Inver Grove Heights teachers win NEA Foundation grants

Colleen Parker, a special education teacher at Simley High School in Inver Grove Heights, and Amanda Madsen, a social justice teacher and iPad manager at Frost Lake Elementary School in St. Paul, have been awarded grants through the NEA Foundation. Parker has also been named the 2018 Minnesota representative to the NEA Global Fellow program.

Amanda Madsen

Finding meaningful professional development opportunities can be difficult for educators, and finding them at a reasonable price can be even more difficult. That's why Amanda Madsen applied for a \$2,000 NEA Foundation Learning & Leadership Grant, so she can attend the International Society for Technology in Education conference in Chicago this summer. Learning & Leadership Grants are available to support the professional development of members by providing grants for:

- Individuals to participate in high-quality professional development like summer institutes, conferences, seminars, travel abroad programs or action research.
- Groups to fund collegial study, including study groups, action research,



Amanda Madsen

lesson plan development or mentoring experiences for faculty or staff. Preference is given to proposals that incorporate STEM and/or global competence in their projects. Individuals can receive \$2,000 and groups are eligible for \$5,000. "Without the grant funding, I wouldn't be able to go," said Madsen. "Conferences like this are expensive." The grant will help cover her conference registration fee and travel expenses. Madsen wanted to attend the International Society for Technology in Education conference to gain a global perspective on technology and learn from international leaders on the subject. "One of our school goals is to gamify in our classrooms," she said. "I



Colleen Parker

want to find out what other teachers are doing to gamify curriculum and introduce and manage content, manage behavior and the workflow of how students receive and submit work." Since Madsen provides support for the iPads in her school, she is constantly helping other teachers bring digital content into their curriculum. When she returns from the conference this summer, Madsen plans to not only share her new knowledge with other educators in her school, but also provide professional development on the topic throughout her district. In addition to the conference, Madsen is looking forward to networking and learning at some of the vendor events associated with the event, such as a Seesaw app event.

Colleen Parker

Colleen Parker was looking for opportunities to bring the world into her classroom. She found those opportunities with the NEA Global Fellow program, and through that, discovered the \$5,000 Student Achievement grant from the NEA Foundation. "I wanted to learn more about the world and be a better global citizen myself, and how to bring that into my classroom," she said. As a Global Fellow, Parker has spent time in Washington, D.C. networking with the other fellows and creating lesson plans about being a global teacher. This summer, she will travel to South Africa with the group to study their education system. "I will be bringing part of the culture, heritage and their learning back to my classroom," she said. "I don't know what that will look like and that's exciting." Before her adventure this summer, Parker will be working with her students to build a kayak with Urban Boat Builders, a nonprofit youth development program that builds boats with youth in the Twin Cities area. The grant covers the cost of the materials and instructor. Parker hopes that through the project her students will use STEM skills as they develop the plans, use specialized tools and

solve problems. "It's important for STEM to be involved in special education," she said. "I've also worked with our administration so the students can earn a high school credit in math, art or science depending on their IEPs." Once the boat has been built, Parker and her students will launch it in Simley Pond, and the Urban Boat Builders will bring extra kayaks so all students can participate. Before they have even worked on the boat, Parker has integrated the concepts of water and boat safety with her students. "We did a two-day knot tying class," she said. "River Heights Marina came in and spoke. Our community education director did a water safety class. We did a two-day experiment with geometry and toothpicks, making different shapes and a model kayak." Seeing the excitement in her students has motivated Parker to do even more cross-curricular activities with them. "I'm finding a spark in students when they are trying something new," she said. Parker hopes that after the boat is built, it will be sold and the proceeds would be used to fund the project next year.

Husband, wife receive national accolades for education work

Wes and Karen Anderson were busy last December. Karen, a service learning, family and consumer science and elementary keyboarding teacher in Dawson-Boyd, was a presenter at the National Association for Career and Technical Education's annual CareerTech VISION in Nashville, Tennessee. At the same time, her husband Wes was also in Nashville at the National Association of Agricultural Educators Convention, where he was given one of six national Teacher Mentor awards. Wes teaches at Lac qui Parle Valley High School. Karen presented on Dawson-Boyd's service learning program, which has grown from three students at its beginning in 1991 to 47 students now.

The class focuses on student volunteering at different sites, and working on a project based on the plan, act, reflect and celebrate (PARC) model. Karen tries to match up student interests with a community need. Some of the goals of the program include:

- To enable students to help others, give of themselves and enter into a caring relationship with others.
- To assist students in seeing the relevance of the academic world with the

real world.

- To enhance the self-esteem and self-confidence of students.
- To increase the civic and citizenship skills of students.
- To better prepare students for their careers and further education.
- To help students know how to get things done.
- To impact local issues and local needs.
- To do something, anything, for someone.

"The connections and lifelong experiences these students gain cannot truly be measured by a grade but rather by what they have learned about themselves and how they apply these skills to their daily life and family," said Karen, in a summary of the program. "We have had many students over the years that have made friendships with someone from a different generation because of their connection with service learning." Wes has taught agricultural education for more than 30 years and serves as a strong mentor to his colleagues, students and family. His colleagues describe him as the reference book for agricultural education. Wes has successfully applied for grants to fund materials



Wes Anderson (center), agriculture teacher at Lac qui Parle Valley High School, receives one of the six national Teacher Mentor Awards given out by the National Association of Agricultural Educators at their national convention in Nashville, Tennessee this December. His wife, Karen Anderson (right), was also in Nashville presenting at the National Association for Career and Technical Education's annual CareerTech VISION. Karen is a service learning, family and consumer science and elementary keyboarding teacher in Dawson-Boyd. Also pictured (left) is Scott Sawatzky, high school principal at Lac qui Parle Valley.

and equipment purchased in his own agriculture department. He uses his grant-writing experience to help colleagues submit grant applications to support their own agriculture programs. Wes also provides practical professional development for his fellow agricultural educators. After he purchased a Plasma Cam CNC machine, he hosted a demonstration of

the equipment and programs for fellow teachers. Wes, a veteran at developing community partnerships with his agriculture program, helps other teachers do the same within their own communities. "Wes, like all of us, has taken his lumps and learned from life events that teaching is a long-term investment in the future of others who

have yet to find their own path," said William Delaney, agriculture instructor at Minneota Public Schools, in a press release about the award. "Wes' input makes the rough spots in the journey smoother and he makes the destination attainable by shining his light from the other end of the tunnel."

