

MINNESOTA EDUCATOR

JUNE/JULY 2019

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THE VOICE FOR PROFESSIONAL
EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

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*COVER PHOTO: More than 400 educators
from across the state packed the Capitol
Rotunda Saturday, May 18 to demand better
for Minnesota's public schools. Copyright
Minnesota House of Representatives.
Photo by Andrew VonBank.*

WINTER CLOSINGS SHOW NEED FOR EDUCATORS TO RALLY FOR BETTER ESP CONTRACTS

This column is for everyone who can't put this awful winter behind them.

The blizzards were numbing. The polar vortex slumped down from the Arctic and drove air temperatures to 20 below and colder. It was a dangerous season for the record books.

This winter still haunts education support professionals who missed work because of school closures. Some lost two full weeks. That really hurt the people that every school depends on.

We heard stories about ESPs taking third and fourth jobs to cover their lost income. Some educators drained their savings accounts; they're still trying to rebuild them.

I heard from ESPs who received bills for their health insurance premiums instead of paychecks. That's what happens when your pay is only a few dollars more than the cost of your insurance in a normal month.

Thanks to some good lobbying, the Legislature gave districts the freedom to designate snow days as instructional days to meet state requirements, but the permission came with strings attached.

Any district that designated snow days also had to pay their hourly employees for the days, or give those workers an opportunity to make up the hours.

This shouldn't have been a problem. The districts had the money. Paying ESPs was in their budgets. In fact, there was nothing stopping every district from paying their ESPs for all the snow days.

But it didn't turn out that way. At least 20 districts didn't use the law and refused to pay their ESPs for lost hours. About twice that number paid for some, but not all, the missed days.

Administrators in one district spent the payroll money on snow plowing. Another said it wouldn't be right to pay people for days they didn't work, even though the ESPs were ready and willing to go in.

For ESPs who had good contracts, the results were different. For example, the contract in Foley essentially said the districts would pay ESPs for a set number of days a year. In Grand Rapids, the contract said the district will pay ESPs and secretaries for closings, period.

Education Minnesota believes all educators deserve respect and fair compensation for their work, but it is clear many ESPs are underpaid and underappreciated. It is time to stop hoping administrators do the right thing and start building power through organizing. With that strength, we can force the important issues at the bargaining table.

Some people disagree. They point to genuinely kind

superintendents who have done right by their district's ESPs.

To that, I say that no superintendent lasts forever.

The next one will probably be worse.

Others claim ESPs are too hard to organize because staff turnover is so high in some districts, but unionists know the best way to retain good employees is to give them a voice and compensation that makes them want to stay.

And if anyone thinks negotiating a snow-day policy isn't worth the effort, I note that some scientists predict climate change will bring the polar vortex over the Midwest more frequently. Last winter might not be a fluke; it might be the new normal.

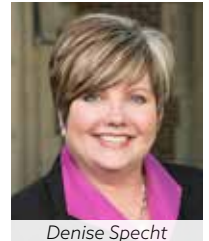
Some ESPs might never recover from this winter. The financial hit was too hard and their administrators' disrespect was a slap that may never stop stinging. But we can do better if everyone, no matter their role, puts some time and effort into winning good contracts for ESPs this year.

Every educator deserves respect. Every educator deserves a fair wage.

Together,



Twitter: @DeniseSpecht



Denise Specht

Free retired membership available!

If you are retired or retiring and have been an Education Minnesota member for at least 10 years, you may qualify for retired membership at no additional cost. Paid membership is available if you don't meet the qualifications.

Why retired membership?

- Continue access to Economic Services Inc. (ESI), NEA and AFT member benefit programs.
- Stay connected with other retired colleagues through newsletters, regional events and annual meetings.
- Participate in political action and legislative efforts on such important issues as pension benefits and retiree medical insurance.
- Maintain Educators Employment Liability Insurance (EEL) coverage when teaching as a day-to-day substitute in Minnesota, and more.

Learn more at www.educationminnesota.org/member-benefits/join-us/retired-membership.

Where are you reading your Minnesota Educator?

Congratulations, Jennifer Henry from Upsala, for being this issue's winning submission!

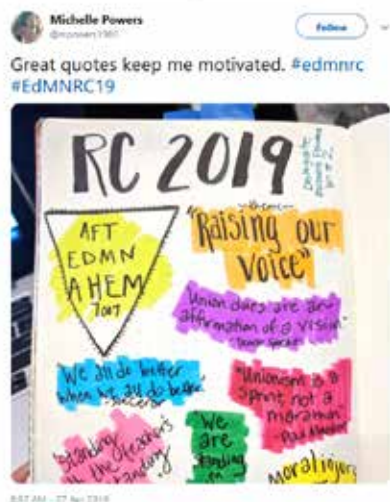
Spring is here and this issue's submissions seem to feature a lot less snow in the background! Hopefully our summer issues will be read while you are getting in some much needed relaxing! See more of where people were reading on page 20.

The contest continues! 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 gift card! Submissions are due July 1. 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!



Members in the news!

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



The students are our future and without this referendum, it will be that much harder to provide the best for them, but we will do what we can with what we have. Unfortunately, we will be saying goodbye to some amazing teachers and staff.



— Floodwood math teacher Amanda Fjeld, after the district lost its \$700,000 referendum election by 15 votes this April, in a Star Tribune article April 10. The district said the referendum was necessary to pay for staff and programs in the district in a time of declining enrollment.



EDUCATORS PACK THE CAPITOL AS LEGISLATIVE SESSION COMES TO A CLOSE

More than 400 educators from across the state packed the Capitol Saturday, May 18 for the #EdMNVotes in Action Rally. Observers said it was the loudest they had heard the Capitol this legislative session.

