



MINNESOTA EDUCATOR

A publication for the members of Education Minnesota

January 2017

In session

The 2017 legislative session kicks off Jan. 3 and with over 30 new legislators taking their seats, the need for educators to get involved has never been greater. A Republican-controlled House and Senate and a Democratic governor will be creating a budget bill and developing policy. Education Minnesota encourages all members to get informed and active. Read more on page 3 about Education Minnesota's priorities and how to stay up to date with what is happening throughout the session.

Educators helping shape Minnesota's ESSA plan

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is working on its implementation plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and educators have been actively involved in the process.

ESSA was signed into law in December 2015 and is the newest version of the 50-year-old federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, replacing the 2001 reauthorization known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB). ESSA emphasizes equity and gives states and schools more latitude to innovate, while maintaining a focus on accountability and

an emphasis on state and local systems of improvement. States are still expected to pursue educational equity for all students, as measured by student outcomes, access to high-quality educators and opportunities to build college and career readiness. Under ESSA, however, states and districts have greater flexibility in many areas than they did under NCLB or the flexibility waivers issued in the past few years.

Educators are working to ensure implementation of ESSA in Minnesota is successful and free of the unintended consequences of NCLB.

"This is the first time we've had a major change in education policy that educators were required to be part of the process," said Kate Schmidt, a teacher on leave and president of the Dakota County United Educators. "I knew I wanted to be involved. So many of our policies were created by people who haven't been in a classroom since they were in school."

The MDE must submit a plan outlining Minnesota's strategy to implement ESSA's requirements for assessments, accountability and supports based on community and educator input.

The state has been working on gathering input and creating its plan since last spring. The law's implementation date has been delayed a year, which means Minnesota will submit its plan for approval later this year. MDE will need to offer a period of public comment before submission.

"All educators should know what ESSA is," said Schmidt. "They should know the Minnesota plan and make public comment. Everyone should at least read a summary of the plan. You need to be aware. You need to give feedback on what it's like to be in schools."

"The national unions worked really hard to make sure teacher voice is involved. If we don't take part now, we may never get this chance again."

There are five committees looking at certain topics that will change under ESSA. Education Minnesota has tried to get staff and members represented on each committee. However, member participation has sometimes been limited by the department's decision to hold the meetings during regular working hours.

Schmidt has been involved

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WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Read the article about the upcoming legislative session and how you can get involved. Then answer the question, "What issue could Minnesota tackle at the Legislature this year that would help you most in your classroom or the profession?" and send it to us via email, Twitter or Facebook to be entered into a drawing for 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.

Congratulations to last month's contest winner, Jodi Prchal of Montgomery. See a selection of answers to last month's question on page 2.

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Elections won't change our commitment to students

The election changed the politics of our state, but it didn't change the principles of our union.

The Legislature will come back to the Capitol this month and find the members of Education Minnesota still committed to preparing all students for successful lives, regardless of where they live, the color of their skin or the challenges they face at home.

Great public education for everyone has always been the secret of Minnesota's success. Our schools and colleges trained the people who created the profits behind the Minnesota economy and who sustain our government by voting in record rates.

Public education, and the rest of the public sector, remains the key to the future for the next generation of Minnesotans. But the majority parties in the state House and Senate and U.S. Congress have a very different vision. We can already see the outlines of that future when we look to the new leaders in Washington, D.C.

As I write this, the president-elect has nominated:

- For treasury secretary, a man who led a bank that foreclosed on an estimated 36,000 homes and pocketed \$1 billion from the FDIC during the recent housing crisis.
- A man for commerce secretary who owned Sago Mine Number One in West Virginia when an explosion killed 12 miners in 2006. Inspectors cited the mine for



Denise Specht, president

96 "serious and substantial" safety violations the year before.

- A fossil fuels advocate and climate-change denier for EPA chief. The New York Times said, as Oklahoma attorney general, nominee Scott Pruitt "fought protections against mercury, arsenic and other toxic pollutants from power plants."

- For labor secretary, a man who opposes creating a livable minimum wage and expanding access to overtime pay. Equally worrying for those of us who fight for pay equity for women, nominee Andrew Puzder was the CEO who approved the Carl's Jr. advertisements in which women in bikinis perform sex acts with cheeseburgers.

- For education secretary, a woman with no training or experience in public education. However, nominee Betsy DeVos of Michigan is a multimillionaire political donor and supporter of sending taxpayer money

to private organizations through education vouchers. Her efforts destroyed the public schools in Detroit.

The next few months will give educators the opportunity to contrast our principles with those of the people in power. The president-elect and his cabinet nominees have shown they view working people as resources to be exploited.

For them, it's OK to turn personal financial crises into corporate profits. None of it is illegal, of course. In fact, some of them would argue it's the free market at work.