Legislature *from page 1*

burden on educators, retirees or taxpayers.

Education Minnesota believes the bill, while not perfect, is a good compromise backed by a coalition of public-sector employee unions, legislators, the governor and fund executives.

SF2620 includes several changes, including:

- Increases in the employer contribution from 7.5 percent to 8.75 percent phased in over six years. State funding is included to cover this cost.
- Increases employee contribution from 7.5 percent to 7.75 percent starting July 1, 2022.
- Reducing the cost-of-living adjustment for retirees from 2 percent to 1 percent for the next five years, then a 0.1 percent increase each year until it reaches 1.5 percent in 2028.

While it is not a budget year, the additional spending of surplus money is being discussed.

Gov. Mark Dayton proposed adding \$226 million in spending this biennium, with about half of that going toward education.

Minnesota has a projected surplus of \$329 million. Dayton’s supplemental budget proposals include:

- \$27 million to make necessary changes to state employees’ pension plans.
- \$16.9 million in increased special education funding.
- \$15.8 million for school safety.
- \$10 million each for Minnesota State and the University of Minnesota.
- \$5.2 million in school-related mental health grants.
- \$847,000 to fully fund districts that currently participate in the Q Comp program.
- Makes voluntary, pre-K funding permanent so districts currently losing funding will not lose it.

Republican House and Senate leaders have not released their budget recommendations yet this session. The governor and legislative leaders will need to iron out their differences before a supplementary budget can be adopted.

Stay up to date on everything happening at the Legislature by following Education Minnesota on Facebook (search for Education Minnesota) and Twitter (@EducationMN), or on our website at www.educationminnesota.org/advocacy.aspx#at-the-legislature.




Shakopee Education Association President Dale Anderson testified before the Senate E-12 Policy Committee about a bill that would create a star rating system for schools based on test scores.




Edina teachers Tim Klobuchar (left) and Tom Connell (above) testified against the Academic Balance Policy bill before the Senate E-12 Policy Committee on March 8. Edina schools have been at the center of an extended, misleading attack on their multicultural curriculum by the Center for the American Experiment, part of the Koch-backed State Policy Network.

Tap into the equity in your home with a Home Equity Line of Credit!¹



FOR A LIMITED TIME ENJOY

NO CLOSING COSTS!²



GET STARTED TODAY!

www.uecu.coop

651-264-0669 | 800-229-2848

1. Variable annual percentage rate. The rate you receive is based on the applicant's credit, repayment history, and length of repayment. Closing cost range is usually \$150-\$600. Annual fee is \$50. Maximum APR is 18%. Property must be located in Minnesota and property insurance is required. Membership eligibility requirements apply. 2. No closing cost offer is available on Home Equity Lines of Credit only; up to \$500 maximum to be paid by the credit union. Credit line must be \$15,000 minimum; \$100,000 maximum; in order to receive the no closing cost offer. A minimum of \$5,000 must be disbursed upon closing. Offer ends 6/30/2018. Federally insured by NCUA.

Safety remains focus at Legislature, in schools

The national conversation about school safety remains in the headlines after the tragedy in Parkland, Florida, with student activism at the forefront.

Students across Minnesota participated in walkouts on March 14 to honor the lives of the 17 people killed at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. Students also marched to the State Capitol in St. Paul on March 7 and participated in the March For Our Lives on March 24.

The Minnesota Legislature is also bringing forward bills that would address school safety issues.

Education Minnesota President Denise Specht laid out the measures Education Minnesota supports to increase school safety before the Senate E-12 Finance Committee on March 12.

1. Hire a counselor, social worker, psychologist or similar support staff member in every district at the recommended ratio of one per every 250 students. Minnesota’s current student-to-counselor ratio is 1 for every 723 students.
2. Cap class sizes so educators can get to know their students better—and spot problems earlier.

3. Train every educator in Minnesota in trauma-informed, restorative practices.
4. Provide funding for every district that wants a full-service community school.
5. Provide enough funding so that every school that wants a school resource officer, can get one.

A bill that would help schools hire more licensed support staff was heard on March 21 in the House Education Finance Committee.

HF978 provides school districts with a mandate-

free, optional matching grant program to hire additional licensed school counselors, nurses, social workers, psychologists or chemical dependency counselors as needed.

Also being debated are bills that would allowing permitted and trained school staff to carry firearms.

HF3286 and SF3116 have been introduced and Education Minnesota members have been speaking out against the bills, using the #ArmMeWith on social media and sending emails through our Policy Action Center.

Education Minnesota also sent out a survey to all members through the Capitol Connection e-newsletter on March 5, designed to capture the thoughts and attitudes of Minnesota’s educators on school safety.

Over 1,200 educators filled it out and the vast majority of educators think arming teachers would make schools more unsafe.

Almost 90 percent also responded that the most important thing that could be done to prevent mass shootings is better mental health screenings and support.



Students across the state participated in the National School Walkout March 14, which honored the lives of the 17 people killed at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Deer River High School students took a moment to remember those who lost their lives.



Students marched to the State Capitol in St. Paul on March 7 to protest for common sense gun control and school safety legislation.

New digital ad campaign invites Minnesota to “Believe in ‘We’”

The message is simple: Every student dreams. But there’s only one place that gives every dream a chance—public schools.

Across the state—in online banner ads, on Facebook and Instagram feeds, YouTube videos and even audio services such as Spotify—the latest phase in Education Minnesota’s “Believe in ‘We’” ad campaign will help tell the simple stories of the incredibly powerful relationships students and educators build every day in our schools and colleges. The new phase of the campaign is called “Believe in Me/ Believe in ‘We’,” and it’s the union’s first foray into a completely online, year-round advertising campaign.