Members not only rallied in the Capitol Rotunda, but met with their local legislators. Educators from 55 of the state's 67 Senate districts attended the rally.

Seven frontline educators spoke during the program. They shared stories about overcrowded classrooms, understaffed special education programs, struggling to make ends meet as

paraprofessionals, lowering standards for teacher licensure and the steady erosion of school funding both at the E-12 and higher education level that makes it more difficult to meet the needs of students, especially students of color, every year.

"We know that it is going to take \$4.3 billion to fully fund education," said Paul Peltier, a teacher from Fosston who spoke about funding issues at the rally. "That \$4.3 billion is a reality check. We need to take one step this year, we need to take one step next year and we need to leapfrog that until it is our reality."



"Denying adequate and equitable funding to our schools here in Minnesota is a denial of the American dream that we are all promised, and to be frank, it is racist," said Jessica Davis, a math teacher from South St. Paul and the 2019 Minnesota Teacher of the Year, who also spoke on funding issues. "But it's more than that – it's damaging to our metro community, it's damaging to rural communities, it's damaging to places that can't pass a levy, it's damaging to indigenous reservations. It's damaging to who we are as Minnesotans."

Several lawmakers attended the rally, including Gov. Tim Walz.

"As a former teacher, there's nothing that prepared me more for being governor than standing in the classroom," Walz said. "I used to wonder who sat at the negotiating table in the Capitol. And now I'm proud to tell you: it's me and the 85,000 teachers who have my back."

The rally capped off a legislative session that saw high levels of activism from Education Minnesota members.

A record number of educators attended lobby days. A total of 493 educators from 89 different locals spent time meeting with their local lawmakers at the Capitol.

Double the number of educators testified during hearings—57, compared to 25 last year.

Education Minnesota organized first-ever town hall meetings with lawmakers in their districts, some of which will happen post-session. Visit www.educationminnesota.org/townhalls to see if one is scheduled in your area.

And thousands of educators wrote and called their legislators on issues like funding, licensure, student debt relief and vouchers through Education Minnesota's Policy Action Center.

(Opposite page) The crowd calls for fully funding of public education.

(Top right) Gov. Tim Walz and First Lady Gwen Walz join Education Minnesota President Denise Specht on stage as other legislators wave to the crowd.

(Middle right) Members of the Dakota County United Educators pose for a photo after the rally.

(Bottom right) Paul Peltier, a music teacher from Fosston, spoke to the crowd about funding issues.



SESSION ENDS WITH BUDGET DEAL, LITTLE POLICY DECISIONS

The 2019 legislative session ran into overtime, but state leaders did come to an agreement around a budget for E-12 and higher education.

After months of debate and vastly different proposals from the Senate majority Republicans, House majority Democrats and Democratic Gov. Tim Walz, the agreement on E-12 funding includes:

- A 2 percent increase on the per-pupil funding formula each of the next two years.
- \$91 million to freeze the special education cross-subsidy.
- \$47 million to preserve 4,000 pre-K seats set to expire this year.
- Permanent funding for Tribal Contract Schools, linked to the formula.

Very little policy proposals that had passed the House made it into the final bills, including fixes to the tiered licensure system,

contract parity for ABE/ECFE teachers, and dedicated training for paraprofessionals.

The higher education bill was the only budget bill to pass before the legislative session adjournment deadline. It increases funding by \$81.5 million for Minnesota State campuses over the next two years.

Included in that spending is:

- \$64.5 million for campus support.
- \$8 million for the Next Gen/ISRS.
- The bill caps tuition at 3 percent both years of the biennium, potentially netting an estimated \$67 million in tuition.

Watch Education Minnesota's social media channels and website for any information on post-session activities, meetings with legislators and how to stay active and involved before the 2020 session and election.

FILING FORM FOR NEA DIRECTOR

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

I, _____, wish to file for the following position:

OR

I, _____, wish to nominate _____ for the following position:

NEA DIRECTOR

Candidate information

Mailing address: _____ City/State/ZIP: _____

Local: _____ Email: _____

Home phone: _____ Cell phone: _____ Work phone: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Deadline is 11:59 p.m. Dec. 13, 2019.

Return completed form by fax to: 651-767-1266, or mail to: Office of the Elections Committee, Education Minnesota, 41 Sherburne Ave., St. Paul, MN 55103, or scan and email to elections.committee@edmn.org. Note: Education Minnesota includes an insert of all candidates in the Minnesota Educator published prior to the election in April and in a Voter Guide distributed at the Representative Convention. Candidates may submit a photo and statement for inclusion in these publications and 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. 20, 2019**.

(For official use only)

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

STATEWIDE CAMPAIGN AROUND ESP BILL OF RIGHTS LAUNCHES

Education Minnesota is formally launching a statewide campaign to get education support professionals the respect they deserve, improve pay and benefits and elevate ESP voices in decisions on staffing levels and working conditions.

ESP issues were also front and center at this year's Representative Convention.

At the convention, ESP members rose to ask delegates to support an ESP Bill of Rights, which will become the keystone of the statewide movement to support living wages, dedicated training and more for ESPs.

Another ESP-focused action item aims to help ESP locals create contracts to hold employees harmless for days the district declines to hold school and to create equal paycheck language to cover planned school breaks.

Two immediate goals of the new campaign are to:

- Ensure school districts pay hourly employees for the work they missed during this harsh winter.
- Start the organizing work to pass the provisions in our new ESP Bill of Rights in future legislative sessions.