We believe differently. I've never met an educator who looked over her or his class and thought of the children looking back as profit centers.

Educators believe public schools and colleges are the economic engine of Minnesota. Every business in our state owes part of its success to people holding diplomas from Minnesota schools.

It's not just schools. Passing out big tax cuts to corporations starves the entire public sector. Those are the men and women who make sure we all have clean air and water, smooth roads, healthy food, safe bridges and physical security. The corporations benefit from all those things as well, but too often call taxes a "burden" that need "relief" instead of payment for services.

Education Minnesota also believes high-quality education should be accessible

to every student. It's wrong to limit the opportunities of any child, and both immoral and short-sighted to overlook other obstacles which stand in their way, including racism and poverty.

Making a high-quality education widely accessible has a second benefit. Bringing together students from different walks of life may help heal the divisions in our state. Our hope is that students who learn together, will someday learn to live together.

Educators also believe public schools should be transparent to the public. The best source of information for the voters are the educators themselves, but those dedicated men and women must have due process protections to fearlessly share the information the public needs to hold elected officials accountable. I hope Minnesotans remember that when they hear proposals to shift resources from public schools to the shadowy world of charter-school management organizations and private religious schools.

Finally, the educators of Minnesota believe in the power of working together in union. Unions balance the labor market by giving workers the leverage to negotiate for the compensation they deserve. Unions also give workers the confidence to speak up about issues that affect the public, from education to trade deals.

Chuck Jones, the union leader at the Carrier plant in Indiana, made news by calling out the president-elect for exaggerating the number of jobs saved by government subsidies. But I was not surprised. That's what unions are supposed to do—give everyday people a voice against the elites.

Here's what Chuck wrote in The Washington Post, "We're not asking for anything besides opportunity, for jobs that let people provide for their families. These plants are profitable, and the workers produced a good-quality product. Because of corporate greed, though, company leaders are racing to the bottom, to find places where they can pay the least. It's a system that exploits everyone."

I couldn't have said it better myself.

This year will be difficult. We won't have much control over what happens in the state Legislature, U.S. Congress or the White House, but we can govern ourselves. We can resist policies that exploit working people. We can defend public education and our students. We will do it by speaking out about what we believe in a clear and steady voice, wherever and whenever we can.

Together,

Twitter: @DeniseSpecht

What successes or struggles have you encountered in closing the student achievement gap?

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. 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!

"One strategy that has helped me close the opportunity gap is to increase communication with my students' parents. Since increasing my positive and informative calls, emails and notes home, my students have been even more engaged and achievement-minded in my classroom. I will definitely continue this practice!"

Debbie Cain, Fridley Education Association

"Our staff have engaged in many different training opportunities over the years and worked to increase the quantity and variety of student supports in order to support our diverse student body and increase achievement of all students while working to close the achievement gap, but as long as public education remains underfunded, our efforts will be hampered by the reality of budget constraints."

Melissa Williams, Education Richfield

"I sense there are some struggles with closing the gap around equal access to technology for all students."

David Higley, Education Minnesota/Edina

"I have had success with closing the achievement gap by meeting the needs of my students by determining what they need and then meeting with them in small groups to meet those needs. I also utilize volunteers to work one-on-one with students who struggle. Making connections with the students also plays a huge role in creating success!"

Jodi Prchal, New Prague Education Association

MINNESOTA EDUCATOR

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

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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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New landscape could lead to funding fight, defending attacks

The start of the 2017 legislative session brings with it new faces and potentially new attacks on education and unions.

The November election brought more than 30 new legislators and changes to the control of the state Legislature. Republicans took control of the Senate and gained a larger majority in the House. And with Democratic Gov. Mark Dayton still in office, that make up could mean divisiveness and battles over major bills, including the budget.

Now more than ever, educators need to have their voices heard so that our priorities of strong public schools and support for students remain priorities for our legislators.

“The men and women educated by Minnesota’s public schools and colleges continue to drive our economy forward, but that progress will slow if our leaders fail to invest in the possibilities of the next generation of Minnesotans,” Education Minnesota President Denise Specht said in a statement after the budget forecast was released in December.

“Everyone in our state benefits when all students are given an equal opportunity to become a great leader, innovator or discoverer, regardless of where they live.

“Investing in opportunities for students in every corner of the state starts with confronting the teacher shortage; providing students with modern, functional buildings in which to learn; making college affordable; hiring enough counselors and support staff; and giving every family access to high-quality preschool. Educators know lawmakers will face many demands for resources in 2017, but we hope they remember that public education is the engine of our economy, and that engines need fuel.”

The biggest bill being discussed will be the state’s two-year budget. Last time Republicans controlled the Legislature under Dayton, there was a government shutdown in 2011.

Education funding will be discussed as part of the budget bill. With a surplus of more than \$1 billion, as of the Educator’s press time, the competition for any increase

in funds will be fierce.