Education Minnesota wants this campaign to

serve as an invitation to share in our students’ hopes and dreams. From every school we visit. From every class we meet. From every educator we engage. And from every student we interview. The campaign calls on everyone—educators, students, parents, employers, school administrators and community leaders—to speak up for the one place that welcomes, embraces and helps students from all walks of life find their voice: public schools, staffed by professional educators with the passion and commitment to believe in every “me.”

One of the core purposes of the “Believe in ‘We’” campaign is to emphasize how our members and the Minnesota public share the same values for

our students—fairness, freedom, opportunity, equity, inclusiveness and excellence—and that we must all speak up for these values, and for public schools.

Starting in late March, our audiences will see educators interviewing students to not only hear about their dreams, but also the reasons behind those dreams and their hope for how they can make a difference. Along the way, our educator interviewers will be “teaching,” encouraging and expanding on the students’ thought processes. The goal is to show, even more than tell, the special and critical bond and role professional educators have in making a better tomorrow possible.

The videos and audio clips for the campaign were recorded in metro area and



Education Minnesota shot footage for our new digital advertising campaign at Worthington Public Schools.

Greater Minnesota schools and higher education campuses in February and March. Look for the ads on your social media channels, and be sure to like and share using the hashtag

#BelieveInWeMN. Learn more and see all of the videos at www.BelieveInWeMN.com.

♦ Public Affairs Specialist Doug Dooher contributed to this article.

Fab Labs take hands-on learning to new heights

Alison Olson-Enamorado sits at a computer, working on a project in an elective class at North High School in North St. Paul. While this is an ordinary scene taking place in schools across the country, what makes Olson-Enamorado's project unusual is that when she is done, she will have built her own 3-D printer and will be able to take it home.

Olson-Enamorado is taking a class in her high school's Fab Lab, short for fabrication laboratory.

Fab Labs are generally equipped with an array of flexible computer-controlled tools that cover several different length scales and various materials. They began as an outreach project from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), aimed at bringing physical science, computer science and the development of digital materials.

Schools around Minnesota are starting to build Fab Labs as a piece of their STEM curriculum, as well as their industrial arts programs.

"We combine the traditional shop class with the Fab Lab," said Dave Moran, who teaches Fab Lab classes at North High School.

Moran's lab includes 3-D printers, laser engravers and cutters, vinyl cutters and printers, a computer-controlled mill.

The North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale district received a \$350,000 grant from 3M to fund the equipment for Fab Labs at North and Tartan high schools. The district also works with Century College to provide concurrent enrollment opportunities for students taking classes related to the Fab Lab.

At Apple Valley High School, the Fab Lab is part of the districtwide E³ STEM program, which offers courses in a variety of STEM career fields and pathways starting in elementary school.

The program was created after the Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan district received a U.S. Department of Labor grant. The program has also created numerous connections and working relationships with business and community partners, all of whom see the benefit of STEM programming and the Fab Lab.

"The businesses we have partnered with say they can't hire enough people with these skills," said Christopher Lee, the Fab Lab coordinator at Apple Valley High School.

The district has also partnered with Dakota County Technical College and Inver Hills Community College to bring in curriculum, and provide opportunities for students to get college credit.

Apple Valley's lab includes 3-D printers, vinyl printers and cutters, embroidery

machines, a heat press, a UV printer, a shop bot that can make 2-D or 3-D cuts on wood, desktop mills and an electronics bench.

"The kids don't even realize how complex it is, because it's interesting and fun," said Lee.

Not only do students have to learn how to run the printers, cutters and other machinery, they have to learn the computer software that makes them run.

"In our classes, it's really 80-85 percent designing and 15 percent actually making it on the machine," said Lee.

At both Apple Valley and North high schools, the Fab Lab classes are electives.

In Apple Valley, the lab is used by other classes as well. Moran said he hopes to expand the reach to other subject areas at North.

Lee says he is using the machinery in the Fab Lab to produce items for the school's store, as well as to support the school's activities.

"We made earrings to sell at basketball games," he said. "We're making a vinyl wrap for the ski team's van."

This piece is important for Lee, because the Department of Labor grant is set to expire soon, and he wants to sell items to help fund the cost of materials for the lab.

Apple Valley High School has a 48 percent free or reduced lunch student population, so they do not have lab fees for the materials. Students can make a donation, if they are able.

For Moran, the best part of the lab is seeing how students have to problem-solve.

"They make their own problems," he said. "There are 500 different right answers for a problem. We build things trying to get them to fail. That's how they learn in here."

Lee also enjoys seeing students troubleshoot issues with the software or equipment.

"With the laser cutter, you have to learn about six pieces of software to run it," he said. "And if something isn't right, it won't work."

Both Moran and Lee say that the skills learned in the Fab Labs prepare students for whatever future they can imagine—whether that is straight to the workforce or a two-year or four-year college.

"A lot of these machines are what you would use in a professional business," said Lee.

"We want to expose them to jobs that might use these skills," said Moran.

Both schools have or are developing internships with businesses that fits into the STEM and Fab Lab programming.

Many Fab Labs are open to the public and are included in Community Education programs.

Lee, along with Apple Valley's E³ STEM program

TECHNOLOGY IN SCHOOLS

coordinator Jim Lynch, encourages educators who might be interested in starting a program at their school to reach out and connect with existing programs.

Even though their lab is up and running, the team from Apple Valley has been visiting Alexandria's space recently.

"Get out there and tour schools," Lynch said. "Ask for help. Build partnerships and ask for stuff."



Apple Valley High School's Fab Lab includes 10 3-D printers, many of which were purchased with donations from local businesses.



Apple Valley High School Fab Lab Coordinator Christopher Lee (right) works with a student to print an image on vinyl, which the student will then heat press onto a T-shirt.



North High School's Fab Lab not only features a variety of mechanical equipment but all of the computers and software needed to make those machines work.



North High School Fab Lab teacher Dave Moran (center) works with students who are using 3-D printers.

