

MINNESOTA EDUCATOR

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2020

**UNIONS
ORGANIZE
AROUND SAFE,
EQUITABLE
REOPENING
PLANS**

MEA GOES VIRTUAL!



THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

Access free professional development online!

Education Minnesota's professional development offerings are now becoming available on the platform, LearnUpon.

Education Minnesota members will be able to access free professional development to improve their professional practice and earn CEU credits for relicensure as well as build union understanding and power.

The majority of courses will be pre-recorded. Some will be offered live via webinar and some will be a combination of both.

To access the platform, members must use the login information that was sent by the LearnUpon system on July 1. Often these messages can go into spam or junk folders, so please check all folders to find the email from notifications@learnupon.com. If you still can't find your email invite or have any questions, please email learnupon@edmn.org.

Course offerings include:

- ▶ *Certified Negotiator Program for Teachers*
- ▶ *Certified Negotiator Program for Education Support Professionals Parts 1-4*
- ▶ *Cultural Competency Training Parts 1-4 (relicensure)*
- ▶ *Culturally Responsive Teaching Through a Racial Justice Lens*
- ▶ *Degrees, Not Debt*
- ▶ *English Learners (relicensure)*
- ▶ *MRA (Member Rights Advocacy) Part 1*
- ▶ *Reading (relicensure)*
- ▶ *Worksite Unity Leader Training Part 1*

More information, including a video on using the platform, is available at edmn.me/learnupon.



THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS





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October/November 2020 – Volume 23, No. 2

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To inquire about advertising in the Educator or on the website:

Email: kaitlyn.peterson@edmn.org
Phone: 651-292-4829

For general inquiries and business at the state headquarters:

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

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The Minnesota Educator is published for members to share news about education issues and training opportunities for educators as well as union and political news that affects public education in Minnesota.

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Contributing Authors: **Megan Boldt**

Art Director: **Eric Widi**



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COVER PHOTO: Anoka-Hennepin Education Minnesota members held a socially distanced rally outside a school board meeting in late August to demand more communication and answers from the district around how they will safely and equitably reopen school buildings.

PANDEMIC DIDN'T CHANGE NEED FOR FULLY FUNDED PUBLIC EDUCATION

The pandemic hasn't shaken the belief of most Minnesotans that every child, no matter their grade, color or ZIP code, deserves a safe, welcoming school that prepares its students to pursue their dreams.

It's that belief that motivates parents and educators to vote this fall. Together, we can still swear in new leaders who will fund our lives, so we all can care for our families, set our students up to thrive, and have full and healthy futures ourselves.

I'm not ready to let our parents down by giving up on our commitment to fully funding public education in Minnesota, from preschool to college.

And I am not ready to concede the pandemic is a reason to slow our push to improve our schools for students of color.

If we don't make the case for fully and equitably funding public education, who will? Minnesota will never reach our goal if we don't push for it, year after year.

Our task was difficult before COVID-19 and the recession will only make it harder, but that's no reason to quit. We cannot settle for going back to normal because normal didn't work for many educators and students, especially students of color.

For too long, certain politicians have deprived educators of the resources we need to reach and teach every child, just as those politicians have called for reopening policies

that put families of color and families in poverty at higher risk during this pandemic.

Consider that over the last two decades, per-pupil aid to schools, in real dollars, has slipped by as much as \$2,000 per pupil. Even in 2016, when lawmakers made what they called a historic investment, they brought per-pupil funding only halfway back to its 2003 level.

To make up for the erosion in state funding, local school districts have turned to local levies. While the right thing to do locally and in the short term, these levies have now transferred too much of the financial burden for educating Minnesota's students from the very rich to Main Street businesses and working families. And it has created winners and losers in a system of public education that should be high-quality and uniform for every child.

At the federal level, the refusal of our leaders in Washington, D.C., to pay for Congress's commitments to special education services have contributed to a shortfall of more than \$700 million a year. That money is moved from Minnesota districts' general funds, in what's known as the cross subsidy, creating even more financial stress.

Now the same powerful few are trying to divide us by race and by place with their stories about the protests after the killing

of George Floyd by Minneapolis police.

They know that if we're made to fear each other, it will be easier to deny working families the well-funded schools, healthcare, housing and other services we all need.

Minnesotans can be greater than fear. We can pull together to rewrite the rules so the wealthiest 1 percent and the largest corporations finally start paying their fair share for the things that benefit us all.

There will be claims that there's not enough money to fund our lives, but those arguments are wrong. Even during this recession and time of budget deficits, there's plenty of money. It's just concentrated in the hands of a few billionaires and the balance sheets of multinational corporations.

This fall, it's time for educators to do their research and vote for the candidates willing to raise the revenue our students need. We can swear in leaders who reflect the very best of every kind of Minnesotan, who will make public education a top priority, and who will fully fund public education.

Together,



Twitter: @DeniseSpecht



Denise Specht

Mayo seeks educators for research

Researchers at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester are working toward stopping the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 by asymptomatic people, and they need the help of front-line educators for an ongoing study

The goal of the study, Mayo Clinic's Generation of Algorithms That Enable Early Detection of Symptomatic SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 Infection in High Risk Employees, is to determine whether there are subtle, early indicators of health changes that indicate a COVID-19 infection, or can predict the severity of symptoms after infection.

The researchers are seeking educators who will permit remote monitoring of their vital signs. The data gathered in the study may help scientists develop protocols that will help protect those at high-risk of exposure to the virus.

To learn more, visit the website, www.mayo.edu/research/remote-monitoring-covid19-symptoms/high-risk-workers or call 507-538-4849.