Snow days pay

School employees, including ESPs, missed many days of work this winter due to cold and snow. Some ESPs missed more than a week of work because of conditions outside their control. In every case, ESPs were standing by and ready to do their jobs when administrators called off school.

In early April, Gov. Tim Walz signed a bill to allow school districts to designate missed days as instructional days. Districts that took advantage of the law (and took advantage of the financial cover it provided) were instructed to pay hourly employees for those days.

Unfortunately, some districts have decided not to pay their ESPs for lost work. This choice is legal in most cases, but Education Minnesota believes it violates both the intent of the legislation and the ethical duty of school leaders to their employees.

What can you and your local do?

- File an intent to bargain letter to help with short- and long-term contract changes that ensure fair compensation and scheduling.
- Meet with your superintendent and share how the district's decision to close and not compensate hourly workers affects our families and our professional lives.
- Work on a plan for the end of the year and next year to attend school board meetings and write letters about the impact of this winter.
- Partner with your teacher local to support your local's activities.

Your Education Minnesota field staff can also help.

ESP Bill of Rights

Education Minnesota has drafted an ESP Bill of Rights to build up and support school staff throughout Minnesota. The Bill of Rights includes proposals the union introduced this legislative session and items we will be working on in future sessions.

Currently, it includes provisions like:

- \$15 minimum wage for ESPs.
- Funding for dedicated paraprofessional training.
- Paid family and medical leave.

What can you do?

- ▶ ***Sign our petition in support of the ESP Bill of Rights and urge your legislator to pass the provisions in it. Then, share the link and encourage your colleagues to sign it, too!***
- ▶ ***actionnetwork.org/petitions/support-our-education-support-professionals***

WINDOW TO REVOKE DUES AUTHORIZATION EXPANDS TO 30 DAYS

This fall, Education Minnesota will expand its dues revocation window from seven days to 30 days. The revocation window is the period of time when a current member may revoke their authorization to have union dues deducted from their paycheck. Education Minnesota's 2019-20 membership application will contain a 30-day revocation window, Sept. 1-30. In addition, for all members who signed applications or recommitment forms in the last two years, we will waive our right to enforce maintenance of dues authorization during Sept. 1-24, effectively allowing these members a 30-day revocation window of Sept. 1-30 with an effective date of Oct. 1.

This change applies to all members who signed

recommitment forms in the 2017-18 membership year or later. Members who signed membership forms prior to that year and did not sign recommitment forms will continue to be allowed to revoke their dues authorization at any time.

Forms containing the seven-day window remain valid, but Education Minnesota will treat them as though they contain a 30-day window. All requests received by locals or Education Minnesota during this window will be processed by our membership department, and locals will notify district payroll departments to stop dues collection effective Oct. 1. Please contact your Education Minnesota field staff with any additional questions about this change.

RECENT CASES SHOW NEED TO HAVE A PLAN, ROOTED IN KINDNESS, FOR TRANSGENDER STUDENTS

Schools districts have a unique opportunity, and a baseline obligation, to ensure that all students feel safe and seen. This includes transgender students, who in the best cases have the support of friends and family. In tougher circumstances, teachers may form the most critical elements of a student's support system. Sometimes no good deed goes unpunished.

In Minnesota, a long running dispute between a parent and her child came to an end on March 25. In *Calgaro v. EJK, et al*, a parent had sued her own child for securing gender transition services from a Minnesota medical facility. The parent also sued the child's school district, St. Louis County, and a range of other entities that had provided support to the parent's daughter. The mother's claims were without merit, and were properly dismissed by district and appeals courts.

While securing the right outcome in litigation is gratifying, the best option is to avoid litigation altogether. In *Calgaro*, that is clearly what St.

This Legal Briefs column, written by Education Minnesota attorneys, is one of an occasional series on legal developments that affect educators.

Louis County School District was attempting to do. It attempted to shelter the student, whom the district thought was legally emancipated, from intrusive record requests from her mother. This was appropriate and supportive.

Districts may be motivated to support students because it is the right thing to do. Nevertheless, it doesn't hurt that there are state and federal regulations that protect transgender students, as well. Although the U.S. Department of

LEGAL BRIEFS, CONTINUED ON PAGE 18



Education Minnesota's new officer team, elected at the Representative Convention in April, will take office July 1. They are (from left) Secretary-Treasurer Rodney Rowe (reelected), Vice President Bernie Burnham and President Denise Specht (reelected). A full profile of the new team will be in the August/September issue of the Minnesota Educator.

SPECHT, BURNHAM, ROWE WIN OFFICER ELECTIONS; CONVENTION WORK AIMS TO KEEP UNION STRONG

More than 540 delegates attended the 2019 Education Minnesota Representative Convention, which included the election of the union's statewide officers.

President Denise Specht and Secretary-Treasurer Rodney Rowe were reelected after running unopposed. Bernie Burnham, an elementary teacher and president of the Duluth Federation of Teachers, was elected vice president after a historic nine candidates ran for the open position. Current Vice President Paul Mueller will end his tenure at Education Minnesota June 30. Read more about Mueller's legacy in union advocacy on pages 10-11.

The new officer team will take office July 1. A full profile of the new officers will be in the August/September issue of the Minnesota Educator magazine.

Also elected were two National Education Association Directors—Marty Fridgen of South Washington County and Heather Bakke from Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop.

The convention also serves as the union's annual business meeting.

Delegates took action on constitution and bylaw amendments, action items, changes to the union's

statements of principle and legislative positions.