Stories from the bargaining table

More than half of the state’s teacher 2017-19 contracts are settled, with many gaining important language changes in addition to salary and benefit increases.

Education Minnesota is collecting stories from the bargaining table as a way to share successes of locals with others. If you have a story you would like to share, email educator@edmn.org.

Joining PEIP has helped in fight to keep insurance increases low

Health insurance increases are often one of the biggest bargaining discussions at the table, but unions who belong to the Public Employees Insurance Program (PEIP) are seeing record low rates.

The combined PEIP school pools now include employees from 112 school districts, and 74 city/county groups with approximately 25,000 members. This January’s renewal had a 0.8 percent increase for the Advantage Plan premium and no increase for the Value and HSA compatible plans. Overall, that is a 0.2 percent average increase.

Matthew Wilmes, president of Education Minnesota - Lewiston-Altura, said that before his local joined PEIP, their renewal rates were between 15 percent and 40 percent each year, which meant the district would raise their deductibles to avoid high jumps in premiums.

“It started turning into insurance that would only be usable in the case of a catastrophe or major medical event,” Wilmes said.

Since joining PEIP, the local has seen renewal rates of 0 to 2 percent with very few changes in deductibles.

“The district has been much more willing to put money into their contribution to our health insurance,” Wilmes said. “The past three contracts have included significant increases to the district contribution, whereas it was almost always unchanged before we started with PEIP.”

Mike Matuska, a teacher and negotiator in Zumbrota-Mazeppa, said the decision to switch from their cooperative insurance to PEIP in the 2013-14 school year was not an easy one.

“In the year we changed, the co-op premium was \$1 per month cheaper than the PEIP premium,” Matuska said. “This made the decision to switch harder for our local. But due to past data, and the trends in the co-op rates, our local voted to join PEIP. The main purpose of the switch to PEIP was a hope of stabilizing the premium increase. Prior to switching to PEIP, we had multiple double digit increases in our premium rate which included multiple increases of over 20 percent.”

In Zumbrota-Mazeppa, only the teachers switched to PEIP, so Matuska said they had an easy time comparing the plans. While the teachers paid

\$12 more a year in their first year in PEIP, they are seeing the payoff five years later.

“Our premiums each year in PEIP are \$9,900 cheaper than the similar plan through the co-op,” Matuska said. “Our staff who were on the co-op plan last year had an increase of over 30 percent in their premiums for the 2017-18 school year. As teachers, our salary increases would not have kept up with these insurance increases, so we would be taking home less this year than we did five years ago if we had not switched.”

Each district and the needs of its teachers are unique, so take everything into consideration when selecting an insurance plan. Locals should contact your field staff for more information on how to pursue a PEIP bid.

Locals add parity language for ECFE, ABE teacher

Three Education Minnesota locals have shared that they have been successful in negotiating early childhood family education (ECFE) and adult basic education (ABE) members away from a separate pay scale and onto the standard teacher salary schedule.

The locals that have reported making that move this year are the Bloomington Federation of Teachers, Chaska Education Association and Education Minnesota/Edina. They join the unions in Little Falls, Pequot Lakes, Sartell, South Washington County and Winona who already have been successful.

“We’ve been talking or thinking about this for 25 years,” said Chris Commers, president of the Chaska Education Association. “As we organize around the ‘Power of We,’ we wanted to make sure all our members felt valued and that we made sure we showed it. We’re all in this together.”

Commers said that the district had the same concerns it has had in the past about the expense and trying to figure out a cost when they wouldn’t know where all of the educators landed on the teacher salary schedule. The union asked that they assume all the ECFE and ABE teachers would be at the top of the schedule, even though they knew that wouldn’t be the case.

“We said that would be the maximum cost,” said Commers. “The number was so shockingly small, it kept the conversation going.”

New ULA language needed before 2019

Eleven local unions have reportedly bargained changes to the Unrequested Leave of Absence language in their 2017-19 contracts.

These locals made changes to existing language, using Education Minnesota’s suggested language: Holdingford, Cass Lake-Bena, Warren-Alvarado-Oslo and St. James.

Education Minnesota will be sharing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) strategy

this spring, focusing on locals who have only statutory references or no ULA process language in their current contracts.

Statute requires that locals have a negotiated plan beginning July 2019. Some districts have taken the position that it is not necessary to negotiate that language until the next contract. This position ignores two possibilities: one is that layoffs could occur without any negotiated process prior to the opening of the next agreement. The second is the new tiered licensure structure, which means Tier 1 and Tier 2 licensed teachers may be on staff in the 2018-19 school year. Without a negotiated ULA, there is no language in place to handle the layoff of Tier 1 and Tier 2 licensed teachers in the second year of the 2017-19 contract.

It is critical to have either language in the master agreement or an MOU in place prior to the spring of 2019 so that a clear, predictable process is in place should layoffs occur.

New ways of communicating

Communicating with members is often challenging with people working in different buildings and having busy schedules. Many locals use newsletters or emails to share information, but leaders in the Minnesota State College Faculty union are adding video to help reinforce their messages to members.

MSCF has started embedding YouTube videos from its president and legislative liaison into its weekly PDF newsletter that is emailed to members.

“We’ve been doing the weekly Minute for about three or four years,” said MSCF President Kevin Lindstrom. “We started doing the videos recently because people want to see you.”

“There is something about seeing a person,” said Mark Grant, MSCF’s legislative liaison. “You can feel more connected to the leadership.”

Lindstrom and Grant use their iPhones to record the messages and avoid scripts, using bullet points to guide what they hope is a more conversational message to their members.

“I don’t usually hear anything back when I sent out a text email,” said Grant. “But I have heard from four people saying they liked the video message.”