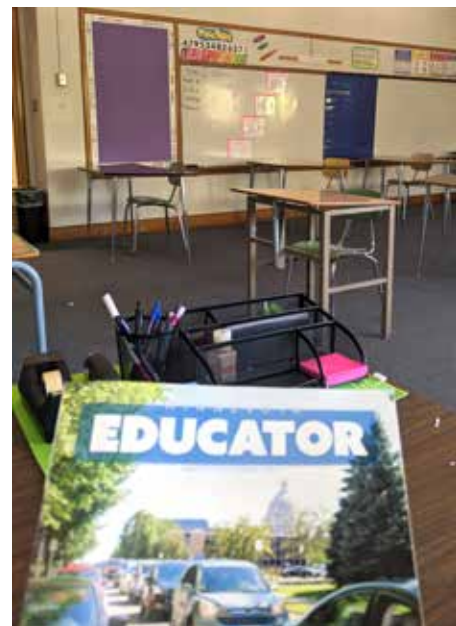
Where are you reading your Minnesota Educator?

Congratulations, Rachael Weess from Red Wing, for being this issue's winning submission!

We love seeing all of the places where you are reading your Minnesota Educator!

Email a photo to educator@edmn.org or share it on social media using #mneducator of where you are reading your Minnesota Educator to be entered into a drawing to win a \$50 Target gift card!

Submissions are due Nov. 6. Happy reading!



Getting social!

Educators use social media as a way to connect with their communities, colleagues and the world. We will feature posts from Education Minnesota members and locals each issue! Make sure to follow Education Minnesota on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube and Pinterest!



Educators in the news!

Education Minnesota members are often interviewed in their local newspapers or TV station. We will feature a quote each issue!

Any support we can gain for guidance counselors and mental health experts, it's an area that was lacking before COVID, but boy-oh-boy has COVID blown that up.

– Prior Lake-Savage teacher Leann Weikle, quoted in a WCCO TV story on Sept. 9. Weikle and other educators shared comments about reopening of school buildings for Dr. Jill Biden at a campaign event at Jeffers Pond Elementary.

REOPENING PLANS BRING LOCALS TOGETHER TO FIGHT FOR SAFETY, EQUITY

As school districts across the state began to put together their plans, local unions took the opportunity to organize and demand a safe and equitable return to school buildings.

Local unions in many locations had a seat at the decision-making table from the beginning as planning took place. Many didn't.

"Learning safely is the goal," said Education Minnesota President Denise Specht, in a press conference before the start of the school year. "It should be done in-person when we can, and at a distance when we must. What is safe must be defined by the latest data, the best scientific analysis and with an eye on the racial disparities that haunt our society. Looking at county numbers is not enough. Learning models should reflect what is safe to do in buildings."

As plans took shape and accommodation requests came in from educators who were high-risk or who have family members who are high-risk, the need for local union support became clear.

"We expect district administrators to follow the law in regards to these accommodations," Specht said. "If they don't, our members can rest assured that their union will use all legal means at its disposal to protect the rights of the most vulnerable educators, and their families, during this pandemic."

Many local unions took this as an opportunity to organize.

In Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose, local president Natalie Polaschek was invited to reopening planning meetings, but her input was limited or went unheard.

The local took action before a school board meeting with a socially-distant rally outside, and Polaschek read a statement inside to the board.

"The teachers of Education Minnesota Buffalo know our classrooms and buildings better than anyone, and without our input, we fear the administrators of our district will miss important

dangers to our students during this pandemic, and also opportunities to improve how we offer education to the children of our communities," Polaschek said in her board statement. "We ask that we have educator voices from all levels at the table to ensure our concerns surrounding cleaning and sanitizing, overall safety and social distancing at all grade levels are addressed."

After that action, more educators were invited onto the reopening task force. But the local still had concerns about accommodations requests being accepted. The local continued conversations with the district and their Education Minnesota field staff to make sure members' needs were being met.

In Anoka-Hennepin, one of the largest districts in the state, the concern was implementing and communicating a plan that kept all educators and students safe with many buildings and many employees, especially educators of color.

"As the district has developed its plan, educators have not heard a consistent message – whether that is about safety, ventilation, educator workloads, child care opportunities, assignments and more," said Anoka-Hennepin Education Minnesota President Val Holthus, in a press release before a rally outside a school board meeting at the end of August. "We want to be back in school with our students safely. We want our school buildings to not only reopen but to stay open safely. We want the district to make sure learning is safe for all students, and working conditions are safe for all educators."

The Anoka-Hennepin Teachers of Color Coalition wrote a letter to administration that outlined their concerns for safety.

"It is essential that you center their health and concerns to develop more creative and equitable solutions that provide educational access and meaningful participation and do not risk the lives and well-being of our beloved students, families and employees," the group said.

More than 300 educators attended the



The members of the White Bear Lake Educators Association rallied before a school board meeting in August to demand the district's plans for fall be safe and equitable for all students and staff.

rally in Anoka, and afterward, the district worked with Holthus and other educators to start working through issues.

As school began, the district and union were continuing to work on many issues regarding safety, workload and accommodations.

Educators of color in Osseo also wrote a letter to administration outlining their concerns.

Education Minnesota-Osseo members held two "car rallies" in the parking lot outside school board headquarters to demand a safe and equitable plan.

The district delayed the start of the school year by a week, and started with two weeks distance learning before moving to hybrid.

In Bloomington, the union organized town hall meetings and informational sessions with members when the district's hybrid plan didn't seem safe or equitable.

Jessica Rice, a member of the Bloomington Federation of Teachers, said that the union started holding meetings about the plan and educators' rights, as well as doing surveys to see how members were feeling.

"Enough members emailed requesting leaves. Enough members spoke out of concern for safety," Rice said during an Education Minnesota leadership event in late August. "A week later, the district revoted and decided to go full distance."

The district will be in distance learning until October, because they determined they wouldn't be able to staff a hybrid model.

Education Minnesota staff continue to work with locals as plans for fall and beyond evolve and the pandemic continues.

Please contact your field staff if you have any questions or concerns.

The COVID-19 resource page on our website is continually updated with more FAQs and information as well. Go to www.educationminnesota.org/resources/in-the-classroom/Coronavirus to see all of the information.

"We were able to shift the tide just by informing members of their rights," Rice said.

Organizing members is also what helped Cook County educators move their district to be fully distance learning until October.