The delegates voted to reaffirm the commitment to union strength through regional connections with intermediate organization support programs, reconvene the dues task force and review the union's dues structure, support a robust funding system for public education, promote collaborative union mentorship between local unions and aspiring educators, and promote and educate locals wishing to better recruit teachers of color.

Delegates also heard from special guests Gov. Tim Walz, State Auditor Julie Blaha, Education Commissioner Mary Cathryn Ricker, National Education Association President Lily Eskelsen Garcia and American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten.

Education Minnesota's statewide award winners were also honored, which included the 2018-19 Education Support Professional of the Year Missy Terpstra from St. Peter, 2019 Human Rights Award winner Jim Parry from Stewartville, and the 2019 Peterson-Schaubach Outstanding Leadership Award winner Kevin Lindstrom, the outgoing president of the Minnesota State College Faculty.



MUELLER SAYS GOODBYE TO LEADERSHIP, BUT NOT ADVOCACY

"I'm not going away, I'm going a different way."

After 12 years as vice president of Education Minnesota, Paul Mueller will be stepping down from his post June 30, choosing not to run for reelection this spring.

"It was a real awakening to get to this point," Mueller said. "All I can say is thank you for the things I have done, the people I have met and the opportunities I have had."

While his exact next steps are not finalized, Mueller knows that he is leaving the union in a good place and is excited about the prospects of more time at home with family and continuing his advocacy in new ways.

"I thought it was a good idea to step aside and let someone else step in," he said. "I am hoping to work five or six more years either in the classroom or in the union movement. There's not less work to do because of the *Janus* ruling, there's more."

Unions have always been a huge part of Mueller's life, even when he was too young to realize it.

"My dad died when I was 6, and I was the youngest of five kids," he said. "My mom had just gotten a job with union pay and union benefits a month before he died. I don't know where I would be without my mom's union job."

Growing up in Wisconsin, Mueller never thought about becoming a teacher. He said he spent a lot of time working on farms and finding mentors in the building and automotive trades, so he thought he was headed in that direction post-high school.

It wasn't until one of his own teachers mentioned that he might be good at it, did he consider it as a career path. And with the subject area of

career and technical education, Mueller was able to merge both his passion for the work of the trades with a career in teaching.

"Unionism actually takes a backseat to my passion for advocating for my subject area," said Mueller, who has served on national boards and committees to help support CTE programs.

Mueller credits his access to public schools and universities as to what got him to this place in life, but he didn't realize the benefits he received because of collective action until after college.

That acknowledgement of collective action carried through as Mueller began his teaching career as an automotive service CTE teacher.

"Even back then, CTE programs were the first to be cut," he said. "I had to organize around keeping my program every year, and passing levies to keep these electives."

Mueller spent most of his career in Brooklyn Center. He not only taught classes, but also ran a job placement program where students would spend the morning at the high school, afternoons at a community or technical college and then evenings working. Student were able to graduate high school with an associate's degree and a job.

And as he continued with his education career, Mueller said the union opportunities just kept coming up.

"Especially in Brooklyn Center, which is a small 160-member local, it just became my turn," he said. "But I was starting in local leadership right at the time of the state merger, so I saw that potential and knew it could be something big."

Mueller was elected to an At-Large Governing

We Are One Solidarity Award

Board position at the very first Education Minnesota Representative Convention in 1999. He also served as a National Education Association Director before becoming vice president.

"When you come into this job, you find your niche," said Mueller. "The vice president's role is really 'duties as assigned.' For me, I saw the potential of our role in the larger labor movement. It became clearer and clearer to me that this is how I can make a difference."

Mueller did just that, by leading the union's AFL-CIO affiliation project. The effort made every Education Minnesota local union fully affiliated with their AFL-CIO regional labor federation or central labor council. Because of the connection that affiliation brought, educators now work with other unions in their area.

"Had it not been for Paul, we would still be trying to just scramble everyone in one at a time, and he has just been phenomenal at helping us build our strength from the inside out," said Chelsie Glaubitz Gabiou, president of the Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation, of which Mueller also sits on the board.

Mueller also championed Education Minnesota's continuous retiree membership project, which allows educators who have been members for 10 years or more at the time of their retirement to become a member of Education Minnesota-Retired at no cost.

"As a leader, he spent many hours looking at what this would look like," said Education Minnesota Secretary-Treasurer Rodney Rowe. "He looked at what would it mean to be a continuous member. When you end your time as an active member, there's still a lot of work to be done."

One of the hallmarks of Mueller's time in leadership has been visiting schools and talking with members, and that is the thing he will miss most.

"What I like to do most is spend the day talking to members," he said. "Our members, we just have to convince them that they can. That you have skills that take you above and beyond most other professions. The excitement for me came in building those skills as I moved up."

Mueller's passion for organizing can be seen at the state and national levels. He has been

As a local, state and national union leader, Vice President Paul Mueller leaves a legacy of organizing and growing the labor movement. Every year, in his honor, Education Minnesota will recognize an Education Minnesota local or active member demonstrating outstanding or significant leadership in any of the following ways:

- ▶ *Developing and implementing an organizing campaign.*
- ▶ *Expanding relationships with other unions and the AFL-CIO.*
- ▶ *Developing and implementing a member engagement campaign.*
- ▶ *Working collectively for the common good.*
- ▶ *Protecting or advocating for workers' rights.*
- ▶ *Extending the benefits of a union by organizing the unorganized.*



the first to take the lead on a floor strategy at a convention, knows everything there is to know about parliamentary procedure and is rarely without a camera in his hand.