Increases for both preK-12 and higher education funding will be up for discussion and the support of educators will be needed to make sure they are considered.

Education Minnesota believes that educators are the most effective advocates for public schools. See the box below to find out how you can share your story about the need for more sufficient and equitable funding with legislators this session.

The decisions state legislators make affect members’ classrooms, schools and the teaching profession in general. State funding dictates what districts can do about class sizes, special education caseloads, even the condition of buildings.

Advocating for policy bills will also be important this session. While there is hope for bipartisan support on issues regarding teacher recruitment and retention, and good momentum for student loan forgiveness programs after last session, nothing is guaranteed in the new political landscape.

There is also potential for additional funding to expand

full-service community schools across the state. Districts like Deer River and Rochester accessed new state funds to create full-service community schools, which bring together public and private service providers to put social, medical and before and after school academic services and enrichment activities where they are most accessible—on the school campus.

This approach has been proven to improve school climate and student achievement. With Education Minnesota’s help, the number of full-service community schools has increased from three to 14 over the past three years.

Education Minnesota is also predicts fighting off attacks on union protections, such as tenure, last-in-first-out policies and seniority. Other attacks may come in the form of reduced teacher licensing standards and public education in general, such as a voucher program for private schools.

Educators should get to know the names of the chairs of the education committees. It is the job of each committee

to hold public hearings on bills, put each bill into its best form and to recommend only those bills that the committee feels merit further consideration. Committee chairs can control who is able to testify and the overall discussion of a bill. The chairs will be important people for members to communication with throughout session.

- Senate Education Finance Chair: Carla Nelson (R), Rochester
- Senate Education Policy Chair: Eric Pratt (R), Prior Lake
- House Education Finance Chair: Jenifer Loon (R), Eden Prairie
- House Education Policy Chair: Sondra Erickson (R), Princeton

Education Minnesota makes sure professional educators’ voices are heard when policy decisions are made. Educators need a seat at the table because they, not the politicians, know what’s best for students.

See the box below to find out how to get active and stay informed this session.

HOW TO STAY INFORMED, GET INVOLVED THIS LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Share your story at a lobby day

Educators are the best people to tell the stories of what is happening in Minnesota schools and Education Minnesota has a way for its members to meet with legislators face to face. All local unions or member groups can sign up for a lobby day. Education Minnesota will set up appointments with the legislators in your area, provide you a short briefing on what is happening at the Capitol and provide you resources for how to share your story effectively. Substitute, mileage and food reimbursements are available. For more information, go to www.educationminnesota.org/advocacy/at-the-legislature/details-on-lobby-days.



Education Minnesota members interested in student loan debt forgiveness met with then-Rep., now Sen. Jason Isaccson during a lobby day last session.

Meet with legislators when they are back in their district

While most of the policy takes shape at the Capitol, legislators are often back in the districts they represent. Watch your legislators’ schedules to see when they are in the district and if they are having any public meetings. Invite your local legislator to your school and classroom. The more they can see and hear about what is going on in their local schools, the more likely they might be to fight for what you need. If locals or members want to schedule a formal meeting with the legislator while they are in the district, contact your Education Minnesota field staff. Don’t know who your local legislator is? Find out on at our Policy Action Center at www.educationminnesota.org/policyactioncenter.

Raise your voice by testifying at a hearing

Committee hearings are a focal point of the legislative process at the Capitol and give educators the chance to share their story and make their voices heard. Contact Education Minnesota’s lobby team at lobbyteam@edmn.org if you’re interested in testifying before a legislative committee. The team can help you prepare your remarks, make sure you’re on the agenda and get you in the right place at the right time.



Education Minnesota members John Bartholow and Maria Le (far left and right), along with then-Sen. Vicki Jensen, testified last year about the need for legislation supporting recruitment and retention of educators.

View our legislative agenda online, connect with our lobbyists on issues you care about

Education Minnesota has lobbyists who spend their time fighting for public education and educators every day. But we still want to hear from you! Not only do we want you to come share your story at the Capitol, our lobbyists can help pass on your messages to legislators as well. Contact lobbyteam@edmn.org if there is something you care about that you would like us to fight for. Education Minnesota member committees and staff have developed the organization’s 2017 legislative agenda. Education Minnesota’s legislative agenda is an overarching vision of what the organization believes the Legislature should do to ensure Minnesota has the best learning and working conditions in its public schools. The guiding principles of this year’s agenda are: Improving teaching leads to improving educational outcomes, engaging students is a crucial step toward their career success and investing in quality learning environments.