"We had teachers on the planning committees this summer, so we knew the district was planning for full in person this fall," said teacher Amanda Hand, at the Education Minnesota leadership event in August. "We started surveying members and found that most didn't feel safe with in person or hybrid."

The educators started organizing membership meetings, developed talking points, spoke to the board, shared information on community Facebook pages and had parents and allies speak to the board.

HASSAN MAKES SURE STUDENTS, TEACHERS OF COLOR ARE SEEN

Qorsho Hassan knows what it's like to feel invisible at school, and because of that, she has spent the last eight years making sure no student feels the same way.

"A lot of my teachers didn't reflect me and didn't create space for me to be my authentic self," she said. "I've learned that I create a space where students can be themselves. They don't see their assets as deficits."

Hassan, who is Somali and Muslim, knows that for many of her students, she is a mirror, and for others, she is a window.

"We are windows to students to see a different culture, and then serve as mirrors to those students who haven't seen themselves in professions like teachers," she said.

This focus on equity and supporting all students is a big reason why Hassan was named the 2020 Minnesota Teacher of the Year this August.

Hassan is a fourth-grade teacher in Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan.

As the 2020-21 school year began, she was teaching in a hybrid model, which made her focus on meeting students' and families' needs even more necessary.

"With COVID-19, we're making a lot of changes with how we reach students and families," she said. "The parents and community are reaching out more. As teachers, we have been pretty good at advocating for services. But we want to be intentional about how we advocate. Things haven't always been equitable for our students of color. Teachers need to be allies for communities of color and students of color."

That is something Hassan does through relationship building and creating spaces where students can thrive.

"Qorsho is able to quickly form meaningful, authentic and sustaining relationships with students and families," said Dr. Chris Bellmont, principal at Gideon Pond Elementary in Burnsville, where Hassan taught last year. "She is then able to use strong, effective and innovative instructional strategies to leverage positive relationships into

profound learning experiences. Qorsho's classroom is vibrant, engaging, and features students using each other as resources to support learning."

Hassan knows that if students feel seen and heard, their educational achievements are much greater.

"I build strong relationships in order to know every single student as an individual," she said in her Teacher of the Year selection materials. "I use deescalation techniques to make sure my students feel valued even in their most challenging moments. By having high expectations and standards for all my students, I am able to see academic growth and progress as well as improvement in confidence and communication. I challenge systems of oppression such as poverty and racism by demanding more resources for my students and their families."

And as an educator of color, Hassan wants her peers to be seen and heard as well.

"Research proves that teachers of color are good for all students and even better for white students. However the retention of teachers of color is very low in Minnesota and the support provided to them is inadequate," she said. "I believe more leaders of color need access to spaces of decision-making in order to correctly address and fix implicit bias, systemic and structural racism. They will be able to dismantle the very system that holds students and communities of color back."

The COVID-19 pandemic and being at the epicenter of the racial justice reawakening has only magnified how educators and classrooms need to be a place for all voices and conversations, Hassan said.

"As educators, we have a wonderful platform to expose students to the world that may be broader than what they experience," she said. "As educators, we have that power. And we need to use that power for good."



Qorsho Hassan

NINE OTHERS HONORED AS TEACHER OF THE YEAR FINALISTS

Besides Hassan, nine other teachers were also finalists for 2020 Minnesota Teacher of the Year award. Here are their reflections on why they teach.

"I teach for the everlasting relationships I have built over 29 years. Those relationships are the most important part of my teaching."

DeWayne Combs, middle school physical education, Saint Paul Public Schools



"I want my moments of teaching to be something that can make memorable stories. And as I make those memorable moments, our community gets better, our schools get better, our society gets better."

Omar McMillan, elementary, Richfield Public Schools



"My classroom is a fun and engaging environment and a safe place for all of my students to learn at their pace with the tools they need to succeed."

Katie Coulson, elementary, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan School District



"Knowledge opens students' minds to new ideas, concepts and ultimately help shapes their ability to become lifelong learners."

Rachel Steil, high school English/journalism, Stillwater Area Public Schools



"Working with young people gives me hope for the future. I believe in the power of education to make this world a better place."

Shannon Finnegan, high school social studies, Hopkins Public Schools



"I teach through a lens of equity, because I believe every perspective and every voice matters."

Maria Villavicencio, elementary, Eden Prairie Schools



"I have an unconditional belief in my students and I am committed to making sure that they know their voices are important and heard."

Maya Kruger, middle school language arts, St. Anthony-New Brighton School District



"I want every child who walks through my classroom doors, including my own, to feel safe, to feel loved and to feel empowered."

Katie Watland, middle school science, Lake Park Audubon School District



"Seeing them graduate is not about data points. Regardless of their destination, I'm proud of them because they have overcome obstacles that many of us will never know or understand."

Ryan (Caleb) Larson, junior/senior high school English, Pine City Public Schools



The 2020 Minnesota Teacher of the Year finalists at the recognition ceremony at the state Capitol in August. (From left) Ryan (Caleb) Larson, DeWayne Combs, Maria Villavicencio, Maya Kruger, Rachel Steil, Katie Watland, Qorsho Hassan, Omar McMillan, Shannon Finnegan and Katie Coulson.



LEAGUE OF LATINX EDUCATORS CELEBRATE HERITAGE MONTH

National Hispanic Heritage Month, Sept. 15-Oct. 15, recognizes the contributions and influence of Latinx Americans to the history, culture and achievements of the United States.

Minnesota's League of Latinx Educators kicked off the month with a video celebrating Latinx educators and the need for more representation.

"This 15th of September, we celebrate the month of Latinx heritage culture," said Sabrina Tapia Contreras, a teacher in Prior Lake-Savage who sits on the LLE executive board. "As Latinx teachers, we would like to celebrate the rich and vast diversity that involve our Latinx roots and feel proud of being Latino or Latina."

The League of Latinx Educators is a community built to support and retain Latinx educators, celebrate Latinx cultural identity and advocate for racial equity in our Minnesota schools in

order to liberate Latinx peoples from inherited colonialism and systems of oppression.

Membership is free and open to educators and high school students interested in studying to be educators, living within Minnesota who self-identify as Latinx.