"I did tell him once, boy there are a lot of pictures and posts," said Dave Masters, a CTE teacher in St. Cloud who has become one of Mueller's best friends through their union work. "But once you 'friend' him on Facebook, you see those posts. There's a lot of things at the teaching level that you don't really have an understanding of at the nation or state level. Those posts help give members a sense of 'how big is our union' and what is our union involved in."

As Mueller's time as an Education Minnesota officer ends, President Denise Specht presented him with the We Are One Solidarity Award at this year's Representative Convention.

"I can't think of anyone who has dedicated his life more to the power of unionism, the power of the collective and why we need to be working with the greater labor movement," Specht said.

LINDSTROM HONORED AS HE LEAVES MSCF LEADERSHIP POST

Kevin Lindstrom, president of the Minnesota State College Faculty, became the first higher education member to win Education Minnesota's highest honor, the Peterson-Schaubach Outstanding Leadership Award.

The award was presented to Lindstrom at Education Minnesota's Representative Convention in April.

"Kevin started at the state level (leadership in MSCF) in 1995," said Shelli Arneson, a faculty member at Rochester Community and Technical College and the Education Minnesota Governing Board member who nominated Lindstrom. "Imagine, since 1995, he has been actively, tirelessly, engaged in fighting on behalf of faculty, students, two-year institutions, in our community and the common good, which is public education."

Lindstrom started his career in higher education as a counselor at Anoka Technical College. He first became active in the union as his campus's grievance rep. He has served on the negotiations team for many, many rounds of bargaining and served as the technical college vice president from 2009-13 before being elected president. Lindstrom decided to not run for reelection this year, but does plan to go back to teaching.

"There is nothing I like more than being in a campus environment, being in a classroom and working directly with students," Lindstrom said. "I have enjoyed this work immensely, but I have missed that campus-based part of it a lot."

Lindstrom has often been a bridge between Education Minnesota's higher education and E-12 members. He worked with high school teachers across the state to deal with changes to the concurrent enrollment system.

"We spent a lot of time talking and learning from each other," Lindstrom said. "Then we sought solutions that respected all parties. I think that's what Education Minnesota leadership is all about and what we have done all throughout our history."

His colleagues credit Lindstrom with being an architect of the MSCF contract, which they



Kevin Lindstrom (center) poses with other members of the Minnesota State College Faculty after receiving Education Minnesota's highest honor, the Peterson-Schaubach Outstanding Leadership Award.

describe as "the envy" of the rest of the country.

"(Our contract) is what makes working in higher education in Minnesota unique," said Matt Williams, current MSCF vice president, who is taking over for Lindstrom as president this summer. "That is largely credited to Kevin's vision and also his depth of knowledge about how stuff fits together. He has a sense of creativity of what a contract does, how it works, how things get put together. In the realm of negotiations, he really has been 'the guy.'"

Through his years in leadership, Lindstrom has never lost his focus on his members.

"His defining principle as he approaches everything is, what is in the best interest of the largest number of faculty in our union," said Mark Grant, the director of government relations for MSCF.

Lindstrom also never forgets to look toward the future.

"There is an urgent conversation in this country about the future of the labor movement, a conversation made even more urgent by the *Janus* decision and the attacks we expect to come," said Williams, in his nomination letter. "While some leaders would double down on what they already know and resist any notion of change or transformation, Kevin has wholeheartedly embraced the need for new strategies, tactics and new leaders."

"As I leave, I hope my legacy is inviting change that reflects a new reality and leaving the new leaders in a position where they feel they are ready to hit the ground running," Lindstrom said.

STEWARTVILLE'S PARRY WINS HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD

Jim Parry knows that when a student feels pride and success in one part of their life, that feeling tends to spread to other parts of their life, too.

That philosophy guides Parry's work as teacher of the REACH program at Stewartville Middle and High School, and is a big part of why he received Education Minnesota's Human Rights Award this April at the Representative Convention.

REACH stands for relationships, education, accountability, character and hard work.

The program started as an academic intervention for students struggling in their core classes, but quickly expanded to an elective class for grades 7-12 that blends academic support with character lessons.

"Our aim is to connect with students who have any struggle in their life that they want to overcome," Parry said. "Academic struggles are only one part of student life."

Parry helped develop the program and dove into the work of creating a safe space for students, with a deep understanding of adverse childhood experiences and trauma-informed practices.

Eighty percent of Parry's students have a score of one or more on the traditional ACEs scale of 10, and 18 percent have a score of eight or higher.

"The educator who isn't trauma-informed or responsive to the special needs of these students isn't equipped to help them navigate through life," Parry said.

Making sure he meets all students' needs and that focus on ACEs and trauma are what make Parry a trusted adult for Stewartville students.

"Kids will ask, 'Can I go to REACH?' if they are having a bad day and I know from talking to Jim that they are always welcome," said Cheri Stageberg, a math teacher at Stewartville Middle and High School and local co-president of Stewartville United Educators, who nominated Parry for the award. "Sometimes they just need a place to chill out or calm down or an adult who cares to talk to a little bit. They always come back the next day in a little bit better place."



Jim Parry (right) accepts the Education Minnesota Human Rights Award at the Representative Convention in April. He was presented the award by Bety Rios-Christensen, the chair of the Human Rights Committee.

Stageberg also noted that she and other teachers see the benefits of REACH and Parry's relationship with the students in their own classrooms.

"The things they learn from Jim through the REACH program definitely help them to be better learners, particularly in math, because then they are more comfortable asking those questions and getting the help they need," she said.

Parry also had made connections in the community that benefit students.