Visit, use the Policy Action Center

Education Minnesota’s Policy Action Center website is designed to keep members informed on important education issues, help them find and track legislation, connect with members of U.S. Congress and state legislators and give them the tools needed to be a successful education advocate. Members can send emails to their legislators, either with provided messages on certain topics or their own messages. Go to www.educationminnesota.org/policyactioncenter to see what Education Minnesota has put together to keep you up to date.



Read the Capitol Connection e-newsletter

Every Monday during the legislative session, Education Minnesota sends an e-newsletter called Capitol Connection to all members for whom we have email addresses. Capitol Connection summarizes the most recent actions affecting public education at the Legislature, and looks ahead to upcoming activities. It’s an inside look at how legislative work affects our schools and students. If you’re an Education Minnesota member and don’t receive Capitol Connection but would like to, contact webmaster@edmn.org and put Capitol Connection in the subject line.



Locals find success in school board election support

After a few tough rounds of negotiations, the Fergus Falls Education Association knew they wanted to help get new school board members elected.

This past year, the union formed a committee and did just that.

“We had a lot more success than we thought,” said Randy Hansen, a social studies teacher who ran the committee. “We needed a better relationship with our board.”

Fergus Falls was one of the many locals who got involved with their local school board or levy elections in 2016. With the help of Education Minnesota, both for resources and financial

support, many locals saw successes.

In Fergus, the committee sought out potential members and eight people ran for three seats. The local not only was able to seek out and find community members they felt would be great candidates, they now have two new faces on the school board.

“We’ve already met with the two new board members,” Hansen said. “We sat down and told them we want an open discussion with them. We’re trying to build those bridges.”

But Hansen doesn’t see their work ending. There will be another election in two years and he says they are

ready to do more work then.

“Our membership was pretty motivated to get involved,” he said. “We’ll do it again and we want to take a more active role.”

For Willmar, this wasn’t the first time getting involved in an election.

The local union has been active in both school board races and two levy campaigns.

“Our community members look to our teachers to be the leaders on education,” said Annette Tiffany, a middle school social worker and the local government relations chair. “They pay attention to where we put our support.”

Education Minnesota-Willmar, which as of press

time was still without a 2015-17 teacher contract, saw the opportunity to fill four open seats with education-friendly leaders who shared their values. They saw three out of the four seats go to their endorsed candidates.

“The people we elected have the experience to work hard for us,” Tiffany said.

Tiffany and the local committee screened the candidates and made their endorsements. They then did phone calling, created postcards and ran online and newspaper ads.

The Willmar local was also able to tap into another resource—other labor unions.

Education Minnesota’s

statewide affiliation with AFL-CIO Area Labor Councils (ALCs) provides Education Minnesota locals another resource to help pass local elections. The ALCs have connections with other labor unions and local communities that have been helpful in local elections.

“They share our values and supported our candidates as well,” Tiffany said of her local ALC.

If any local is interested in getting involved with an election this spring, contact Jim Meyer in Education Minnesota’s public affairs department at jim.meyer@edmn.org or 800-652-9073 x4813.

F.I.R.E. brings new racial equity trainings statewide

Education Minnesota’s MEA F.I.R.E. program is launching this winter, hoping to build a movement around racial equity in education and disrupt systemic racism in education.

“It’s not about changing curriculum in our classrooms,” said Jen Kohan, Education Minnesota’s education issues specialist who is helping develop the program. “This is about adult-to-adult relationships

and developing an anti-racism growth mindset.”

Structural or systemic racism is defined as the normalization and legitimization of an array of dynamics—historical, cultural, institutional and interpersonal—that routinely advantage whites while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color.

F.I.R.E. stands for Facing Inequities and Racism in

Education and the program is looking for educators from all backgrounds and in all job categories to participate and be trained as an advocate or community storyteller.

Local or regional Racial Equity Advocates (REAs) will be trained to serve members as an ally and resource in developing an anti-racism growth mindset.

The REA training will begin this spring or summer.

Another way to get

involved in the program is to become a community storyteller. Trainings for this group will start in late winter or early spring.

Communities of learners can select from a variety of storytelling approaches, and/or create a tailored plan for engaging stakeholders in conversations about race and equity in education.

Education Minnesota is also looking for parents, community members and

students to be involved.

“We really want to get to regional issues,” said Kohan. “We’ll bring the training to you.”

Interested members are also encouraged to visit the Racial Equity Community of Practice and MEA FIRE groups on ConnectED at mynea360.org and www.educationminnesota.org/resources/minnesota-educator-academy/MEA-Fire to learn more.

2017 January/February Financial Planning Workshops

To meet the needs of Education Minnesota members, free workshops designed just for you, are planned for January and February. REGISTER TODAY!