"My favorite part of being an educator is being the link and communication between my Latino students and families to our district," said Eden Prairie teacher María José Villavicencio. "As we know, representation matters."

"I am so proud to be Latina and share my culture," said Karen Coronel, a Prior Lake-Savage teacher. "I work with children

that are very young and from an early age they grow to appreciate our culture, and their own culture and traditions and break all those negative schemes that they might have had in respect to Latinx origins."

Roberto Pratts, a teacher in South Washington County, said that having Latinx adults as educators is important for all students, especially Latinx students.

"I think Latinx students should become educators because future generations need to see adults that look like them in front of the classroom, teaching for the culture and uplifting and continuing to move our culture forward for future generations to come," he said.



Connect with the League of Latinx Educators

<https://sites.google.com/view/leagueoflatinxeducators>

www.twitter.com/latino_league

www.facebook.com/latinxeducators

www.instagram.com/leagueoflatinxeducators

Classroom resources for celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month

NEA: www.nea.org/resource-library/hispanic-heritage-month

AFT: www.sharemylesson.com/collections/hispanic-heritage-month-activities

Colorín Colorado: www.colorincolorado.org/libros-autores/calendario-de-alfabetizacion/hispanic-heritage-month

FUND PROVIDED ASSISTANCE TO SCHOOL, CHILD CARE WORKERS

The School and Child Care Worker Relief Fund recently distributed financial assistance to 90 employees from partner groups, including education support professionals who are Education Minnesota members.

The COVID-19 crisis has disproportionately impacted Black and brown workers and families. Additionally, Black and brown workers make up an inordinate percentage of our schools' hourly school employees which includes child care workers, paraprofessionals, educators and school support staff.

That's why the Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, Education Minnesota, SEIU Local 284 and ISAIH's Kids Count On Us Coalition created a fund to help school workers, child care workers and educators who have been laid off by their districts, under the threat of being laid off or have had to close their child care centers due to the current COVID-19 crisis.

The effort raised more than \$60,000 over the summer.

"These educators and caregivers don't get the respect or wages they deserve during good times, and they are the first to lose pay or face layoffs during a crisis," said Education Minnesota President Denise Specht when the fund was launched. "Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic and the school closures that have come along with it have threatened the economic security of tens of thousands of school employees and child care workers."

Workers affiliated with Education Minnesota, SEIU Local 284 and ISAIH's Kids Count on Us Coalition were able to apply for financial assistance at the end of the summer.

ESPs from Education Minnesota applied if they

had been financially impacted by COVID-19, such as loss of hours, being laid off or furloughed.

More than 180 people applied during the short application window.

A team of child care center directors, ESPs and teachers—representatives from the three partner organizations—reviewed all the applications. They based selection off of having an affiliation to one of the organizations, as well as equitable representation across all partners.

They also looked to support members from marginalized communities, whom COVID-19 has hit hardest. The team also made sure the recipients were hourly workers.

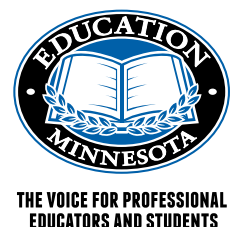
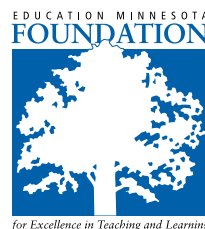
The team spent two weeks reviewing the applications, with many of the team taking time out of their evenings after being in school.

The partnership of these organizations has come from a year-long work group of educators looking at the early childhood education system in Minnesota.

The EPIC 0-5 Care and Education paper, produced by Education Minnesota and ISAIH, will be released in January, with research and recommendations.

Relief fund organizers continue to seek out opportunities to raise money and find ways to support school and child care workers as the pandemic continues to affect their work. More funds may be available in the future.

More information will be posted on edmnfoundation.org and Education Minnesota's social media channels if it becomes available.



MEA CONFERENCE MOVES ONLINE

The 2020 Minnesota Educator Academy (MEA) conference will be held virtually this October due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It will feature at least 20 live sessions via webinar Thursday, Oct. 15, including keynote speaker Dr. Bettina Love. There will also be new relicensure course offerings on Education Minnesota's online learning platform LearnUpon for members to complete at their own pace.

You can still earn continuing education credit, network with your peers and win prizes at Minnesota's largest professional development event for educators. To plan your visit, check out the schedule at www.educationminnesota.org/events/mea for complete workshop details as they become available.

QUICK FACTS

When: 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 15

Where: Online! Registration available soon at www.educationminnesota.org/events/mea.

Courses will be added as they become available.

Admission: Free and open to Education Minnesota members only.

General session: 9-10:15 a.m.

Workshops: 10:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Exhibits: Virtual

DR. BETTINA LOVE TO DELIVER KEYNOTE ON ABOLITIONIST TEACHING

Dr. Bettina Love will discuss the struggles and possibilities of committing to abolitionist goals and fighting for an education system where all students are thriving, not simply surviving.

The University of Georgia professor and award-winning author is an esteemed educational researcher and highly sought-after public speaker. Her writing, research, teaching and activism are centered around how educators, parents and communities can build schools rooted in abolitionist teaching and equitable classrooms that love and affirm Black and brown children.

Love speaks on a range of topics, including anti-racism, hip-hop education and feminism, Black girlhood, queer youth and art-based education to foster youth civic engagement.

She is the author of the books "We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the

Pursuit of Educational Freedom" and "Hip Hop's Li'l Sistas Speak: Negotiating Hip Hop Identities and Politics in the New South." Her work has appeared in numerous books and journals, including the English Journal, Urban Education, The Urban Review and the Journal of LGBT Youth. She also has provided commentary for various news outlets.

Love co-founded the Abolitionist Teaching Network (ATN) in 2020. ATN's mission is simple: develop and support teachers and parents to fight injustice within their schools and communities.



Asynchronous courses on LearnUpon

Education Minnesota launched LearnUpon this spring. Members can access our online catalog of professional development to improve their professional practice, earn CEU credits for relicensure and build union understanding and power.