Olmsted County Sheriff Kevin Torgerson works with Parry on building a relationship between law enforcement and the students in REACH. Torgerson said the work Parry does in building character skills in his students helps them stay out of trouble with his office.

The REACH room also houses a space full of food, clothes and other supplies students can take if they need it.

"He provides students with everything that they need," said Victoria, an 11th-grade REACH student. "They really go that extra mile to make their students feel welcomed and wanted here."

"People just think it's like a study hall, but it really isn't," said Haley, an 11th-grade REACH student.

"You learn more than in regular classes, like respect, kindness and how to treat your peers. I think it would be better if this was almost a required class."



2019 TEACHER OF THE YEAR BELIEVES EVERY VOICE MATTERS

Jessica Davis knows that her high school math students won't ever be asked to solve a quadratic equation on the street. But she says they will always be asked, "How do you know?"

"You will always be asked to justify something. It's that response of how you think about your thinking," Davis said. "We use math as a way to become a more whole person, and I think everyone wants to be a more whole person, whether you like math or not."

Her comprehensive approach to student learning is a big reason why Davis, a math teacher at South St. Paul Secondary School, was named the 2019 Minnesota Teacher of the Year in early May.

Davis was named the recipient from a group of nine finalists, narrowed down from 168 initial candidates, a near-record number.

The selection panel is made up of community, business and education leaders. Education Minnesota organizes and underwrites the program but does not run the selection process.

Davis is the first Teacher of the Year from South

St. Paul. She has taught there since 2009, and also taught at Harding High School in St. Paul.

In college, Davis never considered teaching.

"My mom taught for more than 30 years," Davis said. "She always said I wouldn't like the behind-the-scenes politics involved in education. She was right. I had to learn how to navigate the system, but you have to play the game if you want to change the rules."

Davis first pursued the medical field but after getting a human biology and chemistry degree and a few internships, she realized it wasn't for her.

"I knew that it wasn't going to make me happy," she said. "I had avoided being a teacher. But teaching found me. I like learning and I like math and I knew I could make it fun."

She went back to school and received her teaching license and master's degree through

the Master of Arts in Teaching program at Hamline University, which had just started.

Davis not only teaches math, she leads the school's affinity groups - the Black Pride Organization, Sexuality and Gender Alliance, Comunidad De Latinos Unidos and Women's Society. She is also coaches the school's math team.

"The affinity groups started after the 2016 election," she said. "They needed a support network. It's for the parents as well. It's all about providing opportunities for kids. It just made sense to start supporting each other. The kids take it and I just get it out of the way."

Davis stepped into the role after the group's former advisor left the school.

"I have been able to reflect on my own time as a student, and being a 'one of' or a 'one of a few' can be really lonely," said Davis, an African-American who grew up in Central Minnesota. "If I can help them navigate the system, I have found my purpose."

Davis worked with students in her affinity groups over the last year to write a proposal to administration asking that graduating students be allowed to wear regalia, if they identify as being from a marginalized group.

"I had never done anything like that before either, so we learned together," Davis said.

The administration wanted more time to discuss the proposal, so the students went to the school board. After receiving some media attention, a private donor came forward with the funding to pay for stoles for students to wear this year. The students are meeting with administrators to work out the details.

"They really got to see the process of making a change," Davis said.

The groups have started a social media movement with their #everyvoicematters, which Davis plans on using as a theme during her recognition year.

"It came from them finding a name to call themselves," she said. "This is about educating their peers on what it is like to be them. It's just as much a support group for them as it is having a space for others who want to learn as well."

"I do believe that every voice matters," Davis said. "You have the right to ask a question and that will open up a conversation that might end with no. Then that needs to guide you from there."

Davis will now be Minnesota's nominee to the National Teacher of the Year program this fall.



Besides Davis, eight other teachers were also finalists for 2019 Minnesota Teacher of the Year award. Here are their reflections on their professional motivations and teaching philosophy.

Jeffrey Davies

Industrial technology – woods and trades, Roseville Area High School, Roseville

"CTE is a really important to conversation to be having right now. There's projected to be a huge shortage of skilled labor. We need people to build stuff."



Tim Riordan

Biology and environmental sciences, Blaine High School, Anoka-Hennepin

"You can talk aquatic ecology and the importance of protecting waterways and resources. But we can also then go into a wetland and experience it and smell it and get dirty."



Bernetta Green

Elementary, Eastern Heights Elementary, Saint Paul

"I try to provide different games and activities that are mindful, so they can relax their mind for a period during the day. I try to engage their mind with other things besides books and tech all the time."



Steve Schmitz

Instrumental music, St. Louis Park Senior High School, St. Louis Park

"Music is a great medium to build family and become the best versions of yourself. My motto that's up in the classroom is 'Building better people through excellence in musicianship.'"



Theresa Pearson

English, Winona Senior High School, Winona

"My main focus is for them to understand that their individual stories – those failures, those triumphs – all converge and create this one collective narrative that we are all a part of."



Cory Wade

Elementary, Hillcrest Community School, Bloomington

"For me to have seven hours with these kids every day, that's serious. And I need to take the job serious, because that's somebody's somebody."



Eugenia Popa

English as a second language, Harding High School, Saint Paul

"The stories that the kids are telling me make me feel closer to them. It's that human bonding that happens between us that makes it absolutely unique."



Wilbur Winkelman

Elementary, Lakeview Elementary School, Robbinsdale

"We talk a lot about basic needs, whether it's belonging, if it's shelter, if it's food. How can we help you so we can get you to a place where you can learn?"