Financial/Retirement Planning Essentials

| | |
|--|---|
| METRO (weekday): Jan. 5 Grumpy’s, Roseville Feb. 9 Education Minnesota, St. Paul Feb. 16 Normandale Community College, Bloomington | GREATER MN (Saturday): Jan. 14 Holiday Inn, Alexandria Jan. 14 Ridgewater College, Hutchinson Feb. 18 Grand Casino, Hinckley Feb. 18 Torey’s, Owatonna |
|--|---|

4:15-4:45 p.m. – Registration/Exhibits

4:45-7 p.m. – Workshop/Dinner/Prizes

9:30-10 a.m. – Registration/Rolls-Juice-Coffee

10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. – Workshop/Boxed Lunch/Prizes

Topics Include:

Pension

- Understanding your pension TRA/PERA
- Pension fund performance

Presented by: Chuck Elliott, Education Minnesota ESI Retirement Consultant
Lyle Nelson, Education Minnesota ESI Retirement Consultant

Planning

- What can you expect from Social Security?
- Tax-deferred and tax-free savings, asset allocation/management/diversification/performance 403(b) match and severance payment options

Presented by: EFS Advisors

Protection

- What is your financial vulnerability with long-term illness?
- How can you protect your assets and savings?

Presented by: Educators Lifetime Solutions

Financial Planning for Beginners and NextGen

Jan. 5
Grumpy’s, Roseville

Feb. 16
Normandale Community College, Bloomington

4:15-4:45 p.m. – Registration/Exhibits

4:45-6:15 p.m. – Workshop/Dinner/Prizes

Topics include:

How can you manage your paycheck to have the money you need today and plan for a secure future?

- Managing your paycheck
- Learn the importance of budgeting and smart debt management techniques
- How much will a \$50 per check contribution amount to in 30 years?
- What is a 403(b) and why should you contribute to one? What is a Roth IRA?
- How does a Roth work, and is it the best for you?
- Learn the value of your defined benefit pension and how much of your income it can replace when you retire

LIMITED SEATING, RESERVATIONS REQUIRED

RSVP to Deborah Skog at 651-292-4856 or deborah.skog@edmn.org. Please leave your name(s), phone number and which session you would like to attend. Spouses/Guests Welcome.

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ESSA *from page 1*

in the advisory committee for the school improvement plan. The committee is looking at a more comprehensive way of addressing struggling schools.

“It’s been really important for me to talk about the amount of testing being done and labeling students and schools based on tests,” she said.

Brian Rappe, a sixth-grade special education teacher from Burnsville, has also been active on the school improvement committee. He said educator voice on this plan is more crucial than ever.

“NCLB had such an impact on our work,” he said. “We need to be on the front lines. Educators know that testing and data mining isn’t helping students. We need this law to work so we can do our best and support students at our best.”

Members have also been involved in focus groups and regional meetings as well.

Penny Dupris, a fourth-grade teacher in St. Louis Park, participated in a focus group looking at the law’s effects on the native community and a session discussing whether or not to translate the MCA tests into different languages. As a Native American and one of the few teachers of color in her district, Dupris was asked to attend and was excited

WHAT DOES ESSA MEAN FOR MINNESOTA?

According to the Minnesota Department of Education, the Every Student Succeeds Act preserves many of the same goals and priorities as No Child Left Behind and NCLB Flexibility Waivers. States are still expected to pursue educational equity for all students, as measured by student outcomes, access to high-quality educators, and opportunities to build college and career readiness. Under ESSA, however, states and districts have greater flexibility in many areas than they did under NCLB or the flexibility waivers issued in the past few years.

What are some key issues the committees are looking into for the state plan?

- **Accountability Committees—Advisory and Technical**
Recommending science scores should not be included in accountability. Recommending more emphasis on growth, less proficiency, especially in testing younger grades.
- **Assessment Committee**
Considering giving districts the option to use ACT/SAT instead of the 11th-grade MCA. ESSA requires “rigorous intervention” by state if fewer than 95 percent of students take accountability tests. Committee is determining the appropriate intervention.
- **Educator Quality Committee**
Defining teacher effectiveness in a way that is compatible with current Teacher Development and Evaluation plans.
- **English Learner Committee**
Considering when to give the MCA tests to students who are new to the country.
- **School Improvement Committee**
Considering a more expansive comprehensive needs assessment for all schools. Advocating for a larger emphasis on teacher development.

How can I learn more about ESSA and what it means for me?

- Go to Education Minnesota’s website to see FAQs, a timeline, the principles adopted by educators doing this work, fact sheets for different subject groups and additional resources. www.educationminnesota.org/advocacy.aspx#ESSA
- Go to the Minnesota Department of Education for detailed information on the state’s plan and how to get involved. <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/dse/essa>

What is happening next?

Implementation of ESSA has been moved back from the 2017-18 school year, to the 2018-19 school year.

The Minnesota Department of Education now has until April 3 or Sept. 18 to submit its ESSA plan to the federal government.

Education Minnesota is hopeful that MDE will use the extra time to hold more meetings, discuss other options for the plan and involve more educators.