Here are the courses that will be available for members by Friday, Oct. 16 (more might be added):

- Cultural Competency Training Parts 1–4
- Reading
- English Learners
- Student Mental Health
- Culturally Responsive Teaching Through a Racial Justice Lens
- Degrees, Not Debt
- Families First Coronavirus Response Act
- Member Benefits
- Building Representative—Roles and Responsibilities
- Certified Negotiator Program for Education Support Professionals
- Certified Negotiator Program for Teachers
- MRA I: Member Rights Advocacy Training
- Worksite Unity Leader Training Part 1

Help us promote MEA!

Post on Instagram and Twitter about your favorite MEA moments using #MEAmn20 for a chance to win a 256GB iPad Pro. Each post counts as one entry.

Take credit

You may be able to earn general continuing education credit for attending the MEA conference. An attendance certificate will be emailed to you after you complete the live workshop or LearnUpon session. In addition, some sessions might help you fulfill state relicensure requirements in reading instruction, identifying early-onset mental illness in students, positive behavioral interventions, cultural competency, English language learners and suicide prevention. Check with your district's continuing education committee on whether you will receive credit.



UNITY CAMPAIGN NEEDED NOW MORE THAN EVER, SAYS LEADERS

Education Minnesota's Unity Campaign focuses on electing pro-public education candidates and pushing them for the funding our schools and students. But the organizing happening in locals through the worksite unity leaders means much more, given the pandemic and racial justice movement. Learn how to join the campaign at edmnvotes.org

At a leadership assembly in August, Education Minnesota's Unity Table leaders shared why they are working together with their union this fall and beyond.

Paul Peltier, Fosston

I look around our group and I see some people who are somewhat immunocompromised. Some of them are elderly. Teachers at the end of their career, who are nervous about their station in life and how this COVID might hurt them.



And they're all looking for the answer to this question, how can you possibly help me with what is happening to me? And my answer to them is one word, it's together.

We've heard a lot about what's lacking, what's making our schools unsafe, what unhealthy places are turning out to be. And that some buildings, some protocols and some systems that aren't in place, they're not ready yet. And some of us are waiting for our buildings and our systems to catch up.

That is where we come in. That is the power of being a worksite unity leader.

You get to be an advocate for others. You get to do, in many cases, what you're already doing on grand scale.

We've heard about health and safety issues. And for many of our members, especially our members of color, our community members and students and their families, this racial justice issue is a safety issue.

This is a safety issue that we have to acknowledge, we have to own it and we have to come to it with a clean heart and an open mind.

Diana Ortiz-Hedges, Minnetonka

I was born and raised in San Juan, Puerto Rico. When we moved to Minnesota, I found myself in the town Prince lived. My family and I had found our place in this world.



However all of that came to a halt at the end of 2016.

From one day to the next, I saw this shift in our community. Our hallways were louder than ever. Kids were anxious. I had never felt more afraid.

And in all of that, I felt somehow that I was the problem, that my diversity was to blame.

I learned this was a collective pain felt by people across Minnesota.

I had no idea how to live with it, get rid of it or ignore any of it. I was stuck.

My voice was close to gone. I had all but given up. I was ready to throw in the towel.

My story is not unique. It is not only mine. I share it with people across the nation.

When George Floyd was murdered, my fear got angry. I drew the line in the sand.

I've found others in my building who found my sense of urgency. They have become my community of healing and hope.

Superman isn't coming. We need to do it like our lives depend on it.

Educators across Minnesota are facing one of the most challenging times in all of our career. When we do things together, there is nothing that can get in our way. We will come together in solidarity to rebuild our communities from the inside out.

MANY OPTIONS TO VOTE SAFELY

Early voting is now underway in Minnesota.

Education Minnesota members vote at very high rates, and even during a pandemic, that will remain true. And thankfully, Minnesotans have many options that make voting accessible and safe.

Voting by mail

You can request your ballot online. Make sure to track the status of your ballot, too. That can be done at www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/other-ways-to-vote/vote-early-by-mail.

The Secretary of State's Office is advising voters to request their ballots by Oct. 2 to ensure there is time for your ballot to be returned before Election Day. The best way to vote by mail is to fill out your ballot the day you receive it and get it back in the mail that day.

Voting early in person

Many cities and counties offer numerous days and locations for voting early in person. Find your nearest early voting polling place at www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/other-ways-to-vote/vote-early-in-person.

Voting in person on Election Day

Please make sure to do so safely, and please register ahead of time to limit your time spent in line. Find all the details at www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/election-day-voting.

Education Minnesota digital resources

Available now is an online voter guide that shows the endorsed candidates in your district, and more information about the races. Find that at edmnvotes.org/voter-guide.



Grants & Scholarships Available!

Grants:

Available for teachers, departments, or schools to support financial literacy efforts.

Scholarships:

Available for Educators, Education Major Students, & High School Students.



Visit www.uecu.coop/scholarships for details and applications.
Call UECU with questions at 651-264-0669.

EDUCATION MINNESOTA ENDORSED CANDIDATES

Education Minnesota screening teams have recommended the following candidates for election as of Sept. 22. More endorsements will be available at www.edmnvotes.org before Election Day, which also includes information on our endorsement and local screening processes, as well as our voter guide.