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LEGAL BRIEFS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Education has pared back protections afforded to transgender students, protections still exist. In 2017, after withdrawing Obama-era guidance, the Department of Education issued new guidance that indicates that the following things could violate a student's civil rights:

- Using a non-preferred pronoun;
- Failure to remedy bullying based on gender identity;
- Retaliating against a student who makes a complaint related to discrimination; and
- Different treatment related to a student's failure to conform to "stereotyped notions of masculinity or femininity."

Disappointingly, the Betsy DeVos-led Department of Education has softened its stance on equal access to facilities, including locker rooms and bathrooms, for transgender students. It seems likely that the department's enforcement of the rights it does nominally recognize will be tepid at best. Nevertheless, state and federal anti-discrimination laws still protect all students, as does Minnesota's anti-bullying law.

Not all students can count on a supportive experience at school. In *J.H. v. Anoka Hennepin School District No. 11*, a case recently filed in Anoka County, the plaintiff is a transgender student who alleges that the district abruptly reversed its policy of allowing him to use a boys' locker room in 2017. Instead, he was directed to a separate area with what the district alleged was "enhanced privacy." The student did not ask for this privacy, or the separation from his peers. The state of Minnesota has joined the lawsuit on the side of the plaintiff.

This type of litigation is avoidable. The National School Boards Association has issued guidance that centers the student, offering five recommendations:

1. Treat transgender students according to their gender identity.
2. Allow transgender students to use restrooms and locker rooms that match their gender identity.
3. Address transgender students with their preferred name and use pronouns that correspond with their gender identity.

"Ultimately, our goal is to make sure that students have what they need, materially and emotionally, to succeed in the classroom. Using kindness as a North Star, we can meet this goal with little trouble."

4. Protect transgender students from harassment.

5. Allow transgender students to start a support club.¹

This is the essence of a common sense approach. Transgender students still experience disproportionate amounts of bullying. They are, as well, on orders of magnitude more likely to experience depression and to attempt suicide.² This, too, is avoidable. Students who feel loved and safe will experience better outcomes.

We recommend that staff and administration plan ahead for, rather than react to, emergent student needs. One of the things that officials from the Anoka Hennepin district expressed is their intent to make decisions about students' use of facilities on a case by case basis. Having a policy in place, instead of responding on an ad hoc basis, will ensure that students can feel safe and respected. Ultimately, our goal is to make sure that students have what they need, materially and emotionally, to succeed in the classroom. Using kindness as a North Star, we can meet this goal with little trouble.

– Meg Luger-Nikolai

Luger-Nikolai is an Education Minnesota staff attorney.

¹ *Understanding Transgender Students, NSBA.*
<https://www.nsba.org/newsroom/american-school-board-journal/asbj-june-2018/online-only-understanding-transgender-students>

² *A Toolkit for Ensuring Safe and Supportive Schools for Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students, Minnesota Department of Education, September 27, 2017 (available at <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/safe/>).*

Professional development

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS SUMMER INSTITUTE

The Minnesota School Social Workers Association's annual summer institute will be held June 17-19 at Sugar Lake Lodge in Cohasset. The focus of the institute will be trauma-informed practices and evidence-based interventions and strategies that support today's youth. Continuing education credits are available. Registration and fee information can be found at <http://msswa.org/event-3147203>.

PUPPETRY FESTIVAL EDUCATOR DAY

The Puppeteers of America 2019 National Puppetry Festival is being held this summer at the University of Minnesota, and includes a Professional Day for Teaching Artists and Therapists, July 16. The day will focus on building skills and expertise in using puppets in educational and therapeutic settings, including how to form a student-based puppet troupe at your school, using puppets in ESE and ELL classrooms and designing animatronics for STEAM education. For more information about the event or to register, go to www.regonline.com/puppetfest2019.

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SUMMER WORKSHOPS

The Minnesota Department of Education is offering a variety of workshops this summer at its headquarters in Roseville. Some of the workshops include Coaching and Feedback: A Roadmap to Success, Aug. 1-2; Jumpstart Your Professional Learning Communities for Success, Aug. 20-21; and Student Learning Goals: Designing and Improving Systems for Student Success, Aug. 22. All of these workshops are free to attend, however, lunch is not provided. All of the department's workshop offerings can be found at education.mn.gov/MDE/about/cal.

NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT MIDWEST CONFERENCE

The Minnesota Writing Project is hosting the National Writing Project's Midwest Conference Aug. 2-3 at the University of Minnesota. The Midwest Conference is an annual conference for educators to share and learn about literacy learning. The theme of the 2019 NWP Midwest Conference is Race, Writing and Power and features keynote speakers Maria Asp and Bao Phi. For more

information on the conference or how to register, go to <http://writing.umn.edu/mwp/conference>.

FREE HOLOCAUST STUDIES SEMINAR

"Honoring Resilience: Learning from the Holocaust and the Dakota Exile" will be held Aug. 4-10 at St. Cloud State University. The seminar is free of charge to participants. Attendees will explore lessons and activities for teaching about the Holocaust and Minnesota's Dakota exile through personal testimonies and place-based experiences, including day trips to Mount Zion Temple and Dakota sites such as Bdote (Mendota) and Fort Snelling. Participants will receive copies of relevant texts, other resources and 55 continuing education units. Attendees will also be eligible to apply for classroom mini-grants of up to \$1,000 following completion of the seminar. Most meals and transportation to sites will be provided. Low cost dorm housing will be available. For further information or to apply, go to www.toli.us/satellite-program/st-paul.