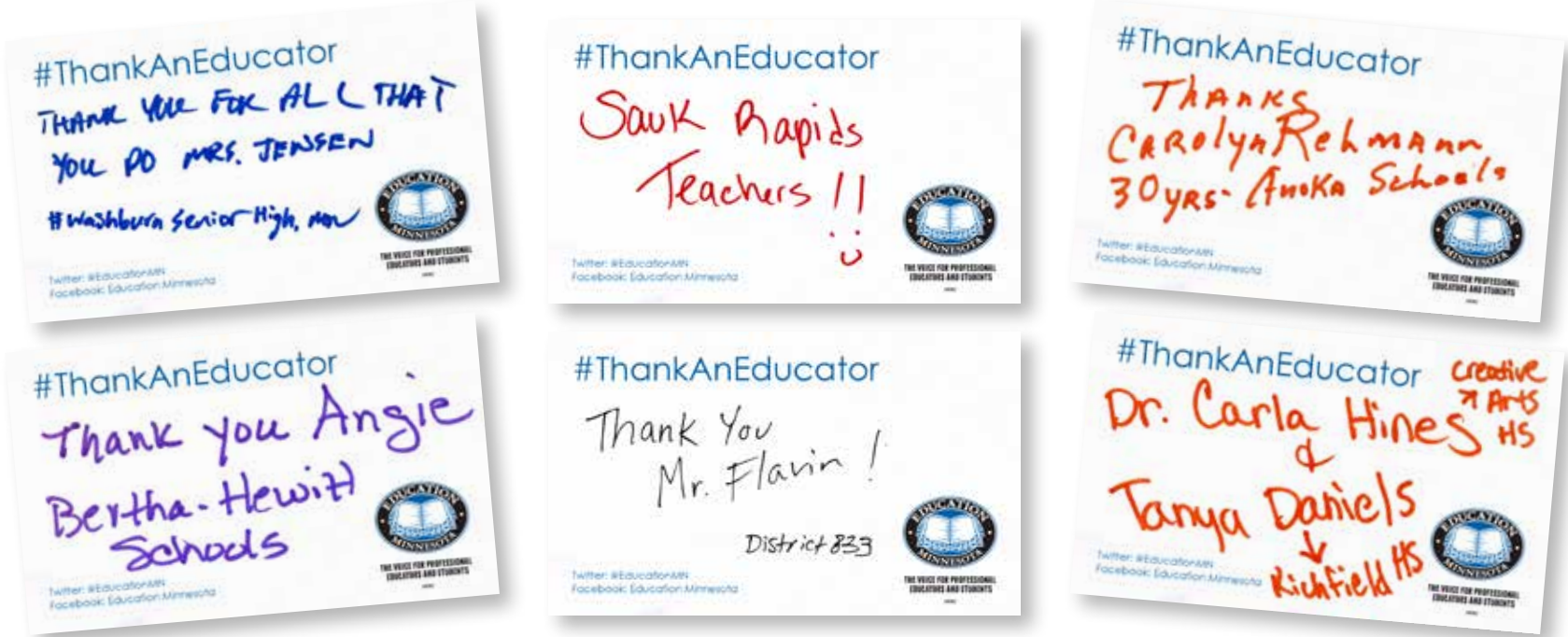
The videos are uploaded to MSCF’s YouTube page using the “unlisted” setting, which requires people to have the link in order to find and play the video. But Grant and Lindstrom agree that any video message is just as easily shared as an email, so when they create the content, they keep in mind it could be shared to a broader audience.

Lindstrom still writes an article about bargaining in his newsletter, but knows the video is another avenue to get the information in front of members.

“I’m a believer in both and that the article is complemented by the video,” he said.

Thank you, educators!

Every year, thousands of kids and adults thank educators who were influential in their lives at Education Minnesota’s State Fair booth. We will feature a selection in each issue of the Minnesota Educator this year. Keep an eye out for your name!



Chaska teachers strengthen union by learning from past

Chris Commers, the local president of the Chaska Education Association, calls himself a student of history, and as he looks at how to organize his members today, he decided to look to the past.

“What are the examples that already exist to help people see the power of the union?” he said.

Commers has created a video sharing the history of the 1984 Chaska teachers strike and how it built the strength of the local, as well as the bond it created with the teaching staff.

“I hope people see the relationships and hear the words these people are saying, and think about their own colleagues and workplaces,” said Commers. “It reinforces the sense of the camaraderie in the union culture.”

The video features teachers who were working in Chaska during that time and who were involved in the union. Retired educators from the district meet for lunch once a month and shared their stories with Education Minnesota staff to create the video.

“We see retirees model the thinking that we’re hoping for in our union today,” Commers said. “We ask members why they are a

teacher and why they are a union member. The video really gets at those values from the retirees.”

Commers plans to share the video in a 10-minute meeting structure at his buildings, as well as with the local’s new members at the back-to-school luncheon next fall.

The video is part of the Chaska Education Association’s larger member engagement work being done by Commers and the rest of the union leadership.

“At our January meeting, our building reps from Pioneer Ridge Middle School, Jenny Forar and Eric Olson said, ‘What are we doing for Janus?’” Commers said.

The local decided to produce a handout that shared what the *Janus v. AFSCME* court case entailed and how it would affect the union at the local level.

“We were able to make it concise and readable,” Commers said.

The local’s building reps connected with members in person, shared the card and had a short conversation about the case and why it was important.

“It went over really well,” Commers said. “People feel like they have a better understanding of what the court case is about and the



The Chaska Education Association went on strike in 1984. Today, the local is sharing that story as a reminder to members about the strength of collective action.

implications for us.”

Commers hopes to reinforce this message at their teacher appreciation event in May and would like to plan another event that focuses on the need for strength in the union and tying that message into why the election in November is important for the future of unions and public education.

“Our teachers adjust their work every day to meet the needs of learners,” Commers said. “How do we transfer this idea to our union work? How do we welcome new, younger members in and give them the ability to see their self-interests in being active

in the union?”

Commers hopes that seeing how teachers in 1984 fought for issues like dedicated prep time for elementary teachers, collaboration with the district

and a salary that kept up with surrounding districts can make that connection for some people.

“We have a rich history here,” he said.

1984 CHASKA STRIKE

The Chaska Education Association went on strike for 22 student days in February and March of 1984. The local fought for dedicated prep time for elementary teachers, increases to salary and benefits and demanded more respect and collaboration from the administration.