** indicates current or former Education Minnesota member*

+ indicates other union member

President

Joe Biden

U.S. Senate

Tina Smith

U.S. House of Representatives

CD1: Dan Feehan

CD3: Dean Phillips

CD5: Ilhan Omar

CD2: Angie Craig

CD4: Betty McCollum

CD7: Collin Peterson

Minnesota House

1A: Connie Lindstrom

12A: Murray Smart *

23A: Patricia Fahey Bacon

33A: Caitlin Cahill

2A: Jeremiah Liend

13B: Benjamin Carollo

23B: Leroy McClelland

33B: Kelly Morrison

2B: David Suby

14A: Tamara Calhoun +

24B: Ashley
Martinez-Perez

34A: Brian Raines

3A: Rob Ecklund

14B: Dan Wolgamott

25A: Kim Hicks +

34B: Kristin Bahner

4B: Paul Marquart*

15A: Calvin Schmock

25B: Liz Boldon

35A: Mike Erickson

5A: John Persell

15B: Ron Thiessen

26A: Tina Liebling

35B: Jason Ruffalo

5B: Joe Abeyta

16A: Doria Drost

26B: Randy Brock

36A: Zack Stephenson

6A: Julie Sandstede *

16B: Mindy Kimmel

27A: Thomas Martinez

36B: Melissa Hortman

6B: Dave Lislegard

17A: Ben Dolan +

27B: Jeanne Poppe *

37A: Erin Koegel

7A: Jennifer Schultz *

17B: Logan Kortgard

28A: Gene Pelowski Jr.

37B: Amir Malik

7B: Liz Olson

18A: Dean Urdahl *

28B: Greg Davids

38A: Kris Fredrick

8A: Brittany Johnson

18B: Heather Bakke *

29A: Renee Cardarelle +

38B: Ami Wazlawik

8B: Carol Wenner

19A: Jeff Brand

29B: Joe Rosh *

39B: Shelly Christensen

9A: Alex Hering

19B: Luke Frederick

30A: Chad Hobot

40A: Michael Nelson

9B: Laura Wright

20A: Erina Prom

30B: Brad Kovach

41A: Connie Bernardy

10A: Dale Menk

20B: Todd Lippert

31A: Brad Brown

41B: Sandra Feist

10B: Gaylene Spolarich

21A: Matt Bruns *

31B: Sue Larson

42A: Kelly Moller

11A: Mike Sundin +

21B: Elise Diesslin

32A: Renae Berg

42B: Jamie Becker-Finn

11B: Jack Frechette

22B: Rod Hamilton

32B: Katie Malchow

43A: Peter Fischer

43B: Leon Lillie	49A: Heather Edelson	54B: Kelsey Waits	60B: Mohamud Noor
44A: Ginny Klevorn	49B: Steve Elkins	55A: Brad Tabke	61A: Frank Hornstein
45A: Cedrick Frazier	50A: Michael Howard	55B: Andrea Nelsen	61B: Jamie Long
45B: Mike Freiberg	50B: Andrew Carlson	56A: Jessica Hanson	63A: Jim Davnie
46A: Ryan Winkler	51A: Sandra Masin	56B: Kaela Berg	66A: Alice Hausman
46B: Cheryl Youakim *	51B: Liz Reyer	57A: Robert Bierman +	66B: Athena Hollins
47A: Arlan Brinkmeier	52A: Rick Hansen	57B: John Huot	67A: John Thompson
47B: Daniel Kessler	52B: Ruth Richardson	58A: Erin Preese *	
48A: Laurie Pryor	53B: Steve Sandell	58B: Sara Wolf +	
48B: Carlie Kotyza-Witthuhn	54A: Anne Claflin	59A: Fue Lee	

Minnesota Senate

1: Reed Perkins	19: Nick Frentz	36: John Hoffman	50: Melissa Wiklund
2: Alan Roy	20: Jon Olson	37: Jerry Newton	51: Jim Carlson
4: Kent Eken	21: Ralph Kaehler	38: Justin Stofferahn	52: Matt Klein
5: Rita Albrecht	22: Shawna Marshall	39: Josiah Hill *	53: Susan Kent
6: David Tomassoni	24: Roger Steinkamp +	40: Chris Eaton	54: Karla Bigham
7: Jen McEwen	25: Sara Flick	41: Mary Kunesh-Podein *	55: Sahra Odowa
8: Michele Anderson	26: Aleta Borrud	42: Jason Isaacson *	56: Lindsey Port
9: A. John Peters	27: Dan Sparks	43: Charles Wiger +	57: Gregory Clausen
10: Steve Samuelson	28: Sarah Kruger	44: Ann Johnson Stewart	58: Matt Little
11: Michelle Lee	29: Chris Brazelton	45: Ann Rest	59: Bobby Joe Champion
12: Jill Abahsain	30: Diane Nguyen	46: Ron Latz	60: Kari Dziedzic
14: Aric Putnam	31: Katie Luthner	47: Addie Miller	61: Scott Dibble
15: Brent Krist	32: Joshua Fike +	48: Steve Cwodzinski *	63: Patricia Torres Ray
17: Fernando Alvarado	33: Gretchen Piper	49: Melisa Lopez Franzen	64: Erin Murphy
18: Chad Tschimperle	34: Bonnie Westlin		



DELEGATE SELECTION FOR 2021 NEA RA

The National Education Association Representative Assembly, the major decision-making body for the NEA, is currently planned to be held in person next July 2-6 in Denver, CO.

All active Education Minnesota members are eligible to run to be a state-credentialed delegate for the NEA RA. The filing period opens on Nov. 2 and closes Dec. 11. Do not submit the forms before the filing period begins.

Elections will take place in local districts during the 15-day window beginning Feb. 1 and ending Feb. 19. Elections will be held on weekdays only during this period.

Ballots will be mailed the last week of January to all local presidents in districts where an election is necessary.

Nominations for state-credentialed student delegates open Nov. 2 and close Feb. 12. Elections will take place on a date to be determined in April, if necessary.

Funding information for state-credentialed delegates

To receive funding, state-credentialed delegates must be in attendance for the entire Representative Assembly, beginning with the first caucus meeting through adjournment the night of July 6. State-credentialed delegates are expected to attend all caucus meetings and to be on the convention floor for all proceedings.

Funding includes: Airfare—travel arrangements to be made through the designated travel agent and direct-billed to Education Minnesota (alternative transportation will be reimbursed up to a predetermined amount); the cost of a double-occupancy room at the delegation hotel (to be direct-billed) for an authorized number of nights; and reimbursement for meals and other convention-related expenses (with original itemized receipts). Substitute costs for state delegates working in year-round school settings

will be covered as outlined in the Education Minnesota Financial Policy for Governance and Members.