HISTORY CONFERENCE FOR TEACHERS

Minnesota teachers of history are invited to attend the 2019 History Fest, a conference focused entirely on teaching history in the K-12 classroom. The conference will take place Aug. 6 at the Minnesota History Center. Participants will be able to choose between educator-led sessions, presentations from college professors and sessions from content experts. Parking, lunch, networking time and CEUs will be included. Interested educators and presenters can register at mnche.wordpress.com.

Grants

TARGET YOUTH SOCCER GRANTS

Target's youth soccer grants program provides support for player registration fees, player and field equipment, and training and professional development for volunteer coaches. Any eligible school, government agency, nonprofit organization or nonprofit regional/local soccer organization, serving youth ages 5 to 18, can apply. A preference will be given to programs serving in-need communities. Annual grants of \$1,000 will be awarded. Applications are due June 15. For more information or to apply, go to corporate.target.com/corporate-responsibility/community/philanthropy/youth-soccer-grants.

REGISTRATION OPEN FOR SUMMER SEMINAR

The 2019 Summer Seminar will take place Aug. 5-7 at the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph, Minnesota.

All Education Minnesota members are invited to choose from more than 90 different course options that will improve your professional skills while connecting you with other educators from around Minnesota.

Hundreds of educators gather to increase their knowledge across a variety of topics—effective techniques in the classroom, how to navigate local unions, working with challenging students, relicensure issues and much more.

We offer a multitude of courses that fall into these main strands:

- Bargaining and benefits
- Building a strong local
- Policy, politics and the law
- Professional practice

For more information or to register, go to www.educationminnesota.org/events/summer-seminar.



Where were people reading their Minnesota Educator? Read more about our contest on page 3!



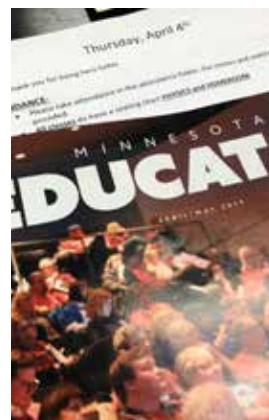
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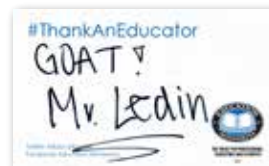
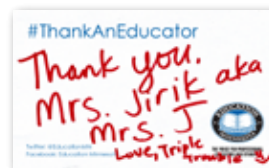
Caroline Hooper, Minneapolis



Kim Pelzer, Retired

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MEMBERS WANT TO KNOW

ATTEND A SUMMER WORKSHOP

When Can I Afford to Retire

One of the many things Education Minnesota ESI Member Benefits provides for members are informational seminars. As you are probably aware, a major pension reform bill passed in the 2018 legislative session. We have a three-step series to assist you in navigating these changes:

- Attend an ESI seminar this summer, topics to be discussed are listed below.
- Schedule a meeting with a pension counselor to provide you with individualized options for you based on these changes.
- Schedule a meeting with a financial advisor to help you in making the decisions that are the best for you. If you don't have one, check out our sponsored partner, EFS Advisors at www.efsadvisors.com

TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED:

Pension education

- Learn how benefits are calculated
 - Understand defined benefit pension plans
- Presented by: Lyle Nelson, Education Minnesota ESI Retirement Consultant*

Financial planning

- What can you expect from Social Security?
 - Tax-deferred and tax-free savings
 - Asset allocation and asset management/diversification/performance and fees
 - 403(b) match and severance payment options
 - Health insurance options prior to age 65 and Medicare supplement information
- Presented by: EFS Advisors*

Asset protection

- What is your financial vulnerability with long-term illness?
 - How can you protect your assets and savings?
- Presented by: Educators Lifetime Solutions*

Summer schedule

9:30 - 10 a.m. Registration

10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Workshop/lunch/prizes

Mon. 6/17/2019	Hibbing Park Hotel	1402 E. Howard St., Hibbing, MN 55746
Tues. 6/18/2019	Education Minnesota Duluth Office	639 East Central Entrance, Duluth, MN 55811
Thurs. 6/27/2019	Education Minnesota Woodbury Office*	2042 Wooddale Dr., Ste. 100, Woodbury, MN 55125
Mon. 7/8/2019	Education Minnesota Windom Office	560 2nd Ave., Windom, MN 56101
Tues. 7/9/2019	Education Minnesota Willmar Office	1520 Willmar Ave. SE, Ste. 1, Willmar, MN 56201
Tues. 7/9/2019	MFT 59 Office*	67 8th Ave. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55413
Thurs. 7/11/2019	MN Landscape Arboretum*	3675 Arboretum Dr., Chaska, MN 55318

* Exhibits at the Woodbury, Minneapolis and Chaska locations



Space is limited, register today

Online at <https://bit.ly/2Vq1qVi>
or contact Deb at

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Please provide your name(s), phone number and
which session you would like to attend
Spouses or guests welcome

Let us know how we can accommodate any special
requests or needs you may have



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Free loan forgiveness assistance program available

Education Minnesota has launched a new partnership to help you save on your education debt and apply for loan forgiveness.

As a member, you now have free access to a new service called Summer. The tools on this website make it easy for educators to lower monthly payments and qualify for loan forgiveness programs.

Based on your unique situation, Summer will determine which savings programs you're eligible for, compare your options side-by-side and help you enroll—all online. The site will even submit paperwork to your school district on your behalf.

Members can also receive assistance from Summer's team of loan experts via online chat or by email.

We already are seeing this partnership pay off. One of our Education Minnesota members who tried Summer is now on track to save almost \$30,000 on her student loans.

To get started, visit Education Minnesota's signup page:
www.meetsummer.org/education-minnesota.