The local has created a video to show current members the history of unionism and activism in the district.

Teachers featured in the video include Mary Booth, Fred Berg, Dan Pelowski, Martha Brown, Dave Zander and Susan Schierts.



Planning for retirement?

Attend an upcoming ESI workshop this spring or summer

April and May workshops

for members with a TRA pension unless otherwise noted


April 10	Detroit Lakes Education MN Office	
	714 Lake Ave., Suite 105	
April 14	Rochester Community College	Weekday
	851 30th Ave. S.E.	4:15 Registration
April 19	Bemidji Education MN Office	4:45 - 7 p.m. Workshop
	677 Anne St. N.W., Suite E	
May 1	Woodbury Education MN Office	Saturday
	2042 Wooddale Dr., Suite 100	9:30 a.m. Registration
May 10	Duluth Education MN Office	10 - 12:30 p.m. Workshop
	639 E. Central Entrance	
May 15	Davanni’s - Golden Valley	
	663 Winnetka Avenue N.	

Seating is limited

Register early to secure your spot.

Spouses/guests are welcome

Watch your email for the link to register or you can contact Deb Skog at Deborah.skog@edmn.org 651-292-4856 (please leave your name(s) and which session you would like to attend)



41 Sherburne Ave., St. Paul, MN 55103
651-292-4856 800-642-4624
esi.educationminnesota.org


June and July workshops

for members with a TRA pension unless otherwise noted

June 14	Windom Education MN Office	
	560 Second Ave.	
June 18	St. Cloud Education MN Office	
	3051 2nd St. S., Suite 200	All summer workshops
June 19	Prairie Woods - Spicer	9:30 a.m. Registration
	12718 10th St. N.E.	10 - 12:30 p.m. Workshop
July 10	MN Landscape Arboretum	
	3675 Arboretum Dr.	
July 10	MN Landscape Arboretum	*for members with a PERA pension
	3675 Arboretum Dr.	
July 11	Apple Valley Education MN Office	
	6950 146th St. W., Suite 114	
July 12	Brooklyn Park Education MN Office	
	9210 Wyoming Ave. N., Suite 200	

Topics to be discussed include:

- Local contract information including what to look for in your contract before you retiree
- Pension education including learning how benefits are calculated
- Financial planning including how to bridge the gap between what you will receive from a pension and what you need to retire
- Asset protection including how you can protect your assets and savings



Member Benefits

Paid for by ESI, not by dues. ESI is self-supporting; revenues provide benefits, service and consumer education for members. Securities offered through Advanced Advisor Group, Member FINRA & SIPC Investment Advisory Services offered through Educators Financial Services, A Registered Investment Advisor. 440 Emerson St N Ste 4, Cambridge MN 55008. (877) 403-2374 Advanced Advisor Group and Educators Financial Services are affiliates under common control D/B/A EFS Advisors and are not affiliated with Education Minnesota/ESI



Volunteers needed for 2018 NEA RA

With the 2018 National Education Association’s Representative Assembly being held in Minneapolis, June 30-July 5, volunteers are needed to help the event run smoothly.

Members can learn more and register for volunteer shifts at <https://goo.gl/6Cnpab>. Members can also contact the host committee at neara2018@gmail.com. Volunteers will receive a \$40 per day stipend, plus breakfast, lunch and parking. Volunteers can be Education Minnesota members, their friends, family or anyone over the age of 15.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDE:

Delegate services

The delegate services committee provides services for delegates with physical challenges.

Information and registration

The information and registration committee provides volunteers for information booth and registration areas.

NEA Fund for Children

The NEA Fund for Children and Public Education is charged with soliciting voluntary contributions from NEA members, their family members, and NEA and affiliate staff for use in the campaigns of candidates for federal office.

RA telephone network

The RA telephone network committee is responsible for staffing and operating the microphone and telephone system used by delegates to communicate with the presiding officer and the assembly in order to participate in the association’s business.

Event services

The event services committee includes volunteer opportunities such as ushers, floaters, host committee room monitor for meals, HCR dinner, joint conference, and other special event help as assigned.

Apply for funding to attend the AFT Convention

The American Federation of Teachers will hold its convention July 13-16 at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

The biennial AFT convention is the most important policymaking body for the union. Delegates will consider an array of issues through resolutions as well as constitution and bylaws measures.

Delegates also will elect the AFT president, secretary-treasurer, executive vice president and the vice presidents for the national union.

Education Minnesota will provide funding for one local delegate from each election district, one ESP local delegate, and one Higher Ed local delegate (total of 22 funded delegates).

Local presidents should have received an information packet from the American Federation of Teachers that includes a tentative schedule and hotel and conference forms.

To be eligible, local delegates must first be elected from their local. Local members who would like to apply for state funding should go online to [http://](http://bit.ly/AFTConvention18)

bit.ly/AFTConvention18 and complete the funding interest form by May 7.

Names of funded local delegates will be selected by a drawing, and local delegates awarded funding will be selected on May 11. Funding includes airfare, hotel accommodations and meals.

Those awarded funding will be notified and sent the necessary information.

For questions on state funding, contact Wanda Cone, Education Minnesota staff at 800-652-9073 ext. 4822, 651-292-4822 or wanda.cone@edmn.org.

2018 AFT CONVENTION

July 13-16 – Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

To be considered for state funding, please fill out the Funding Interest Form at <http://bit.ly/AFTConvention18>.

Forms must be submitted by Monday, May 7.

Selection will be made Friday, May 11.

If you have problems with the online form, please contact Wanda Cone at wanda.cone@edmn.org or 651-292-4822 or 800-652-9073, ext. 4822.

Teachers!
Receive your
Special Ed.
Licensure at
Bethany!

Endorsements for
middle level content
and preprimary available.



Mankato, Minnesota
www.blc.edu

How locals can prepare for Janus decision

On Feb. 26, the U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments in *Janus v. AFSCME Council 31*, a case we have written about in this and previous issues. In *Janus*, the court will consider the constitutionality of fair-share fees. The arguments were lively and clearly left the justices with much to consider.