Mileage to and from the airport is reimbursable at 20 cents a mile, along with the cost of airport parking.

No funding is available for Category 2 delegates, those who are retired or inactive members.

Funding information for small locals

A funding program is available to help locals with 150 or fewer members send a delegate to the Representative Assembly or the American Federation of Teachers TEACH conference. Local presidents will receive information. If you have any questions around the small local grant program, please contact Jessica Schmidt, jessica.schmidt@edmn.org.

FILING FORM FOR NEA RA STATE-CREDENTIALLED DELEGATE

This form must be filed with the Office of the Elections Committee of Education Minnesota. Please print clearly.

I, _____, hereby submit my name for state credentials to the NEA RA to be held July 2-6, 2021, in Denver, CO.

OR

I, _____, wish to nominate _____ for state credentials to the NEA RA to be held July 2-6, 2021, in Denver, CO.

I further certify that the nominee is eligible for state credentials as a delegate from:

_____ **Active Member – Election District:** _____ (K-12; statewide affiliates; and school-related personnel)

_____ **Category 2** (inactive NEA life member and not an Education Minnesota Retired member)

Please complete the following information:

Name: _____ Local: _____
 Home address: _____ City/State/ZIP: _____
 Home phone: _____ Cell phone: _____ Work phone: _____
 Work email: _____ Personal email: _____
 Signature: _____ Date: _____

Do not submit before filing period begins on Nov. 2. Deadline is 11:59 p.m. Dec. 11, 2020.

Scan and email completed form to elections.committee@edmn.org, submit by mail to: Office of the Elections Committee, Education Minnesota, 41 Sherburne Ave., St. Paul, MN 55103 or by fax to: 651-767-1266. If you do not receive confirmation of receipt within seven days after submitting, inquire by email to elections.committee@edmn.org. Note: Candidates may submit a photo and statement for inclusion on the Education Minnesota website. The photo and statement must be submitted using the online submission form at www.educationminnesota.org. Statement and photo must be submitted by **Dec. 17, 2020.**

(For official use only)

This filing form was received on _____ by _____. Membership was verified on _____ by _____.

FILING FORM FOR NEA RA STATE-CREDENTIALIAED DELEGATE – STUDENT

This form must be filed with the Office of the Elections Committee of Education Minnesota. Please print clearly.

I hereby submit my name for state credentials to the NEA RA to be held July 2-6, 2021, in Denver, CO. I further certify that the nominee is eligible for state credentials as a delegate from:

STUDENT

(must be an Education Minnesota Aspiring Educator member)

Please complete the following information:

Name: _____ College: _____
 School address: _____ City/State/ZIP: _____
 Home phone: _____ Cell phone: _____ Work phone: _____
 Work email: _____ Personal email: _____
 Summer address: _____ City/State/ZIP: _____
 Signature: _____ Date: _____

Do not submit before filing period begins on Nov. 2. Deadline is 11:59 p.m. Feb. 12, 2021.

Scan and email completed form to elections.committee@edmn.org, submit by mail to: Office of the Elections Committee, Education Minnesota, 41 Sherburne Ave., St. Paul, MN 55103 or by fax to: 651-767-1266. If you do not receive confirmation of receipt within seven days after submitting, inquire by email to elections.committee@edmn.org. Note: Candidates may submit a photo and statement for inclusion on the Education Minnesota website. The photo and statement must be submitted using the online submission form at www.educationminnesota.org. Statement and photo must be submitted by **Feb. 19, 2021**.

(For official use only)

This filing form was received on _____ by _____. Membership was verified on _____ by _____.

Make up for lost time this summer

Help your child thrive in the new school year



Brain Balance works with kids who struggle to help improve focus, behavior, learning and social skills. We'll build a customized plan based on your child's needs. Now offering programs both onsite and in a virtual, at-home format.

Program Available Onsite & Online, At Home

Brain Balance of Woodbury | Virtual

brainbalancecenters.com/locations/woodbury-mn/
651-731-6172



Brain Balance®
ACHIEVEMENT CENTERS

Political Action Committee Refund Request

Thousands of members of Education Minnesota decide to contribute to the union's political action committee. The PAC is one of our main tools to bring the educator voice to the policy debate by electing people who will listen. Those PAC dollars are used to win local levies and to back candidates and organizations that support lower class sizes, high standards and professional educators.

In accordance with Education Minnesota Bylaw Article 2, Section 3, Subd. b, I hereby request the following:

____ Please refund to me \$25 of my contribution to Education Minnesota's dues that will be contributed to the general account of Education Minnesota Political Action Committee for the 2020-21 academic year.

ALL OF THE FOLLOWING FIELDS ARE REQUIRED. PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY.

Name: _____

Last 4 digits of SS#: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Local/Affiliate: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

A request for refund of the Education Minnesota Political Action Committee contribution will not affect membership rights or benefits. Retired members are not assessed, thus do not qualify for the refund.

DEADLINE FOR REFUNDS:

Refund requests MUST be received by the Education Minnesota Political Action fund:

- 1) By Oct. 31 for continuing members; or
- 2) Within 30 days of signing a membership application for new members.

CHECKS WILL NOT BE MAILED UNTIL THE END OF NOVEMBER, AFTER ALL FORMS HAVE BEEN PROCESSED.

ORIGINAL SIGNATURE NEEDED.

Return this form to:
Education Minnesota Accounting Department
Attn: Refund Request
41 Sherburne Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55103-2196

Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning Refund Request

Contributions to this foundation will provide financial support for innovative programs initiated by Education Minnesota members, locals and affiliates that promote educational access for learners and excellence in teaching. Grants also support professional development for education support professionals and higher education faculty.

In accordance with Education Minnesota Bylaw Article 2, Section 3, Subd. c, I hereby request the following:

____ Please refund to me \$ ____ (maximum \$5) of my Education Minnesota foundation assessment that will be contributed to the Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning for the 2020-21 academic year.

ALL OF THE FOLLOWING FIELDS ARE REQUIRED. PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY.