Before the plan is submitted, the state will have to offer a 30-day period of public comment. Education Minnesota hopes that all educators will be involved in commenting on the state’s plan during that time. Watch www.educationminnesota.org and our social media platforms for when and how to get involved.

to participate. But she was disappointed that she was one of only a few teachers in the room at both sessions.

“It was held during a time when it’s hard for teachers to attend. I am grateful that my principal let me take the time out of the classroom,” she said. “It felt good to have an opportunity to be the voice for our students of color.

Hopefully there will be more opportunities for educators to voice their advocacy for their students. I felt like they were missing a perspective of English language learner students and what they need.”

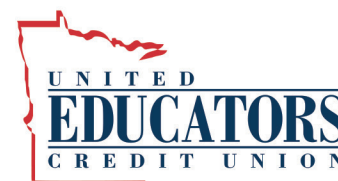
Laura Reese, a science teacher in Lancaster, has been working on the school improvement plan as well.

“There is no one more local than the classroom teacher. Also, apart from parents, there is no one more invested in making sure that students succeed at school and in life,” said Reese, about why educators should be involved in creating this plan.

Reese is hopeful that the focus of ESSA will be making sure students are successful in

schools. She is also grateful that educators are part of the process.

“Educators are working to make sure that ESSA is applied in a way that is equitable and makes sense,” she said.



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Schools are sanctuaries for students, educators

Public schools are known and acknowledged as one of the safest places for our children and the adults who work with them. By nearly every measure, safety is high and violence is low in schools. In recent years, only 1.5 percent of school-aged child homicides occurred at schools, despite the fact that many children spend more of their time at school than other places. The nationwide rate of both violent and non-violent crimes in schools is only 49 per 1,000 students. Schools are both literal and figurative sanctuaries.

And yet we must acknowledge that some members of our society seized the outcome of the 2016 election as permission to engage in bullying, hate speech and other offensive speech and conduct. In schools across the state, students and staff are experiencing overt acts of racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia and more.

As members of Education Minnesota we must stand up to such acts. Minnesota has powerful laws that prohibit these acts and that work to make our schools safe for both students and staff. Education Minnesota members can and must work with school districts,



Christina Ogata

parents, students and their communities to stop the harassment and the bullying.

In 2014, the Minnesota legislature enacted the Safe and Supportive Schools Act. The law's focus is the elimination of student-on-student bullying and cyberbullying. The law's definition of bullying specifically includes behavior that targets students on the basis of actual or perceived protected status, such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, gender, gender identification, or other characteristics.

The law requires districts and staff to employ several tools that will make this goal a reality. Education Minnesota locals can and must be active participants in the development and

implementation of the safe school policies. Tools required by the law include:

- Designating a staff member in each school building as the primary contact to receive reports of bullying and ensure that policies, including restorative practices, are fairly and fully implemented.
- Requiring staff who witness prohibited conduct, or who possess reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that a student is the target of bullying, to make reasonable efforts to address and resolve the prohibited conduct.
- Establishing a procedure to investigate reports of bullying within three days of the report and make the designated contact person responsible for the investigation and the investigative results.
- Establishing a presumption that the response will include notification to the bully's target and the bully.
- Prohibiting reprisal or retaliation against individuals who report the unlawful conduct.

Are you ready to confront,

report and manage student-on-student bullying and cyberbullying? Members who witness examples of prohibited harassment and bullying often feel ill-equipped to intervene or "interrupt" the situation. Members may fear for their own safety, as well as the safety of the students who are being targeted by hate speech or other offensive speech or conduct.

To that end, the law includes significant and ongoing professional development requirements that are focused on building the skills of all school staff. Staff must receive information about:

- Developmentally appropriate strategies both to prevent and to immediately and effectively intervene to stop prohibited conduct.
- The complex dynamics affecting the actor, target, and witnesses to the prohibited conduct.
- Research on prohibited conduct, including specific categories of at-risk students.
- The incidence and nature of cyberbullying.
- Internet safety.

Is your district fulfilling these professional development obligations?

LEGAL BRIEFS

Are you and other Education Minnesota members receiving the training outlined above? If not, your district is violating the law. Please contact your local president or field representative to pursue these conversations.

I end with a reference to our schools as literal sanctuaries for immigrant children. In Minnesota, a few cities have joined the nearly 60 cities across the country that are sanctuary cities.

In sanctuary cities, law enforcement officers do not question individuals about their immigrant status and do not report information they do receive to the federal immigration authorities. Records show that immigrants commit crimes at a lower rate and that immigrants in sanctuary cities provide significant help to law enforcement as crime reporters and witnesses. Is your city a sanctuary city? It could make a difference for the safety of your students.

♦ Christina Ogata

Ogata is general counsel for Education Minnesota.