The justices peppered advocates with questions about the effects of overturning a 40-year-old precedent that permits unions to receive fees from individuals who do not wish to be union members, but who enjoy the benefit of a collective bargaining agreement, among other things.

If the decision is favorable, the court will continue to respect existing legal precedent that we have long relied upon in budgeting and providing services for our members. If the decision is adverse, it will mean that non-members can no longer be charged for the services they receive.

This case will not change the good work that our unions and union members

do. We are all in this together, and we are stronger workers when we have strong workplace protections.

Nevertheless, an adverse decision will have some important consequences. Therefore, I offer three suggestions for how to prepare for the *Janus* decision, which will be published at some point during the next two months.

1. Let your district know this may be coming.

If the *Janus* decision rules that fair-share fees are no longer permissible, unions will have to work in partnership with the district to comply with the court's decision. It is crucial that districts stop withholding fair-share fees right away because the court's decision will take effect immediately.

Most districts will be able to adjust to this decision in the course of a lagged payroll. For those districts operating a current payroll, it will be necessary to halt the payroll if at all possible. If the district does accidentally send erroneously deducted fair-share fees to your local, be ready to escrow that money so that it can be returned

immediately to the district.

It will be important to implement the court's decision as quickly as possible to avoid unnecessary and frivolous litigation about fair-share fees. Because the *Janus* case is, itself, an effort to weaken unions, we should expect that there will be some individuals who wish to engage in bad faith lawsuits in order to waste time and money. We can and should do what we can to avoid this.

2. Check your roster.

Regardless of the court's decision, it is wise to take a look at your membership roster and ensure that it is up to date. For those of you who have already completed membership renewals, or are in the midst of that process, you can be confident that you have the most up-to-date information concerning who in the bargaining unit is currently a fair-share payer.

In many instances, individuals who are not members simply haven't had an opportunity to fill out a membership form or speak with a membership chair. Reviewing your roster is an opportunity to identify those colleagues who would likely

join your ranks, if asked. It is also a chance to ensure that, if the district does need to stop withholding fees after the *Janus* decision, both the union and the district are confident about which employees are affected by the case.

3. Continue to talk to your members.

Our best work as union members and colleagues is a result of the conversations that we have with each other. While the hard work of organizing is nothing new to Education Minnesota members, the *Janus* case can serve as a conversation starter for harder discussions about what it means for colleagues to participate in the union, as well as enjoy its benefits.

Education Minnesota has created materials to help local leaders have discussions at the building level and on a one-to-one basis with members and future members. To see these resources, go to www.educationminnesota.org/advocacy.aspx#Member-engagement.

The *Janus* case will not achieve its purpose, which is to weaken public sector

LEGAL BRIEFS

unions and deny educators a voice in the policies that affect their students, unless we allow it to. Education Minnesota is as committed to educators and the students they serve as ever, and we will continue to find innovative ways to improve our members' working conditions. What *Janus* does is bring into clear focus the value of what we can do for each other as union brothers and sisters.

It is important to be prepared for an adverse decision, because there are a few short-term modifications that unions and districts will need to make on the day the court issues a decision in order to comply with a change in the law. However, that day will come and go, and our obligations to each other will not change.

♦ **Meg Luger-Nikolai**
Luger-Nikolai is a staff attorney for Education Minnesota.

MEMBERS WANT TO KNOW

INTRODUCING A NEW BENEFIT FOR MEMBERS ONLY

Shop millions of products and pay over time.

Zebit

No interest. No membership fees. No credit check.



zebit.com/edmn

41 Sherburne Ave., St. Paul, MN 55103 651-292-4856 800-642-4624 esi.educationminnesota.org esi@edmn.org

Paid for by ESI, not by dues. ESI's self-supporting revenues provide benefits, service and consumer education for members. What do YOU want to know? Send questions to esi@edmn.org.



EDUCATION MINNESOTA OPPORTUNITIES

COLLABORATION LAB BRINGS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO DISTRICTS

The Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning now offers professional development opportunities for school districts and their staff.

The single-day professional development or collaborative meetings will focus on racial equity or relationship building around Teacher Development and Evaluation or specific building issues.

Research has shown that a collaboration between staff and management positively impacts student achievement.

The foundation will work with a district’s administration and staff to build positive relationships between staff and management to:

- Create systems and structures that support collaboration, deepen understanding of

stakeholders and provide honest feedback that can lead to better outcomes for a specific project.

- Support sustainability of these systems and structures so that there is collaboration that takes place regardless of personalities of specific individuals in leadership.
- Reach positive outcomes on a shared goal, project or objective.

Districts will be charged a \$1,000 base partnership fee that will be a charitable donation to the foundation. This fee will get districts:

- Facilitation at four meetings for one yearlong project, including all of the tools for collaboration to make that project; OR
- One full professional development day including all trainers; OR

- Two half-day professional development sessions including all trainers.

Any additional requests for professional development sessions or staff time and facilitation will be charged back to districts at a rate of \$120 per hour. This rate includes prep and travel time to and from professional development sessions or meetings, phone calls or any other work related to the professional development or project.

Staff and management are required to participate in and agree to all professional development, collaboration or goals that are worked on by the foundation.

For more information on the collaboration lab or to fill out an interest form, go to <http://edmnfoundation.org/collaboration-lab>.

ABOUT THIS PAGE

The Minnesota Educator provides opportunities listings on this page as a member service, highlighting the free and low-cost professional development the union provides. The page also lists conferences, training and resources of possible interest. Readers interested in pursuing an opportunity should check it out carefully. The Educator tries to include only legitimate, useful opportunities that support education practice.

To submit an opportunity:

- Send a complete description of your opportunity to educator@edmn.org.
- Send your item by the first Friday of the month to be considered for the next month’s Opportunities page. Include daytime contact information.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ESP regional trainings focus on school safety

This spring, Education Minnesota is offering a free training for education support professionals, called “Advocating for ESP Safety and Voice.” The trainings will be held at locations across the state. Attendees will learn about skills and strategies to advocate for safer working conditions while continuing to meet the growing and changing needs of students—focusing specifically on positioning ESPs as a critical voice in educating the whole child. Dinner will be provided and continuing education credits are available.