Name: _____

Last 4 digits of SS#: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Local/Affiliate: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

A request for refund of the Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning assessment will not affect Education Minnesota membership rights or benefits but will make you ineligible to receive a grant from this foundation. Retired members are not assessed, thus do not qualify for the refund.

DEADLINE FOR REFUNDS:

Refund requests must be received by the Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning:

- 1) By Oct. 31 for continuing members; or
- 2) Within 30 days of signing a membership application for new members.

CHECKS WILL NOT BE MAILED UNTIL THE END OF NOVEMBER, AFTER ALL FORMS HAVE BEEN PROCESSED.

ORIGINAL SIGNATURE NEEDED.

Return this form to:
Education Minnesota Accounting Department
Attn: Refund Request
41 Sherburne Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55103-2196

Grants

EDUCATION MINNESOTA FOUNDATION GRANT DEADLINES APPROACHING

The Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning has multiple grants with a deadline approaching. For details about the grants and how to apply, go to www.edmnfoundation.org. There's a grant waiting for you!

Professional Development Grants for teachers, ESPs and higher education faculty

Awarded twice a year, ESPs and teachers may request up to \$1,500, and higher education faculty may request up to \$3,000.

A Professional Development Grant can also be used for groups to either attend professional development or be trained at their worksite. Deadlines: Nov. 6 and April 2

National Board Certified Teachers Scholarship

Members can receive \$500 per component, up to \$1,000 total. Deadline: Nov. 6

Classroom-Focused Grants

Applicants may request up to \$3,000. Deadline: Dec. 4

Bruce Vento Science Educator Grant

For educators who teach science as part of their day and want to acquire and share new skills and knowledge; this grant may also fund equipment or materials needed in science classrooms. Deadline: Dec. 4

Professional development

TEACHING LANGUAGES, CULTURES VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

The Minnesota Council on the Teaching of Languages and Cultures is holding its annual conference virtually Nov. 6-7. Strands include heritage language, immigrant and BIPOC voices and narratives, teaching for proficiency and more. Go to <http://mctlc.org/event-3632968> for registration information and more.

SCIENCE TEACHERS' VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

The Minnesota Science Teachers Association's Conference on Science Education will be held

virtually Nov. 12-17. The conference will allow participants to still participate in sessions, presented by educators and exhibitors, and connect with colleagues through an event app and online. Conference strands include distance learning and equity, diversity and inclusion in science education. For more information or to register, go to www.mnsta.org/cgi/page.cgi/2020_Conference.html.

Classroom opportunities

ANTI-VAPING DOCUMENTARY

The Center for Prevention at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, with support from ClearWay Minnesota and the Minnesotans for a Smoke-Free Generation coalition, have created a documentary to show students the dangers of vaping and ways they can get involved to stop the rise of youth vaping in our state. The documentary features three teenagers who share their personal experiences, and also action and advocacy work to reverse the epidemic and protect the health of all Minnesotans. The documentary is available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=POKMPKcLwDQ.

Free K12 research
resources and ebooks for
every student in Minnesota

eLm

elibrarymn.org/mea

Free professional
development for educators

These services are provided by Minitex at the University of Minnesota Libraries, and are funded through the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Office of Higher Education.

PART-TIME FIELD PROGRAM ALLOWS FOR NEXT STEP IN UNION ADVOCACY

Applications for Education Minnesota's part-time field staff program are now open.

The program serves as a step for members to increase their union activism by taking on a part-time Education Minnesota staff role.

Program participants learn about how to support locals and members, and they are paid for their work alongside a current field staff who serves as a mentor. They work with local unions and help them with bargaining, member rights issues and more.

"I really enjoy the work of advocating for teachers, bringing people together to create positive change and solving problems," said Katy Tharaldson, a teacher in Minneapolis who is finishing her second year in the program. "The part-time field staff program was a great opportunity to learn more about this work while still being a teacher."

"I have always been active locally, and at the intermediate and state level of the union and I felt this was the next step for me," said Dennis Fischer, who recently went through the program and is now temporarily employed as a field staff.

"The feeling of making a larger difference to improve the lives of educators and students was something I wanted to continue. I then applied for the part-time field staff position," said Kari Rehrauer, who recently went through the program

and is now temporarily employed as a field staff.

"There are so many people working hard on our behalf and it has been really fun to meet them and learn more about the things Education Minnesota does to support education throughout our state," said Tharaldson.

"What has also become clear is that administration, superintendents, school boards do not necessarily put the needs of educators at a high priority," said Rehrauer. "This pandemic has shown that they may not even prioritize the safety of their staff. We must use our collective power to be the guardian for educators' rights or no one else will."

The field program is the largest portion of Education Minnesota's work.

The part-time field staff program is an avenue to bring new perspectives to field work. The inclusion of new, different and diverse voices helps to strengthen the field program, as different experiences and perspectives build a stronger field team.

Applications will remain open until mid-November and can be found at www.educationminnesota.org/about/careers.

The union encourages all members, and especially members of color, to apply.

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Nominations open Oct. 1 for the 2021 Minnesota Teacher of the Year award, and remain open through Nov. 15.

Nominations can be submitted online by accessing a simple nomination form on www.educationminnesota.org.

Eligible nominees must meet these criteria:

- *Teach in a public or nonpublic Pre-K through 12th-grade school or ECFE or Adult Basic Education program, working at least 50 percent of the time directly with students.*
- *Hold a bachelor's degree and a Minnesota teaching license.*
- *Have completed five years of teaching by the nomination deadline.*
- *Intend to teach during the 2021-22 school year.*

The Minnesota Teacher of the Year is in its 57th year as the state's official recognition program honoring excellence in education.

Education Minnesota organizes and underwrites the program, which means the union handles only the business of running the program, not the selection process.

Program and award support also comes from Education Minnesota ESI, Educators Lifetime Solutions, EFS Advisors, the Harvard Club of Minnesota Foundation, SMART Technologies and United Educators Credit Union.

Find out more about the selection process, eligibility, past recipients and more at www.educationminnesota.org/news/awards/teacher-of-the-year.

Minnesota
TEACHER
of the **YEAR**