Education Minnesota staff attorneys also contributed to this report.

MEMBERS WANT TO KNOW

Protecting yourself against identity theft



Will you be next?

Helping Education Minnesota members since 2010

What is identity theft?

Identity theft is gaining from the illegal use of someone else's personal information.

- ✓ Since January 2005 there have been 5,142 data breaches affecting nearly 1 billion records.
- ✓ 13.1 million consumers fell victim to identity theft fraud in 2015*.
- ✓ Types of identity theft include: credit card fraud, loan fraud, utilities fraud, employment related fraud, and government documents fraud.
- ✓ According to the FTC, it takes an average of 6 months and 200 hours or more of work to recover from an identity theft event.

What can I do to lessen the risk of identity theft?

Be prepared, watchful and vigilant for those trying to gain access to information, always protecting your personally identifiable information when possible.

- ✓ Education Minnesota ESI Member Benefits has partnered with Securus Identity Solutions (Securus ID) to provide its members access to identity theft products and services at negotiated rates.
- ✓ **Active Teacher and Education Support Professional (ESP) members receive a complimentary identity theft recovery plan courtesy of Education Minnesota ESI Member Benefits. Register today! Add your family for as little as \$2/mo.**
- ✓ All members receive a substantial discount on other plan options.

*2016 Javelin Identity Fraud Survey Report



For complimentary plan registration or plan enrollment, visit www.educationminnesota.securusid.com

Questions? Call 877-833-9041



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EDUCATION MINNESOTA OPPORTUNITIES

Register now for 2017 Emerging Leaders program

Education Minnesota's Emerging Leaders program will start accepting registrations for its summer 2017 program in January.

The program looks to build the skills of tomorrow's union leaders. The training will be held June 13-15 at the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph.

Attendees will learn to identify aspects of quality leadership, develop their own leadership potential, understand personality and generational differences,

explore leadership opportunities within the union, develop the ability to engage members one-on-one, embrace diversity in the workplace, manage conflict for positive outcomes, know the issues which have faced educators in the past and lead educators to face the issues of tomorrow.

"My experience in the program taught me about our union—the history of unionism in education, different roles our union plays and how I can become involved to help support the education profession. The Emerging Leaders training provides an excellent opportunity

for people interested in becoming more involved in their union," said Tony Streng, teacher and building representative from Education Minnesota Osseo.

Registration is free, but space is limited. Education Minnesota reserves the right to limit the number of registrants from the same local. Meals, lodging and all training materials are covered as well.

For more information, go to www.educationminnesota.org/advocacy/Union-U/emerging-leaders-program.

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

Science Museum education support, professional development

The Science Museum of Minnesota offers its SciEd programming to all educators. SciEd is science education and program support for educators. Through the program, educators can have access to field trips to the museum, in-school visits, curriculum support, the Science House lending library and professional development opportunities. A free email subscription offers teaching tips and ideas, as well as invitations to teacher events, including Free Teacher Previews. The Science House is a circulating library and professional development center with over 2,000 hands-on items educators can borrow for use with your students.

For more information, go to www.smm.org/educators.

Science institutes at Great Lakes Aquarium

The Great Lakes Aquarium in Duluth offers a professional development opportunity one Tuesday a month for educators, focused on next-generation science standards. Topics differ each month. Participants will learn from local science researchers and have access to free teaching kits, equipment and materials. Continuing education units are available. The workshops are free and include coffee, a light dinner, aquarium admission and parking. Each course runs 4:30-7 p.m.

For more information or to view the monthly topics, go to <http://glaquarium.org/learning/for-teachers/professional-development>.

Summer institute focuses on absent narratives

The Minnesota Humanities Center is taking applications for its June 25-30 Educators' Institute. This program provides educators with an opportunity to engage deeply with a proven approach to increase student engagement through absent narratives—those voices often left out or marginalized. The experience will develop classroom strategies for bringing absent narratives pedagogy into practice, while building a community of educators committed to relationship-based educational change in Minnesota.

Learn more and register at www.mnhum.org/institute.

Lesson plan jam held Jan. 7

Education Minnesota invites educators to come share curriculum, instructional strategies and tools for student engagement with an equity frame. The first-ever Lesson Plan Jam: Developing Curriculum for Equity and Engagement will be

held 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 7 at Education Minnesota headquarters in St. Paul. Educators are encouraged to share ideas, materials and strategies with colleagues from across the metro area. Register by Jan. 3.

For more information or to register, go to www.educationminnesota.org/resources/minnesota-educator-academy/Lesson-Plan-Jam.