Find the meeting nearest you and register at www.educationminnesota.org/resources/esps/esp-regional-meetings.

Department of Education hosts Q Comp workshops

The Minnesota Department of Education is offering a series of Q Comp workshops in April. Teams will focus on collecting and analyzing different data to make informed decisions about the effectiveness of current programs. The workshops will take place April 17 in Roseville, April 19 in Mountain Iron, April 25 in Rochester, April 26 in Marshall and April 30 in St. Cloud.

For more information or to register, go to <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/about/cal/index.htm> and find the date for the “Using Data to Inform and Improve Practice” workshop you would like to attend.

Free Holocaust studies seminar

“The Holocaust and the Meaning of Place,” a Minnesota Holocaust Educators Network seminar, will be held July 29-Aug. 4 at the University of Minnesota. Sponsored by the Olga Lengyel Institute for Holocaust Studies and Human Rights, the seminar is free of charge to participants, with additional support provided by the Minnesota Writing Project and the Shakopee Mdewakanton and Upper Sioux communities. Attendees will explore lessons and activities for teaching about the Holocaust and Minnesota’s Dakota exile through personal testimonies and place-based experiences, including day trips to Mount Zion Temple and historic Dakota sites, such as Bdote (Mendota)

and Mankato. Participants will receive copies of relevant texts, 55 continuing education units and a \$100 stipend. Attendees will also be eligible to apply for classroom mini-grants of up to \$1,000 following completion of the seminar. Most meals and transportation to sites will be provided.

For further information or to apply, go to www.toli.us/satellite-program/st-paul.

School social workers spring conference

The Minnesota School Social Workers Association will host its spring conference on April 11 at the TIES Event Center in St. Paul. Conference sessions will focus on dealing with suicidal thoughts, self-injury, means restriction education and a train the trainer workshop on suicide awareness and prevention. Continuing education units are available and lunch will be provided.

For more information or to register, go to <http://msswa.org/event-2788673>.

School counselors spring conference

The Minnesota School Counselors Association will hold its spring conference April 29-May 1 at Madden’s on Gull Lake in Brainerd. The conference features keynote speakers Mike Smith and Manny Scott, as well as numerous breakout sessions. Pre-conference sessions are also available. Registration fees range from \$50 to \$210.

For more information or to register, go to www.mnschoolcounselors.org/events.

Teaching in the outdoor classroom workshop

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is hosting a workshop for educators on teaching in the outdoor classroom. The workshop takes place June 25-28 at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center in Fergus Falls. Participants will learn how to use the outdoors as a classroom with integrated curriculum and in support of state academic standards. They will gain knowledge and hands-on experience with the prairie pothole ecosystem, discover ways to motivate students, strengthen outdoor teaching and reflection skills and apply those skills to indoor curriculum. Participants receive 30 clock hours of continuing education credit. The registration fee is \$50. An option of free lodging is available.

For more information and to register, visit www.friendsofprairiewetlands.com.

GRANTS AND AWARDS

Education Minnesota professional development, classroom grant applications due April 6

The Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning is offering its classroom, education support professional and higher education faculty professional development grants for a second time this spring, with applications due April 6. Higher education members can request up to \$3,000 and ESP and teacher members can access up to \$1,500.

For more information about the foundation or how to apply for a grant, go to www.edmnfoundation.org.

Voya Unsung Heroes grant

Voya Financial is honoring educators with its Unsung Heroes grant program. The grants will go to educators who have a project that utilizes new teaching methods and techniques that improve

learning. Each year, 100 finalists are selected to receive a \$2,000 grant. The winning projects are chosen based on the creativity of the idea, the teaching method applied and the ability to positively influence students. Out of the 100 finalists, three will be selected to receive enhanced awards: \$5,000 for third place; \$10,000 for second place; and \$25,000 for first place. Applications are due April 30.

For more information about the program or how to apply, go to Voya.com/UnsungHeroes.

Como Zoo field trip grants available

The Yellow Bus Fund is designed to assist school-aged children who would otherwise not be financially able to visit environmental learning centers like the Como Park Zoo and Conservatory. Through this grant, the zoo is able to offset some field trip costs when you book a program with its education department. Allocation of funds will be determined both by the number of students served and a statement of need. Reimbursement rates will be distributed at the discretion of the program coordinator through one of two ways—either at a rate of up to \$3 per participant, or to cover the cost of the scheduled programs.

Also available are grants through Project Lighthouse, which provides grants to schools, libraries, rec centers, and other organizations to pay for science-based programming. Como Park Zoo and Conservatory is one of Project Lighthouse’s approved educational organizations.

For more information or how to apply, go to www.comozooconservatory.org/education and click on “Grants for school and group programs.”

Music, arts grant available

California Casualty, the company that provides the NEA® Auto & Home Insurance Program, has introduced a new grant program to benefit public school music and arts programs. K-12 schools in Minnesota can apply for up to \$500. The deadline is June 30, with grants awarded in September. The funds must be used to subsidize music and arts programs at the school. Applicants must be a current member, or referred by a current member, of Education Minnesota. The grant is designed to foster creativity in schools such as choir, band, dance, film, theater, computer arts and graphics and any K-12 curriculum that employs art for learning.

Apply now for the California Casualty Music and Arts Grant at www.calcasmusicartsgrant.com.

CLASSROOM RESOURCES

Reading, language arts resources

ReadWriteThink is an online resource for educators featuring classroom materials and professional development, sponsored in part by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Literacy Association. The site features lesson plans, student interactives, mobile app suggestions, printouts and calendars for educators. Also available are online professional development resources, videos and parent and after-school resources. Educators can search by grade level, lesson plan type, theme, learning objective, units and more.

To see all of the offerings, go to www.readwritethink.org.

PAGE 12

MINNESOTA
EDUCATOR

APRIL 2018 | WWW.EDUCATIONMINNESOTA.ORG