Family and consumer sciences state conference

The Minnesota Association of Family and Consumer Sciences will hold its annual state conference Feb. 23-25 at the Holiday Inn Downtown Waterfront in Duluth. Breakout sessions will focus on family and consumer science trends in and out of the classroom. Speakers include chef Scott Graden of the New Scenic Cafe in Duluth; Wendy Ambrose, director of MN FCCLA; Helen Smith-Stone, teacher and award-winning quilter; Max Peterson, Minnesota Department of Education FACS representative; and Ashley Nelson, author of "50 Apps for Life Skills."

Go to www.mnafcs.com/2017-conference for registration more information or contact mafcsstateconference@gmail.com with questions.

Transgender youth support regional workshops

The Children, Youth & Family Consortium is hosting free regional events focused on meeting the needs of transgender youth for parents, educators and professionals who work with families and youth beginning in January. Workshops will be held in Andover, Bemidji, Minneapolis, Morris and St. Cloud. Attendees will discuss issues related to transgender youth such as relevance for rural and urban communities, definitions, overview of development and medical care and gender as a spectrum. Other speakers will share information specific to nutrition and transgender body image and mental health as a public health issue. The workshops are free, but registration is required.

For more information, go to www.extension.umn.edu/family/cyfc/our-programs/lessons-from-the-field/families-and-youth.

CLASSROOM RESOURCES

BestPrep essay contest for high school students

BestPrep is conducting a statewide essay contest for students in grades 9 through 11. The contest will be sponsored by Thomson Reuters with the top 20 essay winners and their teachers winning valuable prizes and attending BestPrep's Educational Forum. Essay submissions will be accepted through April 15. This year's essay prompt is: Martin Luther King Jr. once wrote: "Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education." Why is it important for students to develop their character alongside academics? How have your educational journey and life experiences developed your character?

If you would like to have your class participate or know of interested students, contact Jonathan Filzen at jfilzen@bestprep.org or 763-233-6322.

Judicial Branch lesson plans, speakers available

The Minnesota Judicial Branch, which includes the Minnesota Supreme Court, Court of Appeals and district courts, offers educators information brochures, lesson plans, free speakers and hosts events to help engage students in the courts system. Lesson plan topics include understanding the difference between legislators and judges, what judicial decision-making is, elections and impartiality and what going to court means. Minnesota judges and court personnel are also available to speak to schools for free.

For more information, go to www.mncourts.gov/Teachers-and-Students.aspx.

GRANTS AND AWARDS

PrairieCare grant for mental health training in Minnesota schools

The PrairieCare Child & Family Fund has created a new grant program for school-based mental health professional development programs. The funding is to support mental health training for local school district staff and professionals. Eligible applicants may include public school districts, private schools, charter schools and other nonprofit entities that have a primary purpose to support or provide educational services to youth in Minnesota. The total award amount for 2017 is up to \$30,000, divided among one or more proposals. Grantee(s) will be expected to utilize the awards to increase awareness of mental illness and to promote early identification and intervention of youth who may need treatment. Applications are due Jan. 27.

For more information, go to www.prairiecarefund.org/grants.html.

Minnesota Zoo financial assistance available for field trips, overnights

The Minnesota Zoo offers school bus, overnight program and Zoo Explorers funding to schools across the state. School bus funding for field trips to the zoo are available to schools that have at least 45 percent of the student body enrolled in the federal free and reduced lunch program and planning a zoo trip before April 28. Funding is very limited for this program. Schools outside the seven-county metro area are invited to apply for the Flint Hills Overnight Grant, which covers overnight program fees, busing, meals and an IMAX film. The Zoo Explorers Fund includes subsidized bus transportation, admission and an education program (Zoo Class, Minnesota Natural Heritage Tour or Interactive Video Conference) for qualified school groups in grades 2-5. The zoo also offers a safari grant program to select school districts around the state. There is an application process for each funding opportunity.

For more information on the programs or how to apply, go to <http://mnzoo.org/education/schools-teachers/teacher-resources> and find financial assistance for field trips and school overnights under Teacher Newsletters and Resources.

Mini-grants available for student service learning campaigns

Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots program encourages students to launch or grow community-based service learning campaigns. The Roots & Shoots grants are available to help support these projects. To apply, participants must sign up for a free Roots & Shoots membership. Funding is available for many different types of projects, from environmental clean-up to community education initiatives. Students submit their projects and then can apply for funding. Minnesota students are eligible to receive a \$200 mini-grant. The next application deadlines are Jan. 20 and March 31.

For more information, go to <http://rootsandshoots.org/minigrant>.

NEA Foundation grants available

The NEA Foundation has two categories of grants available for its members. Both application deadlines are Feb. 1. The leadership and learning grant is for teachers, education support professionals and higher education faculty who are interested in taking part in professional development experiences or to fund collegial study. The student achievement grant is to help educators improve the academic achievement of students in public schools or public higher education institutions.

For more information or how to apply, go to www.neafoundation.org/pages/grants-to-educators.